



BEACON

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ
4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526

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BEACON

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January 7, 2019

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Is This the Future?

Roelf L. Ruffner

Imagine a scene in the future in which a young boy and an elderly man are sitting on a park bench in the autumn. Brightly colored leaves fall to the ground in the chilly air. Across the street from the park stands a mosque with its imposing minaret. An Iman is calling the faithful to afternoon prayers from a loudspeaker on top of the minaret.

With a sigh, the old man comments, “I remember when that mosque was a building belonging to a group called the ‘church of Christ.’” The boy exclaims, “When was that?” “Many years before you were born,” said the old man. “I remember how this street would be lined with gasoline powered automobiles every Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday evening—like clockwork.”

The boy, with an amazed expression on his face, said, “What did they do on those days?” “On Sunday morning they met and studied an

ancient book called ‘the Bible.’ After that they would gather together in the main hall and worship their God,” said the old man as his eyes gazed at the mosque. “What was their worship like?” the boy questioned. “I visited it a few times as a lad,” the old man added. “As I recall, it was very simple by the religious standards of the day. People sat in pews, praying and singing songs about their God’s Son, Jesus. After that they observed what they called ‘the Lord’s Supper.’ In their Bible it said that the bread they ate represented Jesus’s body and the juice they drank represented His blood.” The boy’s attention was rapt. He said, “What else did they do?” “They also contributed money each Sunday for the work of the church,” the old man added.

There was silence for a moment as the old man stroked his beard. “Yes, I almost forgot an important part. The last part of the worship

service a man stood up and preached from the Bible. At the end he invited everyone to obey God.” “How did they obey God,” the boy inquired. “Some repented of sins, and others re-

pented and were immersed in water for the forgiveness of their sins,” said the old man.

The boy shook his head in amazement. “But what happened to them?” The old man thought a minute and then said, “For many years they thrived. People in the community looked upon them with respect saying of each, ‘There goes a Christian!’ But after a while a new generation arose which was dissatisfied with the church. They thought of the older members as antiquated and their worship service as old fashioned. Soon there was enough of them to have their own way. They hired men and women to do the work of the church for them. They spent a lot of money on social gatherings and entertainment.”

The old man continued, “As time went, by men were hired to preach their opinions and not the Bible. This was strange because all this group’s activities previously had been centered on that Book. Within a few years the church seemed indistinguishable from anybody else. In fact, they came to consider themselves identical to the religious groups they had opposed in the past.”

With anticipation the young boy added, “So what happened to them?” The old man looked off into the sky. “It was so long ago,” he said. “I seem to recall that all went well for a while. But gradually the children of the rebellious generation left the group and joined with the other religious groups in town. Finally, the building was abandoned and sold.”

The old man and the young boy sat on that bench for a while longer, each peering in silence at the mosque. Finally, the boy asked, “That is sad in a way. But I have two further questions. What is the Bible and who is Jesus?”

Would You Be Called a Christian?

Would you be called a “Christian,”
If everybody knew
Your secret thoughts and feelings,
And every thing you do?
Or, could they see the likeness
Of Christ in you, each day?
And could they hear Him speaking
In every word you say?

Would you be called a “Christian,”
If anyone should know
That you are found in places
Where Jesus would not go?
And could they hear His echo
In every song you sing?
In eating, drinking, thinking,
Could they see Christ my King?

Would you be called a “Christian,”
If judged by what you read?
By all your recreations,
And every thought and deed?
Could you be counted “Christ-Like,”
As you now work and pray?
Unselfish, kind, forgiving
To others, every day?

Author Unknown

Brethren, is this a purely fictitious tale or an ending waiting to happen? If apostasy has its way in the church, it may well happen. As the old axiom states, "Nature abhors a vacuum." Whenever truth is cast aside a lie, however outrageous, stands waiting to take its place (2 The. 2:9-12).

Let us not forget the question posed by the Head of the church, Jesus Christ, so long ago: "Nevertheless

when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? (Luke 18:8).

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that *ye* should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3).

Columbia, TN

"What Will it Profit a Man?"

Paul Vaughn

Jesus asked a question that has eternal consequences for the soul. He said, "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" (Mark 8:36). Generally most people wander through life ardently seeking earthly concerns and material wealth to gain happiness. While at the same time, they are selling their soul to gain things that will never satisfy or bring true happiness and peace.

Have you ever looked back through your life and realized that you have made a terrible mistake? One you wish you could have changed but it was too late. Often this is the way it is, we will make a wrong choice or spend too much time seeking something that is not needed to bring us to a state of well being, that is true contentment. We wonder and are amazed at how quickly time has passed only to find out we have been sold a bill of goods that are not important anymore to our life.

Each day there are breakthroughs in science and medicine to extend life and make it more enjoyable and we are told that they are profit-

able to our life, yet we will die. All the advances in the world do not mean a thing when we breathe our last breath of air. There can be no effort that is more important than the saving of our soul. It truly is tragic to spend a lifetime seeking and saving things that one will lose at death. It is written, "And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27).

One day when death has control over our life and we look back at all the things that have been important, will we be happy or miserable? It will be too late for us to realize that we sold our soul to gain the world and that is not important anymore? Jesus said:

For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? (Mark 8:36-37).

Let us not exchange our soul for things that are not important.

Centerville, TN

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Henry Hignite	Tim Busch
Rheba Stancliff	Tina Foshee
Carla Burleson	Linda Parks
John Godwin (Aleacia Godwin's husband)	
Wyatt Blancheri (Henry & Paulette Born's grandson)	
Lanie Crowe (Bill & Peggy Crowe's granddaughter)	
Danielle Diehl (Aleacia Godwin's cousin)	
Maureen McLaughlin (Carla Burleson's aunt)	
Bob Stancliff (Rheba Stancliff's son)	

Sympathy

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Cathy Beck in the death of her husband Bill, on January 2, 2019. Please keep Cathy and her family in your prayers.

Please Remember

January 13

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

January 20

Visitation cards for Group 2 can be picked up from Ray Foshee.

January 20

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

January 21

Visitation Get-together at 6:00 p.m., in the zone room.



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Not Teach?

Lester Kamp

How can that be? Why should that be?

We all understand that Christianity is a taught religion! People do not become Christians unless there is teaching. One of the distinctions between the covenant of Moses and the covenant of Christ is that under the new covenant “they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me” (John 6:45). Under the old covenant, a person was in covenant relationship with God because of physical birth. That person, from birth, was then to be taught and learn the law of God. Under the new covenant, a person is taught and learns the law of God to become a child of God.

Without faith a person cannot please God (Heb. 11:6), and that faith comes through hearing (i.e., teaching—Rom. 10:17). Jesus tells us therefore to go and teach (Mat. 28:19).

Paul refers to the necessity of teaching in 1 Corinthians 1:21, “it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”

In the parable of the sower, Jesus stressed that the seed that must be sown is “the word of the kingdom” (Mat. 13:19). That seed is to be spread broadly; some of the seed that is sown will bring forth fruit (i.e., citizens of the kingdom of Christ), and some will not. The responsibility of all Christians is to sow that seed without additions, subtractions, or alterations. If the seed is not broadcast into human hearts, the kingdom will not grow—souls will not be saved. To state it simply: Teaching the Word of God to others is the obligation of every Christian and the lifeline of the church, the kingdom of God on earth. The church that does not realize the importance of teaching will die!

Satan is working in various ways to stop the teaching of God’s Word. For many, the belief

Will He Compliment You?

Galloping inflation makes us squirm. Be-moaning the economy has become the nation's leading parlor game. The danger of materialism sneaks up on us. Our desire for possessions and financial security muddies our capacity to see the truly important. We know Jesus said, "seek ye first the kingdom" (Mat. 6:33). It is a nice text for a devotional taken to well-heeled folk. But when rust corrupts and bills break through and we get all bent out of shape financially it is a little hard to swallow. Are we still supposed to give when things get tough?

Giving is a matter of priorities. We usually find funds for things that are truly important to us. So, when we give (or fail to) we are really testifying as to the importance of the matter to us. Ask these questions about everything you spend your money on for the next 30 days.

Will it have lasting, eternal significance?

Will it help my spiritual growth?

Will it honor God and advance His kingdom?

Will it confirm what I say is most important to me?

One day Jesus watched as people gave to the treasury (Mark 12:41-44). He observed what each gave, but He complimented the gift of only one of them. He always watches when His people make their offerings. He sees what each gives. The gouging question is, will He be complimentary of your gift?

Author Unknown

that it is someone else's responsibility, a lie of the devil, is enough to stop the teaching. Sometimes efforts are made by other people, sometimes religious people, to stop Christians from teaching.

A New Testament Example

The church has always had its enemies. Early in the history of the church some made efforts to stop the church from teaching. They said, "Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name?" (Acts 5:28). Here the opposition to the church was coming from the religious leaders of the day, the Jewish Sanhedrin. The very ones who should have known God's Word and who should have recognized Jesus as the Messiah were determined to stop the growth of God's people, the church. Paul stated that the Gospel is "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16). Even the enemies of the church recognized the power of the Word. The Sanhedrin knew that if the church were to be stopped then the teaching of the church must be stopped. Earlier, Peter and John had been threatened "not to speak at all or teach in the name of Jesus" (Acts 4:18). Their reply was significant, "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (4:20). Their determination to teach in the name of Jesus was unwavering in the face of threatening (i.e., potential harm and even death).

What About Us—Now?

How often have we allowed far less to keep us silent about Christ, the Gospel, and the church purchased by the precious blood of Christ? Often, we are persuaded not to teach by our own indifference, by the press of time, by convenience, or by the influence, or words

of others. Sometimes those who ought to know better and do better—those who are members of the church—discourage others from teaching the lost about the good news of Jesus Christ. We should recognize that anything which discourages us from doing what God wants us to do has to be wrong and that we should not allow these temptations to ensnare us and cause us to be silent. We must speak; we must teach!

“Behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine.” Sometimes we have a tendency to exaggerate our own accomplishments. The statement here came, however, from the enemies of the church; this is no exaggeration. These early Christians had literally filled their city with the doctrine of Christ. There is the

challenge for us—to fill our cities with the doctrine of Christ. Thousands of souls all around us need to hear the Gospel. They desperately need to heed this message. They are lost without it! We can fill our cities with the Gospel. To accomplish this task, we need the commitment we see in the first century church.

The Challenge

We need to rise above discouragement and indifference. We need to work harder to teach more. Let us make this the year in which we determine to fill our communities with the Gospel. By the close of the year will even the enemies of Christ be able to declare, “You have filled the city with your doctrine!”? Let us all work toward this end.

Aurora, CO

Some Thoughts on Praise

Doug Post

I saw a short video about praise. The notable preacher argued that when praise wells up inside you simply express it how you like. The point he was alluding to was that of rhythmic handclapping. Of course, the word for praise, etymologically, refers to expressing approval, thanks, love, etc., and certainly, may refer to clapping as an expression. However, what does it say with regards to giving God glory, worship, and praise? How is our praise to be expressed? We are told to “continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to His name” (Heb. 13:15). Our sacrifice, all of self, in praise to God, is to be offered up by the fruit of our lips (singing). Here, as in Ephesians 5:19, there is a stated specific, “that is, the fruit of our lips.”

Here, as in Ephesians 5:19, we are not to go beyond what is written, neither adding to or taking away from. Any form of expression, other than the fruit of our lips, that is offered up as our sacrifice to God, is just as sinful as the sacrifice Cain offered. It is not according to faith!!

OK

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Terry Hightower	

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“Will-Worship”

David P. Brown

In Colossians 2:23 Paul lets us know that there is such a thing as “will-worship.” MacKnight defines *will-worship* to be “a worship of human invention, consequently performed from one’s own will” (390).

There is an approach to Bible study that allows the will of man to interject its views into the Bible rather than get out of the Bible only what God put in it. This concept of Bible study begins with the premise: “If it is not expressly forbidden, it may be done.” This allows for any person to do anything that he so desires. Such a rule condones, supports, encourages, and propagates will-worship. It makes the Word of God stand at the whimsical judgment bar of man’s desires.

In Cain this disposition is easily seen. Cain worshipped—but it was will-worship. Cain wanted to worship God as it suited Cain, not as God desired. So the Scripture records that

the Lord “had not respect” for Cain’s offering (Gen. 4:5).

The whole denominational world exists because of will-worship. The motto of all the sectarian denominational human churches is: “You go to your church and I’ll go to mine; and we’ll all get to heaven together.”

The present Independent Christian Church began and continues to exist because of will-worship. They **will** to have their mechanical instruments in worship and further blaspheme God by saying that there is no authority for the kind of music with which God would be worshipped. Mechanical instrumental music is their idol—their *golden calf* and from it they **will** not be parted. “Ephraim is joined to idols: Let him alone” (Hos. 4:17).

Many examples of will-worship exist. The aforementioned one is one of the more well-known cases. But, what are men to do to keep

from will-worship?

The answer to recognizing and avoiding will-worship is to recognize the prerequisites our Lord gave concerning the learning and doing of His work. In Luke 8, in “The Parable of the Sower” (possibly better designated as “The Parable of the Soils”), Jesus does not teach that one must have many academic degrees to understand the truth. He plainly states that “an honest and good heart” is necessary to learning and doing the truth (8:15). In “The Sermon on the Mount,” Jesus promised that those who hungered and thirsted “after righteousness” would “be filled” (Mat. 5:6). Jesus also taught that one must study with the full intent to “do his will.” Then and then only “he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether* I speak of myself” (John 7:17). The principle of putting first things first in Matthew 6:33 is another requisite to avoiding will-worship. The sum of these verses is seen in the “honest and good heart” that “hunger and thirsts after righteousness,” desiring to do God’s will and in all things to put God first in every thought, word, and action. When this is

done, there is the constant looking “into the perfect law of liberty” that allows for each Christian to examine himself to see whether he is in the faith (2 Cor. 13:5). Our Lord sets out this attitude as fundamental in avoiding will-worship.

If we allow “idols in our hearts,” we are certain in time to depart from the truth. There must be the desire in all of us that whether we understand the *why* of every commandment or not, that we will divest ourselves of all things that hinder us from unreservedly serving God in obedience to His commandments.

But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ (Phi. 3:7-8).

Work Cited

Macknight, James. *Macknight on the Epistles*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, n.d. Spring, TX

The Providence of God

G. K. Wallace

All Christians believe in the providence of God. David Lipscomb well said, describing the age in which we now live:

The Bible draws no distinction between special and general providence, as the terms are generally understood. God is always present in His laws. What is done through these laws,

God does (518).

Special Providence

In the age of miracles there was no doubt many special providences manifested. Jesus conferred special blessings on certain individuals and groups. The apostles exercised special powers on certain occasions. These miracles did not interrupt the laws of nature. They

demonstrated a power of God over and above the laws of nature. These miracles were **confirmatory** and **temporary** (Mark 16:20; Eph. 4:11-13; 1 Cor. 13; Heb. 2:3).

Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

Providence, whether special or general, was unrelated to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Christ raised Lazarus from the dead but not as a result of the prayers of Lazarus nor the fact that the Holy Spirit dwelt in Him. Christ showed special providence to many who were not even children of God. Balaam's ass spoke in an "unknown tongue." God's general providence is manifested toward the birds (Mat. 6:26). The Christian farmer asks God to bless his fields. However, we know that the Holy Spirit did not dwell in Balaam's ass, a bird, nor a corn stalk. It is not correct to expect special providence to accomplish what may be gained through the ordinary channels of blessings.

Testifying

That special providence was exercised in the case of miracles both in the Old Testament and the New is apparent even to the casual reader of the Bible. That God over-ruled circumstance in the life of Esther, Daniel, Joseph, or Paul, et al, cannot be denied. However, there was an **inspired interpreter** to certify the providence of God in these Bible characters. Today, we have no **divine interpreter** and, therefore, we cannot relate our experiences as the leadings of God. There have been things in my life, as in yours also, that appear to be providential. They may be but I cannot preach such as I have no divine interpreter. I shall not and I cannot Scripturally relate my experience as an act of God. Paul said, "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your

servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor. 4:5). When you hear one of my brethren testifying, he is **preaching himself**, he is not preaching Jesus. I will not and cannot preach myself. Let me preach Jesus. All actions of the holy men of the Bible have certified to us by divine revelation. My message is a certified Gospel and not a **human experience**. I have no right to relate my experience as the leadings of God. Every false teacher makes the same claim and all have the same proof—their tongues. I know a man who claims that the Holy Spirit has directed him all the days of his life but he now preaches the exact opposite of what he preached yesterday. Is his tongue reliable? It is high time that we quit preaching ourselves and start preaching Jesus Christ.

The testifying among us cannot be justified by referring to **reports** of work done whether in Acts or the *News and Notes of the Gospel Advocate*. It is good to report but to relate an experience and claim it is a leading of the Holy Spirit is a different thing altogether. Since the only evidence one has of a special providence is his own experience, he has no right to relate it as an act of God. No one now has a **divine interpreter** of his life and any interpretation of his life is **purely human**. To preach such experiences is to preach oneself and thus to violate the instructions of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 4:5). We have a complete message revealed in the Word of God and we should proclaim it and not ourselves.

Work Cited

Lipscomb, David and Elisha Sewell. *Questions Answered*. Ed. Marshall Clement Kurfees. Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate, 1921.

Deceased

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Please Remember

January 30

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



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Not, Is It Alright with Me, But Alright with God

Charles Pogue

Without raising a very specific example in detail, I would ask for all who read this article to consider a question with me. Do we make our decisions on issues concerning things such as entertainment, dress, speech, what holidays to observe or not to observe, and many others that we consider, on the basis of what we think about that thing or what God thinks about it?

Do we make excuses for accepting a thing as alright based on our feelings and assuming we have made correct logical arguments to a correct objective conclusion in the affirmative? If instead, we asked ourselves the question, what is there in God's Word that applies to the issue under consideration, many times we would abandon that thing of which we approved, now knowing that God disapproves of it.

The truth about many is that they run to Romans 14 on whatever thing they want to accept as okay, and say that it is a matter of con-

science when it is no such thing. Romans 14 deals with matters concerning which God has not ruled. But too many of us (we suppose thinking a thing must be dealt with in explicit statements rather than implicit ones), want to place the thing in the conscience category, when it is essentially comprised of matters on which God has ruled. Perhaps that rule is conveyed to us in implicit language, but nevertheless, He has ruled them to be evil.

One of the things that some fail to consider is that if a thing of which they approve is inundated with specifics which God holds in disdain, then they should reject the thing composed of those specifics instead of telling themselves, "Well, it's okay, the components are only incidental." The truth is if a thing is composed of parts that are objected to of God, then so is the whole.

What will one do when he gets into judg-

ment having convinced himself that a little bit of this (whatever this is) was not a problem in his life, and our Lord on the other hand says, “Oh, yes it was a problem, because that which you decided was okay was full of things that I told you in my Word, I hate that. Not only so, I told you that a little leaven leavens the whole lump” (1 Cor. 5:6; Gal. 5:9). The conclusion will be that the thing he thought was not a problem in this life was, but is an even greater one for him now in that day of reckoning.

What will one do if he arrives before that judgment seat and the Lord tells him that thing of which he approved, implicitly denies Him or something that He revealed in His Word, and now he is going to be sentenced based upon what the Lord says, not based upon what he thought was an okay thing? That is exactly what is going to happen to some, is it not?

The inspired Word of God tells us to abstain from all appearance of evil (1 The. 5:22). The apostle, by inspiration, wrote that we are to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness (Eph. 5:11). Is that what we do, or do we make up some kind of excuse to convince ourselves that we are not having any fellowship with those works when in actuality we are? One says I am not fellowshiping or approving the evil things even though it is them

when combined together, that make up the total of the thing of which I do approve. I am only approving the sum, not the parts. No, you are approving both! That is exactly the point.

We correctly lash out for example at pornography, drug use, and dancing as evil forms of entertainment as the Scripture implicitly teaches, but at the same time, other things which are either explicitly or implicitly exposed as sin; things such as sorcery, magic, witchcraft, evolution, false gods, false religions (including made up ones), superhuman powers endowed to the creature, violence, immodesty, vulgar language, and more, we rationalize that the mediums composed of those are acceptable forms of entertainment while as at the same time recognizing the component parts to be wrong individually. As the old saying goes, consistency, thou art a jewel. Or, as we might rephrase it, inconsistency is a hard nut to crack!

One thing that all brethren should be encouraged to do regarding secular matters, is question them! Not to question them on the basis of feelings or what one perceives to be unattackable logic, but on the basis of what the scripture reveals as good and evil, and then make the proper application to all things. The question is not, is it alright with me, but is it alright with God?

Beeville, TX

Questions on Baptism

Franklin Camp

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the

gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38).

- If baptism is not a condition of salvation, will you please answer these questions?

- If baptism is not a condition salvation, why did Peter mention baptism, since he was answering the question of what to do to be saved? (Acts 2:37).
- If salvation comes after baptism, would not repentance also follow salvation, since they are joined by the conjunction and?
- Are not repentance and baptism in this verse both for the same purpose?
- If salvation comes before baptism, why does Peter say it is for the remission of sins?
- If the phrase, “for the remission of sins” in Acts 2:38 means because of remission, would not the same phrase in Matthew 26:28 mean because of remission of sins?
- Did Jesus shed His blood because men were already saved?
- If Christ did not shed His blood because men were already saved, would it not follow that men are not baptized because they are already saved? The phrase in Matthew 26:28 and Acts 2:38 are identical in both the Greek and English.
- Would it not be a false doctrine to teach that Christ shed His blood because men were already saved?
- Likewise, is it not a false doctrine to teach that men are baptized, because they are already saved?
- If the people on Pentecost were saved before they were baptized, why were they not added to the church until they were baptized, since such as should be saved were added to the church?
- The word church means “the called out” and only those baptized were added to

the church. If one is saved before he is baptized, would he be saved before he is called out of the world?

- Is salvation in the world or in Christ? (2 Tim. 2:10).

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls (Acts 2:41).

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).

Then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved (Luke 8:12).

- Can one be saved and not receive the Word? All who received the Word on Pentecost were baptized.
- Were there any on Pentecost who were saved that did not receive the Word?
- Does the Word say “baptized for the remission of sins” or “baptized because of remission of sins”?
- How is it possible for one to be baptized as the Word teaches, and not be baptized for the remission of sins?
- If you were not baptized for the remission of sins, you were not baptized as the Word teaches and therefore were not saved.
- If not, why not?

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Lanie Crowe (Bill & Peggy Crowe's granddaughter)	
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Bob Stancliff (Rheba Stancliff's son)	
Chip Crowe (Bill & Peggy Crowe's son)	
Junior McLeod (Paul & Phyllis Brantley's great-grandson)	

Please Remember

February 3

Visitation cards for Group 1 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

February 10

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

Cards to Lee Hammac

If you want to send a card to Lee Hammac give the card to Phyllis Brantley (with no stamp). She will put all cards in an envelope and send them to him. Write Joel Lee Hammac on the card. If you have any questions, contact Phyllis.



BEACON

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

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Everything in Life is Gambling, or is it?

Philip Smith

I suppose everyone who has preached against gambling has heard the response that “everything in life is a gamble,” but is it really? This has been repeated so many times that it has become a mantra for the gambling crowd who seek to justify their actions.

Before discussing whether everything in life is a gamble let us consider three major problems with gambling. The first is that the motivation to gamble is the desire to gain something from others for nothing. That is simply covetousness and the Bible teaches that covetousness is sinful (Col. 3:5-6; Eph. 5:3). The second is that the Bible authorizes us to gain funds in four ways: (1) Work (Gen. 3:19; 2 The. 3:10), (2) Buying and selling (Acts 16:14; 4:32-35; Mat. 13:44-45; Jam. 4:13), (3) Gift or inheritance (Mat. 2:11; Eph. 4:28; Deu. 21:17), (4) Interest (Mat. 25:27). Gambling also exemplifies a lack of love to-

ward others because in gambling we desire to take that which belongs to others without giving anything in return (Deu. 20:17; Luke 12:15).

Let us consider the proposition that everything in life is a gamble. This stems from the assumption that risk is equivalent to gambling and that every single thing in life is a risk. There are some things that are certain in life such as aging. When our life ends then aging ends. Another thing that is sure is death (Heb. 9:27). This is not a risk we take for it is certain as well. I am sure you can think of other certainties in life.

What constitutes gambling? First, there must be a *pot* into which the players put something of value. This is the bet or the wager. Second, there must be an event in which the outcome is uncertain. Third, there must be one or more winners and one or

more losers. Business is not gambling because if the business fails, then everyone loses and no one wins, but if the business succeeds, then everyone wins and no one loses. In other words, all three elements of gambling are not present in business and in many other things people call a *gamble*.

Christians must avoid gambling because it violates God's will concerning how man can make increase. It also violates God's teaching concerning loving our neighbor. Finally, it is sinful because it is motivated by greed.

Denton, 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 lecture-ships, sermons, and Gospel meetings can be viewed. Why not check it out at:

<http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

The Faith Healing Racket

W. P. Jolly

Of all the modern systems of deception, there is none quite so mean and plain crooked as the so-called *healing* campaigns. Please consider the following:

In New Testament times all healing that was done was accomplished at once, **without delay**. Such is not true of the modern *healers* today. People are asked, "Don't you feel a little better than you did?" or questions of like nature. Some people have even been known to throw away their crutches one day and then

be found using them again the next. **They simply are not healed.**

If these men have power to heal they ought to heal everybody that asks to be healed, including the totally deaf and the totally blind. This ought to be performed in a moment of time, **immediately**, even as it was done by the apostles of Christ. It certainly should not require hours of crying, praying, and general hysteria to get the job done. If these self-styled *healers can not* do these things then they ought to quit making such broad claims and thus eliminate all the public confusion which they have wrought.

If these men fail and then cast the blame upon the sick person for his "lack of faith," they are really saying in effect that they have nothing to do with it after all and that the healing is actually accomplished by the faith of the afflicted one. Now if this be true, **of what use is the healer?** If the cure depends

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upon the sick man's faith, then for what purpose are these *healers* going about the country anyway? The sick man could bring about his own cure by faith, in the privacy of his own home. In addition to this, he would not need to spend money on the *faith healer*. The truth is friends that this sort of thing is a dirty, low-down, devilish, deceptive **fraud**. Listen: When the disciples of the Lord failed to heal a man on one occasion, they asked the Lord why they could not heal him. Here is the Bible record: "And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief" (Mat. 17:20) Yes, it was because of **their** unbelief. The sick man's faith or lack of faith had nothing to do with it. It is not one bit harder for God to raise the dead than it is for Him to work a miraculous cure on a sore toe. Show me **one dead person** that has been raised in one of these *healing* campaigns. Show me **one cork leg** that has been replaced with one of flesh and bone. Show me **one glass eye** that has been replaced by a real human eye. Do not be deceived, for "Many false prophets are gone out into the world."

The miracles of the New Testament days were for a special purpose and that purpose was to confirm the Word.

And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following (Mark 16:20).

The Word was confirmed, or proven to be of God by the performing of miracles. When the Word was firmly established and confirmed, the need for further confirmation ceased. A thing once confirmed is forever confirmed. Consider the fact that the apostle

Paul brought a dead man back to life (Acts 20:9-10). The same apostle left one of his co-laborers in the Gospel at Miletum **sick** (2 Tim. 4:20). If Paul could raise the dead, why did he leave Trophimus at Miletum **sick**? He did it simply because he could not abuse the power which God wrought through him. This power was to be used on special occasions to prove to a skeptical world that his words were the words of the true and living God. His mission was to preach the Gospel, not to heal the sick. His beloved son in the faith Timothy was burdened with his "often infirmities" but we find no record of Paul ever going to him and healing him. Paul could not even remove his own "thorn in the flesh" though he prayed that it be taken away.

The divine record testified that miracles were to cease. Hear the New Testament:

Charity never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away (1 Cor. 13:8-10).

We now have that perfect revelation of God to man, the New Testament Scriptures. Hear the claim:

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 (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

What else could the Christian want or need?? (*The Gospel Guardian*, May 6, 1954)

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| Bob Stancliff (Rheba Stancliff's son) | |
| Chip Crowe (Bill & Peggy Crowe's son) | |
| Junior McLeod (Paul & Phyllis Brantley's great-grandson) | |

Please Remember

February 10

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

February 17

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out by Ray Foshee.

February 17

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

February 18

Visitation Get-together at 6:00 p.m., in the zone room.



BEACON

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Wrong is Wrong

Bruce Stulting

There are many today who try to justify sin. With our current moral decline, efforts to justify sin have become increasingly more frequent. Each time society (or anyone else) justifies a sin, Satan wins a great victory. However, those who would live as faithful Christians must not be ignorant of Satan's devices (2 Cor. 2:11). Wrong is always wrong regardless of who attempts to justify it. Some think that they can do wrong if they do not get caught. For those who hold this view Proverbs 15:3 says, "the eyes of the LORD *are* in every place, Beholding the evil and the good." There is no such thing as a sin that we will not get caught in. Regardless if others know of our sin, God knows.

Some try to justify wrong doing by saying it is for a good cause. This is situation ethics which state that the end justifies the means, but no matter how noble our cause, sin is not

justified. Paul taught that damnation was just on those who said, "Let us do evil, that good may come?" (Rom. 3:8). Some try to justify their sins by saying that others are doing worse things. We must remember the words in Ezekiel 18:4, "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." Paul states in 2 Corinthians 5:10 that "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad."

Attempts are made by others to justify sin because it does not bother their conscience. The conscience can be trained to accept wrong doing. However, evil done in sincerity is still sinful in the sight of God. In Galatians 6:7 Paul warns, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Still others attempt to justify their sins by

saying that it is commonly considered acceptable. Exodus 23:2 stated, “Thou shalt not follow a multitude to *do* evil.” The majority should not dictate right and wrong to the Christian. The Christian must strive to keep on the strait and narrow way which leads to life and stay off of the wide way that leads to

the broad gate and destruction. Regarding sin Proverbs 4:14-15 warns, “Avoid it, pass not by it, Turn from it, and pass away.” Let the Christian “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil” (1 The. 5:21-22).

Huntsville, TX

With My Whole Heart

Tim Smith

“I will praise *thee*, O LORD, with my whole heart” (Psa. 9:1).

Is there any part of man that should be withheld from Him with Whom we have to do? How can we serve Him partially? What should we do to ensure that we are serving Him with our whole heart? These three questions, while they may appear blasé to some, may well determine the destiny of the person sitting nearest you as you read these lines... and they may well determine the destiny of the person sitting nearest them as well. Let us spend a few minutes considering each question in the light of the passage we have selected as our text.

Is There Any Part of Man
That Should Be Withheld from Him
with Whom We Have to Do?

On the very face of it the answer to this question is pretty simple: no. We might even begin before this question and ask why anyone would wish to withhold anything from Him with Whom we have to do. Without Him we would not be, and not being we certainly would not know the beauty of a mountain sunrise or summer breeze or a

quiet sunset. Not being we would never see the look of love on our children’s faces or hear them call our name anytime some little thing frightened them or perhaps when they have fallen and scraped a knee. Now, since He has given us life and all things in it what on earth would move us to want to withhold anything from Him for which He might ask? It flies in the face of logic! Having given us so much, even if He did ask of us that we give Him our very lives it would be no large price to pay. If we have drawn a breath it is His. So what if He wants it back? Is it not Him to want back? Should He turn from us this very minute and withhold from us all blessings henceforth we would cease to exist. We would simply not be. Anything, therefore, that He desires of us we ought to give Him. He is worthy! He alone is worthy!

How Can We Serve Him Partially?

Is it possible to serve Him partially? I suppose, after a sort, it is. Inasmuch as we can perform some of the tasks commanded by Him and leave others undone we can serve Him partially. That is not, of course, to say that He will acknowledge such, not by any

means. But how can we do such a thing? We have noted already that He has given us all, is there any right or just way that we can give back to Him less than He has given to us? Of course, if we give Him our all we still have not given Him as much as He has given us. However, in His grace, He will accept our all if we give it. I often think of those who “do” many right things only to fall short in so many other areas. Think of the denominations with their charitable endeavors, or the Catholics with their active interest in health care or the many individuals who are so nice and profess so great a love for the Lord. They do many right things, but not enough. “If we keep the whole law and offend in one point.” How sad! But then, whose duty is it to know whether a man is serving fully? Is it not the duty of each man to determine as much from the Word? That being true, it is sad, not because of the consequences to the partially-obedient, but sad that they would set an example of partial service—partial obedience— which is, in essence, but full disobedience!

What Should We Do to Ensure That We Are Serving Him with Our Whole Heart?

In essence, this question deals with ensuring that we are not guilty of full disobedience by rendering only partial service. Every man will stand and answer before the judgment seat of the Lord for himself. Therefore, every man has the duty of preparing for that accounting. How can I make such preparations as to be ready to give account? I would suggest to you first of all that we must study the Bible for ourselves. Never be content to believe “what we have always believed” on any subject. Learn the meaning of words you do

not understand. Know that you know that you know what that passage really means. Meditate on the things you study. Mull them over. Consider them from every perspective. Be sure. Having done that, implement into your life what God requires of you. Leave nothing undone. If it means losing sleep, lose sleep. If it means making major changes in every aspect of your life, make major changes in every aspect of your life. Do whatever you must do to comply in every particular with the Word. Then, having studied and obeyed, never quit. You will never reach the age of retirement from Christianity. Retirement from your secular employment may come, but there is no retirement age from being a Christian! When you die nothing more will be required of you. Remain steadfast in all matters at all times and continue to study and to obey and never grow complacent. The Lord will reward you accordingly.

Do you see how the answer to these three questions may well determine the destiny awaiting you? Rather, can you see a way wherein the answer to these three questions will not determine your destiny? May God bless you as you study and obey His Word.

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Rheba Stancliff Tina Foshee
Linda Parks
Nancy Travis (surgery scheduled for
February 13)
John Godwin (Aleacia Godwin's
husband)
Wyatt Blancheri (Henry & Paulette
Born's grandson)
Lanie Crowe (Bill & Peggy Crowe's
granddaughter)
Danielle Diehl (Aleacia Godwin's
cousin)
Maureen McLaughlin (Carla
Bureson's aunt)
Bob Stancliff (Rheba Stancliff's son)
Chip Crowe (Bill & Peggy Crowe's
son)
Junior McLeod (Paul & Phyllis
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“Little Children, Keep Yourselves from Idols” (1 John 5:21)

Roelf L. Ruffner

The Roman Catholic Church is a collector of many artifacts from antiquity. They have many rare and priceless paintings, statues, and works of art even from the time before the birth of Christ. In the past, they declared certain objects, assumed to be associated with Bible times, to be venerated and worthy of worship: pieces of Christ’s cross, mummified hand of John the Baptist, vials of Mary’s breast milk, the spear that was thrust in Jesus’ side, and various and sundry items from Catholic *saints*. Cathedrals have been built around these items and millions make pilgrimages to see them and worship them. For several years, many Catholics and non-Catholics have increasingly turned their attention to the Shroud of Turin as a possible artifact of veneration.

The *Shroud of Turin* is a large rectangular woven cloth, approximately 14 ft by 3.5 ft. It appears to show the front and rear images of a naked man and is alleged by some to be the burial cloth of Jesus Christ. It is owned by the Catholic Church and stored in the cathedral of St. John the Baptist in Turin, Italy, hence its name. It is rarely on display to the public. While some Christians vouch for its authenticity, many do not. Even the Vatican won’t say it’s authentic, which is in itself instructive (“Shroud”).

When a picture is taken of the shroud, the negative gives the shadowy impression of a naked man whose face looks remarkably similar to many modern-day pictures and painting of Jesus. Yet, no one knows what

Jesus looked like and **all** are products of various artists' imaginations. Countless tests have been run on this cloth and all seem to conflict with each other. Radiocarbon dating shows it was manufactured sometime in the 14th Century AD. That makes it almost 1,300 years too late to be associated with the crucifixion of Jesus. But the argument continues to rage on between supporters of the shroud and its skeptics who maintain that it is a fraud. Yet, rarely in the arguments is the only historical source existing about the burial of Jesus Christ—the New Testament—consulted.

The burial cloth of Jesus is referred to six times in the New Testament: Matthew 27:59, Mark 15:45-46, Luke 23:53, Luke 24:12, John 19:38-40, and John 20:5-7. In the gospels of Matthew and Luke the word *wrapped* or *entylíssō*—"to roll up, wrapped together" (Thayer 688) is used to describe what Joseph of Arimaetha and Nicodemus did to prepare the lifeless body of Jesus for burial using a clean linen cloth. John goes further in his account and states, "Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury" (John 19:40). "Wound it in the linen clothes" or "bound it in linen clothes" (ASV). This is similar to how Lazarus was laid to rest. "And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes" (John 11:44). In both cases the cloth was wrapped around the body or even in cloth strips not too dissimilar to the wrapping of an Egyptian mummy.

Yet, the negative image of the Shroud of Turin clearly implies that the linen cloth was

placed directly on top and on the bottom of the body in a horizontal position. This does not match the burial method described in the New Testament. Whoever concocted this fraud knew what they were doing, but they did know the New Testament.

Jesus Christ's body was treated in much the same manner at His burial as it was at His birth.

And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn (Luke 2:7).

And at His resurrection that burial cloth (wound in with 100 lbs. of waxy, aromatic spices—John 19:39-40) was lying empty in place like a cocoon, the face covering or napkin neatly wrapped up by itself (20:5-7). Further proof that Jesus' body had not been stolen nor did He *swoon* in the tomb but was resurrected by the power of God. Even in His grave clothes my Lord showed Himself the master of detail and undeniable truth. Even His grave clothes He left behind are part of the "many infallible proofs" (Acts 1:3) that He had risen from the dead. These "proofs" we have recorded for us in the New Testament so we might believe (20:30-31). "Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed" (John 20:8).

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Columbia, TN

The Bible and True Science

Ken Chumbley

Professor Arnold H. Guyot, LLD (1807-1884) a renowned Swiss-American geologist and geographer was a professor of geology and physical geography at Princeton University wrote the following in the conclusion to his book *Creation or The Biblical Cosmology in The Light Of Modern Science* (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1889, 135-36):

Such is the grand cosmogonic week described by Moses. To a sincere and unprejudiced mind it must be evident that these great outlines are the same as those which modern science enables us to trace, however imperfect and unsettled the data afforded by scientific researches may appear on many points. Whatever modifications in our present view of the development of the universe and the globe may be expected from new discoveries, the prominent features of this vast picture will remain, and these only are delineated in this admirable account of Genesis. These outlines were sufficient for the moral purposes of the book; the scientific details are for us patiently to investigate. They were, no doubt, unknown to Moses; as the details of the life and of the work of the Saviour were unknown to the

great prophets, who announced his coming and traced out with master hand his character and mission, centuries before his appearance on the earth.

But the same divine hand which lifted, for Daniel and Isaiah, the veil which covered the tableau of the time to come, unveiled to the eyes of the author of Genesis, by a series of graphic visions and pictures, the earliest ages of the creation. Thus Moses was the prophet of the past, as Daniel and Isaiah and many others were the prophets of the future.

Today, because of his views of the Bible would be laughed at by many of his contemporaries for holding such "ridiculous" views. What has changed? Has the Bible changed? No. The change is that many *Scientists* now reject out of hand the Biblical record without proof because of their preconceived notions. Many no longer have a belief in God and consequently any idea that there was a Creator and that He would inspire a Book that, while not being a science textbook is ahead of modern science in its statements. However, his words, written as a result of his extensive studies, are worthy of note as he confirms the inspiration of the Biblical record, including the first chapters of Genesis which some today, even some supposed Christians, like to reject as "myth."

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March 17

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Visitation Get-together at 6:00 p.m., in the zone room.



BEACON

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February 25, 2019

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“Exceeding Great Reward”

Lee Moses

Even the greatest men of faith have had their moments of doubt, or at least of concern. Abraham, the “father of the faithful” (Rom. 4:11, 16; Gal. 3:7), certainly had such moments. As the Lord instructed him, he obediently left his close-knit family and his prosperous homeland to come to a far less developed country where he knew no one. When Abram arrived in this strange country, “the Canaanite was then in the land” (Gen. 12:6). Nevertheless, the Lord assured him, “Unto thy seed will I give this land” (12:6). Nevertheless, the Lord assured him, “Unto thy seed will I give this land” (12:7). Even though the land was presently occupied, Abram had Divine assurance that his descendants would receive the land.

However, even after Abram and his wife Sarai had both reached an advanced age, they still had no children. So, God had promised

them that their descendants would inherit the land in which they were sojourning, even though they had no children to give them descendants, and the land of Canaan showed no present prospects of availability.

It was under these circumstances that the Lord again appeared to Abram:

After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir (15:1-3).

Abram was a little perplexed as to what his *great reward* could be, or at least as to how his promised reward could come about.

Abram had just rejected the offer of material reward from the king of Sodom, but God would ultimately reward Abram far greater than could the king of Sodom. Abram and Sarai would indeed have a son together, and their descendants through him would ultimately inherit the land in which Abram sojourned. Greater yet, the Savior of all mankind would be born of that descent. And that *city* for which Abram looked, “which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God,” would indeed be his (Heb. 11:10).

Christians can be tempted to look at a world given to sin, at a church given to compromise, and at a life filled with trials—and wonder, “Is it all worth it? Should I just give in?” Time and again, Scripture reminds us, “Most certainly it is worth it!” “No, you absolutely must not give in!”

For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward

man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens (2 Cor. 4:16–5:1).

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).

God will Himself be the reward of those who abide faithfully in Christ. No supposed *reward* on earth can compare with that “exceeding great reward.”

Union City, TN

He “...Knew not Joseph”

B. C. Carr

A familiar statement to many is found in Exodus 1:8: “Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph.” This change in leadership was to result in radical changes that would affect God’s people. Under the Pharaoh who knew Joseph, Israel was greatly blessed. They had grown from seventy souls to perhaps three million people. They were given choice land for their cattle in the land of Goshen. Their wealth had increased. The God of heaven was respected because of Joseph (Gen. 41:32-45). When

Jacob died the nobles of Egypt honored him (50:7).

How things changed because the new leader knew not Joseph or his God. Israel is regarded as an enemy (Exo. 1:10). They were made slaves. Cruel taskmasters were placed over them (1:11). Orders were given to kill the male babies (1:15-16). What changes had taken place because of a change in leadership!

**Changes in Leadership
Are Occurring in the Church**

We have seen a generation of great men

pass on. Men like Foy E. Wallace, Jr., G. K. Wallace, N. B. Hardeman, H. A. Dixon, Gus Nichols, B. C. Goodpasture, and a host of others who stood for the Truth without wavering. They challenged false teachers and engaged them in debate. The church grew and remained strong in the faith. Strong elders watched over the churches. False teachers were not allowed in the pulpits. Error was condemned by stalwart preachers and teachers. Young people felt secure under their leadership. Now, these have gone on. There is a new leadership in the church. Some preachers now ridicule these men of the past. Elders are yielding to popular demands for softer preaching and entertainment. They have been deceived into thinking this will cause the church to grow.

What We Hear Today

From the same pulpits where brave and faithful men stood we are hearing: Salvation is by grace alone. Men can do nothing toward their own salvation. Others are saying that we are saved by faith only. We are told that instrumental music is a matter of tradition or opinion; we should not make it a test of fellowship. “Pattern theology” is to be rejected. We should be less rigid in our belief. The “old paths” mentality should be rejected. We should not believe we are the only true church. The Scriptures should not be used as proof-texts. We need to give women a more prominent role in the church. Preachers are swapping pulpits with denominational *pastors*. Fellowship among all who “believe in Christ” should be practiced. These are just a few things being heard today in pulpits of the

church where they could not have been preached just a few years ago.

Lectureships which use faithful preachers to expose such false teachings are being avoided by the new breed. Faithful preachers are not being used by these liberal churches. Schools which still teach the Bible without fear or favor are not being supported by these who *knew not Joseph* because they do not know the God of Joseph. Some of the congregations which condemned false teachers a few years ago have since employed them as their preachers. The church is suffering because of changes in leadership.

What Can We Do to Prevent Apostasy?

1. We need to appoint and support faithful elders who will properly oversee the flock (Acts 20:28-32).
2. We need to be busy now training other leaders to take their place. Consider Joshua’s training and the influence he wielded (Jos. 24:31).
3. We need to learn again proper respect for the Word of God (Psa. 119:9-16). We must teach this to our children (Deu. 6:4-9).
4. We must vaccinate against the errors of our day by exposing all false teachers—even if this means being *negative* (Acts 20:29-32; 2 Tim. 4:1-5).
5. We must indoctrinate each generation. It is right to teach doctrine (1 Tim. 4:16; 2 John 9-11).
6. We need to pray fervently for elders and preachers (Jam. 5:16).
7. We must be set for the defense of the Gospel (Phi. 1:17).

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Lessons from the Flood

Dub McClish

The great flood in the time of Noah engulfed all of the world (Gen. 7:19-20) in its destructive effects. It was of such cataclysmic power and proportions that only the eventual end of the physical universe by fire is worthy of comparison (2 Pet. 3:5-10). The flood's effects are yet seen in such things as the topsyturvy fossil strata, the strange angles of layered stone often seen in exposed mountain sides, and the like. The astute observer sees the more important effects of the flood, however, in the lessons it provides concerning the nature of God.

God Despises Sin

Wickedness was so pervasive by Noah's time that God regretted having created man (Gen. 6:5-7, 11-13). God's abhorrence of sin is an inherent trait. Because He could not abide sin, He expelled Adam and Eve from Eden. Their sin brought death upon all mankind (Rom.

5:12). The flood would never have occurred had God been indifferent to sin. May we never think that He does not despise the wickedness of our era.

God's Longsuffering Is Not Infinite

He prefaced His announcement of the flood by saying, "My Spirit shall not strive with man for ever" (Gen. 6:3). Longsuffering is one of God's attributes. He is "slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness and truth" (Exo. 34:6). He is perfect in this, as in every other trait, but further longsuffering toward the evil that preceded the flood would have been a vice rather than a virtue. As the "iniquity of the Amorite" in Canaan was "full" by the time of Joshua (Gen. 15:16; Jos. 3:11), so shall the wickedness of men again someday be full. Only God's longsuffering preserves our world, but both will someday end (2 Pet. 3:9-10).

God Requires Obedience

Noah found grace in God's eyes because he was "a righteous man, *and* perfect in his generations: Noah walked with God" (Gen. 6:8-9). His obedience was the key factor in mankind's surviving the flood. Noah did "according to all that God commanded him" (6:22). God's demanded response from men has always been a faith that prompts obedience (Heb. 11:1-31). By definition, sin is disobedience—transgression of God's law (1 John 3:4).

God Rewards Obedience

God invited Noah and his family into the ark, saying, "for thee have I seen righteous before me" (Gen. 7:1). As God's deepest grief is our sin, so His greatest joy is our obedience. Our souls cannot be purified apart from our obedience (1 Pet. 1:22). Only those who obey God will be saved by His grace (Mat. 7:21-23). Jesus saves all who obey Him (Heb. 5:9). God's delight in Noah's obedience is typical of His delight in every person who has an obedient heart.

Denton, TX

Locating God's Children

Bill Jackson

For years and years, those of us in the church of the Lord thought we knew where the children of God were located. We had seen, in Acts 2:47, that those who obeyed the Gospel of Christ were added, by the Lord Himself, to the church, which is His body (Eph. 1:22-23). The New Testament emphasizes, repeatedly, that there is but one body (4:4). Never do we get, from the New Testament, a picture of some religious conglomerate made up of various religious denominations. The body is the church—the church of Christ (Rom. 16:16). Our preaching and teaching, in the church, used to ring out this point: The saved are in the church; the church houses the saved; the saved are God's children; God has no children outside His family, the church!

Of late, we are hearing of those who claim to find children of God throughout the reli-

gious world, yea, in all the religious denominations around us. Some have claimed to have found children of God in such numbers that "they're coming out of the woodwork!" And, it is a mighty peculiar thing, which peculiarity we now want to mention. Those who claim that the Lord has children in all the denominations have a view of men entering the family of God, and thus are "in the church," and such men are not even aware of it! They have a view of these being "in the church," and at the same time those "in the church" will argue against the church of the New Testament and its importance in God's plan of things. They have a view of men being in God's family, the church, and becoming *Christians*, and at the same time these will refuse to wear the name *Christian* and will defend the use of human names! They have a view of men becoming *Christians*, and entering the church, the king-

dom of God, and yet denying that the kingdom has yet come, and they look for and teach concerning a mythical kingdom yet to be set up on earth! They have a view of one entering the Lord's family, and becoming a *Christian*, and yet these will argue for a perverting of the New Testament pattern of worship as pertains to giving, to the Lord's supper, and to the use of vocal music only in worship! They have a view of some being in the church, being *Christians*, and yet they will argue against the Lord's New Testament teaching on church organization, and will fight to protect a man-made system, far, far removed from the Bible! Brethren, something is bad, bad wrong with any view that has such contradiction in it! This surely indicates the difficulty facing men when they try to improve on what the New Testament teaches, and when they try to find some children for God outside that family He has identified on the pages of Scripture!

We tire of hearing men speak of these, wholly sold on sectarianism, and wholly defensive of man-made systems, and claiming for them that "they have the necessary faith, have repented of sins, have confessed the Christ, and have been baptized acceptably," and thus are "in the church, are Christians," when they do not know it and are virtually in darkness concerning all things peculiar to the Lord's system! Perhaps we need to take a look and see that, considering where they are and the convictions they now have, something is defective in their faith, defective in their repentance, defective in their confession, and defective in their baptism! Those in New Testament times who had

their souls purified did so in obeying the truth of God (1 Pet. 1:22), which was the Gospel (Eph. 1:13). Never do we find those who somehow heard false doctrine, believed false doctrine, obeyed false doctrine, joined some false system with one-hundred-percent endorsement of false doctrine, but somehow they were "God's children" and "Christians."

It may be called a narrow view—that which we have been setting forth—but we are in good company (Mat. 7:13-14). A very simple truth is that men must be taught (John 6:45) if they are going to become children of God. Additionally, they must be taught the truth! Who would have thought that we would ever see the day when men would, in the church, stand up and argue that God has children scattered throughout denominationalism, which *children* deny the very body these claim they have been added to by the Lord! We will do better if we will return to proclaiming the Gospel of Christ in its purity, and stress the plan of salvation with power and clarity, and set forth the one body—the church of the Lord—in its holiness and beauty! We do a confusing work, reflecting upon our own convictions pertaining to the Word of God, when we follow a soft and compromising course. Many of those who belong to God have, over thirty and more years of faithfulness in God's family, yet to find those "children of God" throughout denominationalism. Acts 2:47 tells us where they are! We will stand on that.

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God's Demonstrations to Man

Jerry C. Brewer

God's dealings with mankind are marvelous and leave no room for our failure to understand His will. Teachers know that information is retained best when visual aids are used in conjunction with words that present the lesson. The Creator knew that long before man did and has left a number of what we call "Bible Pictures" scattered throughout His Word.

God Demonstrates Man's Inability to Atone for and Cover His Sin

Jeremiah's words are oft quoted, indicating man's inability to know the way of salvation apart from God. "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). That fact was demonstrated by God when man fell in the Garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve sinned by eating the forbidden fruit, their eyes were opened and they recognized

their nakedness. In their shame, they fashioned coverings for themselves from fig leaves.

And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons (Gen. 3:7).

According to *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of The Bible*, *aprons* in this passage is translated from the Hebrew word meaning, "a belt (for the waist)." *Aprons* occurs only one other time in the Bible, in Acts 19:12, and Strong says the word there means a "semicinctum (i.e. narrow covering):—apron." From these definitions, it is probable that their *aprons* were like the scanty clothing one could see at a public beach or swimming pool today.

The *aprons* Adam and Eve devised were not sufficient to cover them, according to God,

so He provided proper clothing. “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them” (Gen. 3:21). This implies that God considered them “unclothed” since He made coats of skins “and clothed them.” God did not say that in so many words, but He **demonstrated** His will in this account. In that demonstration, He set forth His will regarding not only man’s physical covering. In covering Adam and Eve in animal skins, the animals had to be killed and that **demonstrated** that blood must be shed for man’s sin covering (Heb. 9:11-28).

God Demonstrates the

End of the Law and the Prophets

Jesus took Peter, James, and John upon a mountain and was transfigured before them and Mark records the account this way:

And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them. And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid. And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him (Mark 9:3-7).

Matthew renders the disciples’ reaction this way:

And when the disciples heard *it*, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only (Mat. 17:6-7).

Not only did God pronounce that Jesus’ Word would supersede that of the Law and the Prophets as personified in Moses and Elijah, but He **demonstrated** that fact. When the men fell to the ground, they hid their faces from the fearful sight and the sound of Deity’s voice from heaven. However, when Jesus touched them and told them to arise and not fear, they looked up to see only their Master standing there. Moses and Elijah had returned to the unseen world. Not only did God command them to hear Jesus above the Law and the Prophets, but He demonstrated His will by removing Moses and Elijah from the scene, leaving only Him through whom God speaks in this dispensation (Heb. 1:1-2).

God Demonstrates His Final Judgment

Three great watershed events in man’s history constitute God’s demonstrations of a final event in that history. That final event is, of course, the judgment and the meting out of God’s rewards and punishments.

The first event in history that demonstrates the goodness and wrath of God in the final judgment is the flood. For 120 years, Noah labored in building the ark and preaching to his contemporaries. It had never rained before, but God said He would send a flood upon the entire earth. The ark stood as mute testimony—a demonstration—of God’s mercy. It was designed to save men from the coming deluge, but men ignored the warning, and rejected God’s mercy. When the flood came, only eight persons were saved in the ark (1 Pet. 3:20). The rest of mankind perished. Why? Because, “Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD” (Gen. 6:8), because he was obedient

to God (6:9), and, “the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (6:5) God delivered righteous Noah and His wrath fell upon vile humanity. When judgment comes, God will deliver the righteous and punish the wicked.

The second event that demonstrates the goodness and severity of God was the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19). Because of the exceeding wickedness of these

cities, God rained fire and brimstone upon them, eradicating them from the face of the earth. Nevertheless, God delivered righteous Lot. When judgment comes, God will deliver His children and utterly punish wicked men.

The third demonstration of God’s righteous judgment was the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. Step by step, Israel’s cup of iniquity was filled with the blood of the prophets until, at last, they murdered the Son of God. Jesus told them what would occur as a result of their wickedness in the parable of the wicked husbandmen (Mat. 21:33-43) and that is what came to pass some 40 years later. The Romans invaded Judea, laid siege to Jerusalem and utterly destroyed it. Josephus says 1,100,000 persons perished in that destruction and blood literally ran in the streets. However, not a single faithful Christian died in Jerusalem’s destruction. God delivered His faithful and meted out utter destruction to the wicked.

These three events demonstrate what is to come at the Second Coming of Christ. God will judge the world in righteousness by Him and now calls all men to repentance (Acts 17:30-31). But, like those of Noah’s day, the wicked of Sodom, and the Jews in Jesus’ day, few men today really believe the God we serve is a God of vengeance. They will rue the day they spurned the Gospel invitation:

For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb. 10:30-31).

Be-Attitudes

We are familiar with the beatitudes in Matthew 5. Here are a few additional **Be** – Attitudes to help you enjoy a better life.

- Be** – content with what you have.
- Be** – willing to share what you have.
- Be** – Loyal to your friends.
- Be** – patient and understanding with others.
- Be** – strong in the face of adversity.
- Be** – weak enough to seek God’s help.
- Be** – charitable to those in need.
- Be** – wise enough to know that only God is wise.
- Be** – quick to share your smile.
- Be** – willing to weep with others.
- Be** – a leader when others are lost.
- Be** – first to lift up a fallen opponent.
- Be** – last to boast of your own victory.
- Be** – sure you know the path, so you will not stumble.

Author Unknown

Elk City, OK

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Give Us More Positive Preaching

David P. Brown

For a long time now much has been said concerning the importance of “Positive Preaching.” No faithful child of God is opposed to being totally for God’s truth. Godly people have always advocated such; and, in being positively for God’s truth, they have been pleased to oppose what the Bible positively condemned. Hence, if by the words “Positive Preaching” is meant that we should be **positively** for what God’s Word authorizes and **positively** against anything not authorized by the Bible, we are disposed to heartily support it. If, however, by “Positive Preaching” is meant there should be no preaching against what the Bible is positively opposed to, then we are glad to positively oppose such preaching.

In the Old Testament when God commanded the death of all the Amalekites, including King Agag, He gave a positive

imperative statement of His will for that people and their animals (1 Sam. 15:3). But we are disposed to believe that Agag strongly considered said command to be exceedingly negative. However, when Saul failed in carrying out God’s edict, Samuel demonstrated for all eternity a positive zeal for God according to knowledge. Thus, it is recorded in Sacred Writ that, “Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal” (15:33). **Would your actions have been as positive as Samuel’s?**

Another faithful positive preacher of the Old Testament is Micaiah (1 Kin. 22:1-39; 2 Chr. 18:4-34). He said, “As the LORD liveth, even what my God saith, that will I speak” (18:13). Nevertheless King Ahab said of Micaiah: “I hate him; for he never prophesied good unto me, but always evil” (18:7). In view of Micaiah’s determination to speak the truth of

God, why did Ahab think of Micaiah as he did?

“And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that *were* before him” (1 Kin. 16:30). Ahab was a wicked man. Thus, our previous question is answered.

Moving On

H. L. Gradowith (Tim Smith)

Someday you'll awaken to find that

I've gone

Don't worry for me for you'll see I've
moved on

To a Better Land where I'll be free
from pain!

The wonderful Victory Christ lets us
gain!

Should you go to that Better Land
before me

And from this life's temptations first
be set free

I'll be looking for you—I hope we can
meet

There by the Great White Throne at
the Master's feet!

We'll reminisce on the Path that led us
There,

And in the praises of the Lord we will
share;

We'll shout and we'll sing and we'll
jump all around!

For the real Promised Land at last
we'll have found!

Deceased

Like the wicked of all ages he wanted to hear only those words that condoned his ungodly deeds.

Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for the Lord shall deliver *it* into the hand of the king (1 Kin. 22:6).

Four hundred positive preachers: and every last one of them a liar! Now, those false prophets knew that they were telling the king a lie, for later:

the messenger that was gone to call Micaiah spake unto him, saying, Behold now, the words of the prophets *declare* good unto the king with one mouth: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak *that which is* good (22:13).

That *spineless four hundred* defined *good* in only one way—whatever Ahab wants is *good*; and, that is exactly the way Ahab determined what was good. Those “Positive” preachers outnumbered Micaiah 400 to 1; but, being in the minority did not stop faithful Micaiah from telling Ahab the truth in a very positive way (2 Chr. 18:13-27).

Today, when we continue to hear the modern-day Ahabs and their prophets compromise the truth of the Gospel and water it down to make it condone whatever evil that comes into their hearts, let us remember Samuel and Micaiah. When “Ahab and his prophets” cry for more “Positive Preaching,” let us call to mind the hewing of Agag by Samuel—God's man. When “Ahab and his crowd” fight those who live, preach, and con-

tend for the whole counsel of God, let us remember faithful Micaiah.

As God commissioned Jeremiah he comforted and exhorted him by saying to him: “Be not afraid of their faces: for I *am* with thee to

deliver thee, saith the LORD” (Jer. 1:8). Most assuredly God will be with us as we face all of Satan’s henchmen—even his modern-day Ahabs with their positive *yes* men.

Spring, TX

Let Us Quit Molly-Coddling Sinners

Andrew M. Connally

If Jesus cast fire on the earth (Luke 12:49) and He did, then every attempt to extinguish the blaze is a slap in the face of our Lord. These brethren who plead for “Unity in Diversity,” “Fellowship vs. fellowship,” and a watering down of God’s Truth on any subject whether it be denominationalism, sectarianism, marriage and divorce...is nothing more than the devil’s ploy to subvert the Truth of God and a perversion of the Gospel. All who are guilty of such are false teachers and are sunshine patriots in the Kingdom of the devil; they have already left God and the Kingdom of Truth!

Brethren **I am angry**—angry that the permissiveness and the lukewarmness of our ungodly secular age have permeated our churches, Christian colleges, preacher schools, and families, and so few seem to even care much less are willing to fight the storms of digressions!

I am angry that Gospel preachers would defend age old heresies we have fought for generations and fail to see the attitudes and consequences of such after all these years!

I am angry that elders will allow such and even seek such to fill our pulpits, to participate in our lectureships, and teach in our colleges and schools. What are they thinking of; or,

are they not thinking at all!

I am angry that so many in the church are so ignorant of logic, Truth, and the consequences of sin!

I am angry that the church is being swept by materialism and secularism, worldliness and permissiveness, and so few realize they are caught up in it!

I am angry so few seem to care we are baptizing so few both here and abroad and act as if table fellowship and parties are more important than defending the Truth and sending missionaries to the lost of the earth!

I am angry because so few young preachers are preparing for the mission fields of the world. The main concern of some seems to be security, comfort, and acceptance, rather than being a militant soldier of the cross!

Our Lord taught us to preach the Word even when it means opposing error and calling names of those who are guilty. Consider 1 John 4:1, Titus 1:10-11, 3:10-11, 1 Timothy 6:20-21, 2 Timothy 2:16-17, 4:14-15, and 2 John 9-11. We are not slanderers by calling attention to error and those teaching it. We dare not be *too loving* to cause division for the *fire* the Lord “cast upon the earth”!

Deceased

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Why Some Religious People Do Not Study the Scriptures

Charles Pogue

A well-known denominational preacher once talked about how he became angry and disgusted with a long in-depth study of Ephesians. His disdain for such a study made me stop and think how so many people in religious error do not study the Bible and to consider some excuses they make for not doing so. Doubtless, there are some who have their individual disdain for some passages of Scripture—Mark 16:16 comes to mind. However, there are some common excuses people make for their refusal to study, while at the same time claiming to be religious. What are some of those popular excuses?

Some depend on their preacher whom they incorrectly refer to as *my pastor*. “Why should I study when my pastor explains everything to me I need to know?” It is no wonder the

false doctrine of salvation by faith only is so popular. Some have never studied to learn how false it is, while at the same time having it pounded into their heads that one is “saved by faith only.” Some of those denominational spokesmen will go so far as to warn them not to listen to those church of Christ people who will tell you baptism is essential for the forgiveness of sins and salvation. Those false teachers in the religious bodies of men may even be confident that most of their misguided sheep have no intention of studying for themselves and learn the truth about the question.

Some denominational people know a few Scriptures. They hear about them by reading their denominational creed books or books by prosperity theology false teachers. They

like those verses of Scripture because they learn from them that as long as Jesus is claimed as Savior, they will grow wealthy while belonging to any church they want to, or none if they just want to have their own thing going with Jesus. They are not going to study that old outdated book, the Bible, as there is too much in there that is negative, and they are not wanting to hear such. They like that golden rule verse of Matthew 7:12. But, they do not want to hear other things in the chapter like, the way to eternal life is hard and narrow and only a few find it (7:13-14), or they will not get to heaven by just audibly calling “Lord, Lord” but by doing the will of the Father (7:21-23). They do not want to know once a person has been saved, he must leave sin or lose his soul; that is too harsh and legalistic.

There are others who would say, look some of what the Bible says is just too boring. What

a waste of space for Matthew to record that long old genealogy. “What could I possibly learn from that?” You could learn when God promised Abraham that through his seed all nations of the earth would be blessed (Gen. 12:1-3; 22:17-18; 26:4), it was in fact through the lineage of Abraham Jesus came, and Matthew 1 gives the proof. Oh, who cares if God saw it necessary to show the proof that what He promised and the way it came about was the way He said it would. Hey, if the biology teacher assigns learning the periodic table, or the English teacher assigns memorizing the 800-plus word poem, *America* by Allen Ginsberg, they have no problem with that, but do not ask them to read those genealogies in Matthew 1 and Luke 3.

People can offer all kinds of excuses for not studying the Bible, but what is the real reason pseudo-religious people refuse to? They do not want to be convicted of sin. They do not want to know the marriage they are in is not sanctioned by God. They do not want to know gambling is a sin. They might win that lottery you know. They do not want to know drunkenness will cost them their souls. Most of all, they do not want to know that sinner’s prayer they laid their hand on the radio and repeated will not save them.

Many people in religious error, do not wish to, and will not, read and study their Bibles. The worst thought going along with that is many brothers and sisters in Christ are developing the same attitude for the same reason. Do not they know by so doing they are pressing hard toward the same fate?

Beeville, 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>

What Should Those Who Are in the Church Be Called as a People?

Dub Mowery

When added by the Lord to His church, a person has been born into the family of God (John 3:5; 1 Pet. 1:23; Acts 2:36-41, 47). God is the Father of those in His spiritual family (2 Cor. 6:18). The relationship of those who are in God's family to one another is similar to that of siblings in a physical family. Thus, *brother* and *sister* are not formal titles, but rather pertain to a family relationship. Although, there is certainly nothing wrong for those in Christ to refer to one another as brother or sister, still it is not to be used as a formal address.

Just as a physical family has its family name, so do the children of God. During the patriarchal age, Jacob, the son of Isaac and grandson of Abraham, received a new name given unto him by the Lord. That name was Israel, which means "prince of God" (Gen. 32:28; 35:10; 2 Kin. 17:34). He was the father of twelve sons whose descendants became known as the twelve tribes of Israel (Exo. 5:1-2). As a people the Jews were called Israelites, meaning the children of the prince of God (Jos. 13:6). In speaking of these same people as a nation, it became the nation of Israel (2 Sam. 7:23). It was during the Jewish dispen-

sation that the prophet Isaiah foretold that the family of God would receive a new name when Gentiles saw the righteousness of God (were converted—Isa. 62:2). After the Gentile household of Cornelius obeyed the gospel (Acts 10), obedient believers in Christ were called Christians (11:26). This was the new name given by the mouth of the Lord. We are to glorify God in the name Christian and in no other name (1 Pet. 4:16; Acts 26:28). To be a Christian is to be a follower and learner of Jesus Christ. Salvation is found only in the name of Christ in whom we honor as Christians (4:12).

There are other Scriptural terms pertaining to the family of God, but these are not a proper name or a family name. For example: A man whose name is John Brown includes both a given name and a family name. If Mr. Brown's occupation is farming, then it is correct to refer to him as farmer Brown. *Farmer* is not his name, but depicts his occupation. In a similar manner, the following terms are descriptive, but do not fall in a category of a given name or a family name. Some of these terms are: sons of God (Rom. 8:14), disciples (John 8:31-32), brethren (Eph. 6:23), saints (2 Cor. 1:1), children of God (Gal. 3:26), a good soldier of Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 2:3), a royal priesthood (1 Pet. 2:9), et al.

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What the World Needs Now Is Repentance, Sweet Repentance!

Roelf L. Ruffner

And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die (2 Sam. 12:13).

How the Lord (and myself) longs to hear the sinner say, “I have sinned against the LORD.” How the Father and all the holy angels in heaven must long to witness every resident in my beloved country say those same words of repentance. Considering all the ungodliness accepted and practiced in this nation; how sin has become part of our national fabric, I do not expect to see this soon. Only once in the history of the world to my knowledge has an ungodly people truly repented of their sins after hearing God’s Word proclaimed—the bloody, tyrannical city of Nineveh (Jon. 3:5-10). Who would have thought? Perhaps someday He and we will see our Pres-

ident, his cabinet, Congress and the Supreme Court in sackcloth and fasting; weeping over the damage they have done in God’s sight. Space fails me to mention a few others: entertainment moguls, actors and actresses, fashion designers, pot growers, purveyors of porn, moral compromisers, false teachers of religion, sexual perverts, the haters of God, the gambling *industry*, the alcohol *industry*, etc. Yet, even the heathen King of the Assyrian Empire (Nineveh) when faced with the wrath of God in sackcloth said, “Who can tell *if* God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?” (3:9). Yet, how does that happen? I believe David’s simple confession shows us how.

“I Have Sinned”

It was not his neighbor or one of his soldiers

who had sinned but David! The greatest obstacle to salvation is not just unbelief or even a dogged dismissal of baptism (immersion) for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) but repentance. For me, repenting is realizing that I am wrong, God and His Word are right (Pro. 14:12), confessing that sin to Him and setting about to change that wrong in my heart and life. “And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” (Acts 9:6).

What is sin? Many know sin when they see it because they have a vestige of a conscience or Biblical influence left in their semi-pagan lives. Others, “their conscience seared with a hot iron” (1 Tim. 4:2) by years of sinning, are not bothered. Still others do not have a clue what sin entails. All these need an application of God’s living Word to their hearts (Heb. 4:12; Rom. 1:16). “Hell-fire-and-damnation” preaching done in a spirit of Biblical love is needed. Where are the preachers who will proclaim from God’s Word what sin is and the eternal penalty for not repenting of it? Most are too afraid for their jobs to speak boldly. Some believe they will lose their audi-

ence and the revenue stream. They see sin as offending someone and not the stark reality of separation from God—spiritual death (Rom. 6:23). My preacher friend, have you lovingly explained to your listeners the reality of eternal punishment in all its horror (Mark 9:43-48) and the need to repent before it is everlasting too late (Mat. 25:46)? Dear parent, grandparent, Bible class teacher, those who believe in God and the Holy Bible, have you sat down with your children and explained to them what sin is and the need for repentance? Harder yet, have you and I done this very thing **with our next door neighbor?**

“Against the LORD”

Sin in its hideousness wrecks lives, deludes once innocent minds, enslaves (John 8:34), addicts, murders human spirits and, if not forgiven by God, helps send a precious soul to eternal damnation. Above all just one sin separates us from the Eternal Being who loves us beyond our comprehension (3:16; 1 John 3:16). All sin is ultimately sin against God as David realized. This is why David prayed to God:

Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, And done *this* evil in thy sight: That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, *And* be clear when thou judgest (Psa. 51:4).

My friends, the real enemy of America is not poverty and crime, radical Islam, or social injustice. The real enemy is sin and our failure to repent. Have you and I repented of our sins? Have we put sackcloth on our hearts and wept? You may not be a dope dealer or a pedophile, but you are a sinner if you have not repented of your sins and been “born again of water and of the Spirit” (John 3:5).

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Then and only then can the precious blood of Jesus wash away that sin from your soul (Rom. 6:1-7; Col. 2:12; 1 Pet. 1:18-19). Two thousand years ago a servant of Christ told a repenting sinner (Saul of Tarsus) who understood what sin was all about and who had not eaten or drunk for three days because he still carried those sins, “And now why tarriest

thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). “The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die” (2 Sam. 12:13).

Let us pray each day that our nation will open their hearts to repentance (John 9:31).

Columbia, TN

Brethren, We Must Preach the Word!

Robert L. Whiteside

An old theme, do you say? (2 Tim. 4:1-5). What about it is old? Christ, Truth, Sin, Salvation, Duty, Destiny—these never grow old. There is something wrong with one who thinks any Bible theme is old or out-of-date. If there were a cure for all fleshly ailments, would it ever be “out of date”? Would any sufferer say of it, “O, that is too old for this progressive age”? But there is no such cure known to man.

Man has a nature more important and enduring than his flesh, and ailments more far reaching in their results than any fleshy ills. The Gospel of Christ is a sure cure for all spiritual and moral ills. As long as there are moral evils to be corrected, sins to be forgiven, sinners to be saved, and downtrodden and discouraged to be inspired, sorrowing hearts to be comforted, just that long will the Gospel be fresh and “up to date.” And what else is up to date?

We have made great advancement in material things, but these do not meet the needs of the soul. Science has made great strides in material things, but it has no remedy for sin and crime. In fact, it has put forces into the

hands of the world that the world does not know what to do with. In truth, I think it can be safely said that science has made crime more plentiful and daring and has enabled the criminal to escape a hundredfold more easily. I am not unmindful of the comforts science has brought to those who know how to use them; it has done wonders in combating disease. But it has put powers in the hands of man that he does not know how to handle. Even now scientists are seeking ways and means to destroy whole cities with one blast. Science has just about perfected means by which one civilization will destroy itself in the next war. It cannot cure one moral evil, nor generate one spiritual force for the world's regeneration. And, when a scientist tries to become a philosopher, he becomes a great injury to the world; for he usually leaves God out of any scheme of philosophy that he tries to construct. Psychology and sociology, or any of the moral philosophies, are equally helpless. Jesus is the Great Physician, and the Gospel is His remedy, His only remedy, for the evils that affect the world.

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God Is

Charles Pogue

A story on Fox News on March 18, 2019, relates scientists have found quartzite rocks on a small Island between Madagascar and the eastern coast of Africa. The discovery bumfuzzled them. Why? According to them, they should not have been there.

These people will wonder and wonder, no doubt come up with all kinds of ridiculous explanations concerning the presence of the rocks. The person who believes in God knows immediately how they got there. The answer is Genesis 7:17-20.

And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth. And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters. And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered.

Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered.

The rocks were doubtless displaced by the rushing waters of the flood from fountains of the deep (8:2). They came to rest where men would not expect them to be found based upon the surrounding geological features. There is no mystery they are found in an unexpected place.

From the wonders upon the earth all about us to the complexity of our own human bodies the pieces of evidence for God are all about us. For those who are willing to accept the evidence, His being is easy to believe. The Psalmist David said it so elaborately: “I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: Marvellous are thy works; And that my soul knoweth right well” (Psa. 139:14).

Conversely, He wrote in Psalm 14:1: “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.

They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, There is none that doeth good.” When a man comes across a mystery, which cannot be explained through natural causes, he would do himself a favor to remember, “Now

faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1). Faith is also the evidence of some things one does not expect to see but does!

Beeville, TX

Am I Saved or Lost?

Guy N. Woods

Am I saved or lost? is surely life’s most momentous question. To be lost in the darkness of the night, on unfamiliar streets in a strange city, in a storm adrift at sea or in a small plane in deep fog and without instruments are terrifying experiences but not unheard of in our day. Tragic though such ordeals are to be lost in sin and under eternal condemnation through endless ages is immeasurably worse.

How may salvation be obtained? The correct answer is dependent on the viewpoint from which it is raised. (1) Unregenerate man is lost in a sense in which he cannot save himself, his friends cannot save him, and if he is saved at all, God must do it. (2) There is another sense in which man is lost and cannot save himself, friends and loved ones cannot save him, and God will not save him! For the first sense see John 3:16, Romans 5:8-11, and 1 Timothy 1:15. For the second, see Matthew 7:21 and 1 John 2:4, and often elsewhere in the sacred writings. Is it not strange that in view of the many positive affirmations of human responsibility in the Bible, there are yet those who teach that there is nothing one does, or can do, in achieving his own acceptance before God? It will surely be clearly seen from the passages cited herein that to refuse these conditions God has made precedent to

salvation is as fatal as the attempt to do that which only God can do in saving us.

The **principle** of salvation is *grace*—the unmerited favor of God. Man’s guilt has been irrefutably established (John 3:18) and it is therefore impossible for him to ask for annulment on the grounds that the sentence is incompatible with the evidence. It is equally impossible to argue for mitigation of sentence on the allegation that the sentence is too severe; the Judge of the earth can only do that which is right. A plea of merit on the basis of moral worth is wholly unavailing; we are sinners all. Salvation can neither be earned nor purchased through good works. Undemanded by justice and unpurchased by worth, grace is the principle of salvation.

The **motive** of salvation is *love*—that factor in the Divine Mind that brought our Lord to the earth to make atonement for sin (3:16; Rom. 5:3). The immeasurable love which prompted the Creator’s offer of salvation through Christ is affirmed in Romans 5:8: “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

The **procuring** cause of salvation is the *blood* which was shed by our Lord at Calvary, without which there would be no forgiveness (Heb. 10:1-4). Here, and here alone, is the

cleansing fountain, the precious laver where the obedient are washed and made clean from all of their sins.

The **agent** of redemption is the *Holy Spirit* but for whose revelation in the Scriptures we would be without knowledge of our guilt before God or of the means by which to be cleansed from its stain (John 16:13; 1 Cor. 2:8-13; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).

The **power** by which salvation is obtained is the *Gospel* (Rom. 1:16). Not one instance exists of any one being saved, following the beginning of the Christian age on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1ff), apart from, and independent of, the Gospel—the divine instrumentality of salvation (Rom. 1:16-17; Mark 16:15; 1 Cor. 1:21). It must be heard, believed, and obeyed to secure the blessings of salvation and redemption.

The **place** of salvation is in the *church*. It is fatal to ignore the highly significant fact that God has always designated a place where there and there alone His blessings are available. Salvation from the flood was in the ark (1 Pet. 3:20); the Israelites found deliverance from the plague only in the brazen serpent (Num. 24:1-9), and the sojourners in Egypt were delivered from the avenging hand of the Death Angel only in those houses over whose doors blood had been sprinkled (Exo. 12:21-26). Salvation is **only** in the body of Christ—the church (Col. 1:13; Eph. 1:19-23). Here alone is divine deliverance from the guilt, the power, and the presence of sin. To the church—the one about which we read in the Bible—the Lord adds all who submit to His will (Acts 2:47).

Deceased

Grace

Al Brown

Before my children grew up, there were times when I required them to do certain things. Sometimes I made conditions with which they had to comply in order to receive something they wanted. If they failed to do what was required, they not only did not get what they wanted, their father did not look on them with favor. This is such a common occurrence every child understands the principle.

Why, then, is it so difficult for grown men and women to understand this is also the way God's grace works. He has shown us what favor toward man moved Him to do, but He has set conditions to be met if man is to receive

the gift and stand in the favor of God. If he refuses to meet the conditions, he does not get the prize nor is he in God's favor. He does not merit the prize when he fulfills the conditions; it is still a gift.

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Jennifer Pye (Dod Dodd's friend)	
Doug Myrick (Terri Myrick's husband)	

Please Remember

April 14

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

April 15

Visitation Get-together at 6:00
p.m., in the zone room.



Correction

In last week's *Beacon* (Apr 1) the name
of the author of the article titled
"Brethren, We Must Preach the Word!"
was misspelled. It should have read
Robertson L. Whiteside. We apologize
for this oversight.



BEACON

Vol. XLVIII / No. 15

April 15, 2019

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Women in the Church

Lester Kamp

Many are changing their *understanding* of the role of women in the church. Some suggest that the changing of culture and the changing attitudes of many relative to the general role of women in society should rightfully alter our thinking about the roles available to women in the work and worship of the church. Women in some congregations which wear the name “Church of Christ” are being given an expanded role in the worship and work of the church. These expanded roles of women have been met with eagerness and approval by some while others have strongly rejected and opposed them. The question is: Scripturally, what should our attitude be toward the role of women in the church?

One important passage which must be considered on this topic is 1 Timothy 2:8-14. Note should **first** be given to the reason stated by the inspired Paul in these verses for the regu-

lations which should govern the activities of men and women in the church. The reason transcends culture. The regulations which are given here in this passage are based upon the order of creation and the deception of the first woman (Eve) when she sinned in the garden of Eden (2:13-14). Neither of these things has to do with culture, changing times, or changing attitudes. Therefore, regardless of change the principles set forth by the inspired apostle here remain the same for those who respect the authority of God’s Word.

Second, a consideration should be given to the regulations found here. In verse 8, Paul refers to men and prayer. He states that men are to “pray in every place.” This governs prayer whatever the place. All Christians are to pray (1 The. 5:17), so we should not jump to the conclusion that women are here prohibited from praying everywhere. Rather what is being

taught is that whatever the circumstances wherever it takes place when both men and women are present the men are to *lead* the prayers. This is not restricted to the worship assembly of the church; but, as Paul states, it is applicable to “every place.”

Third, Paul instructs women specifically in 1 Timothy 2:12: “But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man” (ASV). Again, the regulation must be understood in light of other Scripture. Paul is not forbidding women to teach for in other places Paul commanded women to teach (e.g., Tit. 2:3-5). What Paul states here has to do with women not being allowed to teach men in the church. Immediately, it should be acknowledged that women do not have the authority from God to preach in an assembly of both men and women nor to teach a Bible class in which both sexes are students. But there is also significance in what Paul then states, “nor to have dominion over a man.” *Nor* is used to further explain the significance of the role of women being described. The apostle is forbidding any teaching or any similar activity in which woman might exercise authority over the man. Placing a woman in charge of such things as Vacation Bible School (where men are involved as teachers and in other capacities), the general educational program of the

church, or the visitation program (again where men are involved) would therefore be sinful. It should also be recognized that a woman can take charge of (be in authority) circumstances where she is not necessarily in a position of authority and thereby sin. I have known women to take over classes where a man was the *teacher* by her attitude and her determination to control the discussion and monopolize the conversation. I have also known of women who have *taken over* discussion meetings where a man was supposed to be in charge by using similar tactics. Paul, through inspiration, determined that such behavior was and remains sinful—it is a violation of God’s law (1 John 3:4). Because men are not shouldering well their responsibilities before God does not justify a woman taking over. Both should recognize their God-given roles and follow what God authorizes.

It is true that God has regulated the roles of both men and women in the church. Those regulations are not altered by changing times, attitudes or culture. These regulations of God will remain the same until the end of time. We are going to be held accountable before God for abiding by these regulations (John 12:48; 8:31-32). We should seek to please Him in all that we do and say (Gal. 1:10).

Aurora, CO

On Congregational *Stance*

Bill Jackson

What is the *stance* of the congregation of which you are a member? That is a good question, and one especially appropriate in our day. It has been shown, time and time again, that

a person baptized can grow and develop into a knowledgeable, working, and faithful child of God due, to a great extent, to the congregation wherein he has his membership. The oppo-

site has been shown also. In fact, it is seen in the movement that some members must make through job transfers and other factors. When one leaves a sound and faithful congregation and places membership with and serves in a congregation known for “what it will tolerate,” that child of God will change also. The individual will accept and blend in with the congregation. It depends on the congregation’s *stance*.

For sure, a congregation will have a name, a reputation, based on its work and its *stance*. Rome was known for having a faith spoken of throughout the world (Rom. 1:8). Thessalonica was known for its sounding out the Word into distant areas (1 The. 1:8). The churches of Macedonia were known for their liberal giving (2 Cor. 8:1-5). Sardis, once having a good name, and with some of that still lingering in the minds of men, nevertheless was told by the Lord that “thou art dead” (Rev. 3:1). We recall hearing of one person’s saying, “This congregation is known for its love, and that congregation is known for its doctrine!” That, brethren, is tragic. Love and doctrine are combined within the system of the Lord. Jesus combined them in His statement in John 14:15.

What, by the way (wherever this is received), is the *stance* of the congregation where you are? Is the doctrine of God sounded forth powerfully and plainly, and without modification, addition, subtraction, or dilution? Is the congregation a *disciplinary* one, in that sin is rebuked and the wayward and disobedient are seen to with dispatch? Are the Bible classes known for their emphasis on the Word of God, or are the classes given to playtime and waste-time? Have the elders led the congregation in

taking a stand against worldliness, sectarianism, and every other form of error that will weaken and finally kill the church? Is the emphasis of the congregation’s work that of preaching and teaching rather than entertainment and social work? Are those in the congregation content to abide in God’s will, rather than always having a desire for something new and appealing that they can borrow from sectarianism? Are those who stand up to preach and teach grounded in the faith with no disposition to traipse off into liberalism, anti-ism, or any other “ism”?

Oh yes, a congregation has a *stance*—a name, a reputation. Preachers can help it be known for what it is, good or bad. Elders can do the same. So, can Bible class teachers. So, can any and all of the members. What is entered into the eternal record books, under our names, will be that which we did/failed to do while members of the congregation where we lived. We will partake of, support, condone, and further whatever *stance* the congregation has taken. Now, the question again: How is it where you are? Are you ready to face God concerning it?

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Please Remember

April 21

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out by Ray Foshee.

April 21

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



YouTube Channel

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Some Thoughts on Messianic Hope as Described in the Scriptures

Johnny Oxendine

Hope is one of the most inspiring in the whole canon of Scripture. Without hope, Job desired to die (7:6). Joel says, “the Lord *will be* the hope of his people” (3:16). Paul in 1 Timothy 1:1 reiterates this basic idea when his salutation says that the Lord Jesus Christ is our hope. This hope is made possible, according to Peter in 1 Peter 1:3, “by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

Exactly what made this event so significant? The Bible tells us that this *hope* was generated by the prophetic utterance in Genesis 3:15. That passage is almost benign to the casual reader of God’s Word. The full impact of the verse may never have crossed the minds of many (had it not constantly been pointed out as momentous) because it is delivered in such a subtle manner.

Hope in the Old Testament (*tiqvah*) literally means “a cord.” The figurative language extends and expands that into “expectancy, a thing to long for,” and that carries over into the basic New Testament meaning as well. As we examine the verse from Genesis 3:15, we see the plan of God for the salvation of man already in place (Eph. 1:4).

The destiny as set forth is that the serpent will essentially wound the heel that crushes him. This shows not only the power of God Almighty, but also confirms the limits of Satan’s power as well. He will inflict persecution upon the people of God, but the ultimate victory belongs to Christ. Satan’s defeat has already been announced! Whether he understood the extent of his doom is not clear, but the Word of God used to illustrate the effect of Christ on

Satan was clearly meant for our understanding. The word used for *bruise* means to overwhelm, to crush. The language of the text indicates that this overwhelming and crushing victory will take place in the future. Satan brought in sin, and sin brought in death. They shall both be rendered powerless in the same order.

A look at this Messianic hope can be undertaken through a simple following of the Scriptures. Genesis 3:15 is the early revelation of the foreordained plan, and the development continued as explained in Acts 2:16-23 where Peter is providing the Old Testament references from Joel. If we then go to Romans 8:29 we will see that this was based on the foreknowledge of God. This illuminates God's wisdom as we read in 1 Corinthians 2:7 and also in Ephesians 1:5.

This plan that God put into place was not altered as a result of any rebellion by Satan, as some propose. In 2 Timothy 1:9, we read:

“Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus **before the world began.**” This more than explains the Messianic hope as being fully under God's control. Something which Paul also tells us in Titus 1:2 when we are again informed that this was determined before the creation of the world. Why does God do this? We get some insight into this from 1 Peter 1:2 when the text describes the purpose of the foreknowledge of God. We understand this is again revealed to us as His plan, which from the beginning included the death of Christ (Rev. 13:8) to provide us hope and eternal salvation. Thus we can see clearly the work of God from the very beginning in offering a text that gave hope to all of mankind—Genesis 3:15.

San Mateo, CA

“Where Two Seas Met”

Winfred Clark

From the above title you might conclude this would be a lesson in geography. Though such might well be. This is not true. In Acts 27:41 we find a description of the plight of Paul and his fellow-passengers on his voyage to Rome. The ship ran aground where the seas from the south and the north of the island met. Thus, cross-current wrecked the ship.

How, many moral and spiritual shipwrecks have come in much the same way! Figuratively, the *seas* of life meet in many ways to the loss of those caught. Note some *seas* that meet, and note the savage harm done:

A Wrong Act to Oppose Another Wrong Act

How many times have you heard someone say, “This may not be right, but what he (or she) did is not right either!” Here you have two *seas* meeting to destroy one's soul. Note the language of Romans 12:20-21. One is not to be overcome of evil, but “overcome evil with

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good.” If you choose evil methods to combat evil, you lose.

A wrong act cannot remedy another wrong act. Peter was ready to kill the people who came for Christ in the garden (Mat. 26:50-53), and nothing could have suited Satan more. but Jesus would not stoop to the devil’s methods.

When Samuel felt that he was rejected, he would still pray for Israel (1 Sam. 12:23). Though they rejected Samuel and wanted a king, this would not cause Samuel to use wrong methods in opposing them.

Ignorance Meets Religious Error

When people will not seek to become informed, they will be ignorant. This ignorance is willful (Hos. 4:6). When people reject knowledge (4:8) Romans 1:28, they can blame nobody but themselves.

When false teachers find such conditions, they have a *field day*. They can lead such people into almost anything! The blind leading the blind, both fall into the ditch (Mat. 15:14).

Note the crowd that came to Jesus in Matthew 22:23. There were those who say that there is no resurrection. They presented a hypothetical question, bringing up the supposed case of a woman who had married seven brothers in succession. This was according to the

Levirate law—when one died, she married another brother. Watch them gloat! They just knew (?) Jesus could not solve this complex problem and hold to the resurrection! However, Jesus showed them that their problem was in their ignorance of the power of God and of the Scriptures (read Mat. 22:29-30). Suppose Jesus had not known the Truth! Suppose He had not known the Scriptures! What then? Error would have been triumphant!

When a false teacher comes along now, does not the same danger exist? What causes people to be swept into the neo-Pentecostal movement, for example? Error and ignorance meet! Havoc is wrought when this occurs.

Liberalism Meets

Arrogance and Dissatisfaction

Watch a liberal operate within a church. He (or she) will seek a weak or disgruntled member to begin to work on. If he can find those who feel neglected, he will befriend them to win their confidence. As Absalom of old, he will “steal their hearts” (2 Sam. 15:6).

When these forces meet, you can see the beginning of discord and confusion. James would describe them just as they are “sensual, devilish” (Jam. 3:15). This cunning deceit will serve no good purpose. Watch your attitude, for you may be sure that the liberals are just waiting for you to become disenchanted; and they then will begin to tell you how bad the church, the elders, and the status quo really are.

Be On Guard!

Remember that “where two seas meet” shipwrecks take place. Do not allow your soul to become part of the debris (1 Cor. 10:12).

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A New Birth

Philip Smith

I have always been delighted seeing a newly born child. The beginning of a new life that is pure and without a single evil thought or motive brings joy to family, friends, and even casual acquaintances. While the birth of a child is cause for rejoicing, there is another birth that brings even more joy. That is the *birth* of a Christian.

Jesus said, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:7). This new birth takes place only in baptism because it is in baptism that we become a “new creature.” We must be in Jesus Christ to be a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17). The only way we can be in Jesus Christ is through baptism (Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:27). Since that is where we become a new creature that is where we are born again.

There in one birth, but two elements in this one birth. The first element is that in which

we are baptized—*water*. Since Jesus in the great commission told His apostles, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16), we understand that baptism is necessary for salvation. Since water baptism is the only baptism preached in the New Testament in which each of us may choose whether or not we will submit (Eph. 4:4-6) and that is the baptism people obeyed in the New Testament (Acts 8:38; 10:47-48), we rightly conclude that the element of water in the new birth is the water of baptism.

The other element in the new birth is the *Spirit*. How does the Holy Spirit enter the new birth? Is it a Holy Spirit baptism in which the Spirit in some way overwhelms us as it did the apostles and Cornelius?

Is it the Holy Spirit somehow enlightening the mind of the individual so he might better understand the Scriptures or perhaps with-

stand temptation? Of course not. It is the Spirit working **through the Word** to bring about our obedience in baptism.

The Word is the sword of the Spirit, and the Spirit uses the Word to cut to the heart (2:37; 5:33; 7:54; Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12). In doing so, it has the power to bring about obedience in baptism. The fact the Spirit uses the Word of God cannot be missed. 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 (1 Pet. 1:22-23).

We are born by the Word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit. This is the part the Spirit plays in the new birth.

If we are to be part of the Kingdom of God and be saved from our past sins, we must be born again. Will you begin a new life that, like a newborn babe, is pure and innocent? Then you must be baptized in water in obedience to the words of the Holy Spirit as proclaimed in the New Testament.

Denton, TX

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 \$139.99 (Friday/Saturday) \$65.99 (Sunday-Tuesday)—one bed and \$144.99 (Friday/Saturday) \$70.99 (Sunday-Tuesday)—two beds. Their phone number is 850-941-0908. Tell them you are attending the Bellview Lectures when making your reservations.

Books

The lectureship book, *Making The Case For*, may be purchased for \$5.00 (plus \$3.75 per book for postage). The book will contain 27 chapters and will be a spiral-bound book. The books will not be mailed until after the lectures are over.

Books-on-CD

The Bellview lectureship books (1975-1976, 1978, 1988-2005, 2007-2019) will be available on CD in PDF format. The price is \$37.75

(includes postage). The CD also includes the *Defender* (1970, 1972-2018), *Beacon* (1972, 1974-2018), and other material. If you have a previous CD contact our office for the cost of an update.

Videos on the Internet

The lessons will be broadcast live on the Internet at:

www.bellviewcoc.com

Lessons will be archived at:

www.bellviewcoc.com/lectures.html

Meals

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

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2019 Bellview Lectures

Making The Case For

June 7-11, 2019

Friday, June 7

- 7:00 pm Establishing Your Case
Terry Hightower
- 8:00 pm God's Existence
Gene Hill

Saturday, June 8

- 9:00 am Cessation Of Miracles
Michael Hatcher
- 10:00 am Marriage
Phil Smith
- 11:00 am Christianity
Roelf Ruffner
- Lunch Break*
- 1:00 pm Singing Without Instruments
Johnny Oxendine
- 2:00 pm The Work of the Spirit
John West
- 3:00 pm Open Forum:
Dinner Break
- 7:00 pm The Bible as God's Word
Lee Moses
- 8:00 pm Eternity
Roelf Ruffner

Sunday, June 9

- 9:00 am The First Day of the Week
Harrell Davidson
- 10:00 am Worship Of The Church
Geoff Litke
- Lunch Break*
- 1:00 pm Basis Of Morality
Terry Hightower
- 2:00 pm The One Church
David Ray

Monday, June 10

- 9:00 am Sinfulness Of Denominations
Gene Hill
- 10:00 am The Christian Home
Johnny Oxendine
- 11:00 am Not Praying To Jesus
Wayne Blake

Lunch Break

- 1:00 pm The Distinction Between
The Covenants
Bruce Stulting
- 2:00 pm How The Spirit Works on
the Heart of Man
David Ray
- 3:00 pm Open Forum:
Dinner Break
- 7:00 pm Respect for Spiritual Matters
David Brown
- 8:00 pm Water Immersion
Harrell Davidson

Tuesday, June 11

- 9:00 am Christ's Resurrection
Lee Moses
- 10:00 am Roles in the Home
John West
- 11:00 am Divorce And Remarriage
Bruce Stulting

Lunch Break

- 1:00 pm Christian Fellowship
David Brown
- 2:00 pm Providence
Geoff Litke
- 3:00 pm Open Forum:
Dinner Break
- 7:00 pm Future Resurrection and
Judgment
Wayne Blake
- 8:00 pm Conversion
Phil Smith

Open Forum Questions

If you have a question send it to:
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Sophie Taylor (Pam Busch's cousin)	
Dan Schleppe (Joyce Johnson's friend)	

Please Remember

May 5

Visitation cards for Group 1 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

May 12

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

Directory Change

Nancy Travis' new telephone number is 485-1724. Please update your directory.



BEACON

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A Rebuke for Perverting the Gospel

Jerry C. Brewer

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.... For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ (Gal. 1:6-8, 10).

After his short salutation to the churches of Galatia and without further preliminaries, Paul expresses his wonder and amazement that they had so soon been diverted from the Gospel which he preached and had embraced a perversion thereof. They had not embraced “another gospel,” because there is only one Gospel. They had been bewitched by Judaiz-

ing teachers who enjoined certain aspects of the law—specifically the rite of circumcision—upon the newly converted Gentiles. Their teachings had the effect of diluting the Gospel and thus perverting it. They had embraced *another* gospel of a different kind rather than *another* of the same kind.

My friend, Wayne Price, who taught Greek for many years, says this, “better renders the use of two different words for ‘another’ in the original language.” Their hybrid gospel, produced by intermingling certain parts of the Law of Moses with the Gospel of Christ, was powerless to save. It was not another gospel, but a perverted version of the pure Gospel Paul had received by revelation and preached to them. As salt added to pure water renders it powerless to quench thirst, so error added to the Gospel renders it powerless to save. Error mingled with Truth always results in

error and there was never a case of Truth advancing or triumphing through compromise or mixing with error.

The finality of divine revelation through the apostles of Jesus Christ is forcefully affirmed in these verses—so forcefully affirmed that Paul repeats it for emphasis. The apostles were guided into all truth (John 16:13). That leaves no room for latter day revelations such as those claimed by Joseph Smith in the *Book of Mormon* or Muhammed in the *Qu'ran*. Neither do these verses admit of so-called *revelations* to any preacher in our

day. Jude's inspired book affirms that the faith has been "once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). Paul not only excludes modern revelations through men but says that even angels are accursed if they "preach any other gospel unto you." Thus, is Joseph Smith's claim of revelation from an angel named Moroni refuted. Even if such an angel had existed and given Smith that revelation, that angel is accursed (*Unto The Churches Of Galatia: A Commentary On Paul's Epistle To The Galatians*, 12-13).

Elk City, OK

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 \$139.99 (Friday/Saturday) \$65.99 (Sunday-Tuesday)—one bed and \$144.99 (Friday/Saturday) \$70.99 (Sunday-Tuesday)—two beds. Their phone number is 850-941-0908. Tell them you are attending the Bellview Lectures when making your reservations.

Books

The lectureship book, *Making The Case For*, may be purchased for \$5.00 (plus \$3.75 per book for postage). The book will contain 27 chapters and will be a spiral-bound book. The books will not be mailed until after the lectures are over.

Books-on-CD

The Bellview lectureship books (1975-1976, 1978, 1988-2005, 2007-2019) will be available on CD in PDF format. The price is \$37.75

(includes postage). The CD also includes the *Defender* (1970, 1972-2018), *Beacon* (1972, 1974-2018), and other material. If you have a previous CD contact our office for the cost of an update.

Videos on the Internet

The lessons will be broadcast live on the Internet at:

www.bellviewcoc.com

Lessons will be archived at:

www.bellviewcoc.com/lectures.html

Meals

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

Defender and Beacon Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

2019 Bellview Lectures

Making The Case For

June 7-11, 2019

Friday, June 7

- 7:00 pm Establishing Your Case
Terry Hightower
- 8:00 pm God's Existence
Gene Hill

Saturday, June 8

- 9:00 am Cessation Of Miracles
Michael Hatcher
- 10:00 am Marriage
Phil Smith
- 11:00 am Christianity
Roelf Ruffner
- Lunch Break*
- 1:00 pm Singing Without Instruments
Johnny Oxendine
- 2:00 pm The Work of the Spirit
John West

- 3:00 pm Open Forum:
Dinner Break

- 7:00 pm The Bible as God's Word
Lee Moses
- 8:00 pm Eternity
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- 9:00 am The First Day of the Week
Harrell Davidson
- 10:00 am Worship Of The Church
Geoff Litke

Lunch Break

- 1:00 pm Basis Of Morality
Terry Hightower
- 2:00 pm The One Church
David Ray

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Gene Hill
- 10:00 am The Christian Home
Johnny Oxendine
- 11:00 am Not Praying To Jesus
Wayne Blake

Lunch Break

- 1:00 pm The Distinction Between
The Covenants
Bruce Stulting
- 2:00 pm How The Spirit Works on
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David Ray

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Tina Foshee	Ray Foshee
Carla Burleson	Bill Busch
Linda Parks	Nancy Travis
Heather Stark	Cary Parks
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Lanie Crowe (Bill & Peggy Crowe's granddaughter)	
Danielle Diehl (Aleacia Godwin's cousin)	
Maureen McLaughlin (Carla Burleson's aunt)	
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Sarah Noel (Dot Dodd's friend)	
Doug Myrick (Terri Myrick's husband)	
Sophie Taylor (Pam Busch's cousin)	
Don Schleppe (Joyce Johnson's friend)	

Please Remember

May 12

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

May 19

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out by Ray Foshee.

May 19

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



BEACON

Vol. XLVIII / No. 19

May 13, 2019

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

Rejecting Truth

David P. Brown

In admonishing Christians of their responsibility to continue to speak the God-saving Truth that they may grow thereby (1 Pet. 2:2), the apostle Peter reminds them of how the Jews did not accept Jesus as the only begotten Son of God. Peter declared: “They stumble at the word, being disobedient” (2:8). We learn from the Greek word translated *being disobedient*, that its meaning is “not to allow oneself to be persuaded” (see *Thayer* or any reputable Greek lexicon).

Implied is the fact that man has the power to reject obvious Truth. He can close his understanding to adequate evidence if he does not love the Truth above everything else (2 The. 2:10-12). When the Truth is offered to an honest man in error, one of two things can happen:

1. He will keep his honesty by giving up his error and embracing the Truth, or

2. He will reject the Truth, give up his honesty, and keep his error.

Speaking for God, Isaiah said to Israel: “Come now, and let us reason together” (Isa. 1:18). God created man a rational creature and has never bypassed man’s rationality in seeking to lead and guide him. God does not force Himself upon man against his will (Rom. 1:28). If men will not receive the abundant and adequate evidence regarding their spiritual needs, God will not force it on them.

The people in Isaiah’s day were unreasonable and would not accept God’s Word. They simply would not allow themselves to be persuaded (Isa. 6:9-13). Thus, they lost their honesty and retained their error. In the words of Peter: “They stumble[d] at the word, being disobedient.” Hence, Paul’s request to the Thessalonians that they pray “that we may be

delivered from unreasonable and evil men; for all have not faith” (2 The. 3:2).

your honesty and harden your heart as you embrace the strong delusion of error.

If you want to become wicked, just stop being reasonable. In doing so, you will lose

Spring, TX

Bellview Lectures Books Order Form

Make checks or money orders out to Bellview Church of Christ

Please send the following:

Date: _____

Copy(s)	Price
___ Making The Case For (2019) @ \$5.00 (spiral-bound)	_____
___ The Church (2018) @ \$5.00 (spiral-bound)	_____
___ Set Ye Up A Standard In The Land (2017) @ \$5.00 (spiral-bound)	_____
___ Typology (2016) @ \$5.00 (spiral-bound)	_____
___ Refuting Realized Eschatology (2015) @ \$25.00	_____
___ Understanding The Will Of The Lord (2014) @ \$11.00	_____
___ Innovations (2013) @ \$5.00 (spiral-bound)	_____
___ What The Bible Says About: (2012) @ \$11.00	_____
___ Back To The Bible (2010) @ \$4.00	_____
___ Preaching From The Major Prophets (2008) @ \$5.00	_____
___ A Time To Build (2007) @ \$5.00	_____
___ The Blight Of Liberalism (2005) @ \$5.00	_____
___ Great New Testament Questions (2004) @ \$5.00	_____
___ Great Old Testament Questions (2003) @ \$5.00	_____
___ Beatitudes (2002) @ \$5.00	_____
___ Encouraging Statements Of The Bible (2001) @ \$5.00	_____
___ Sad Statements Of The Bible (2000) @ \$5.00	_____
___ Worldliness (1999) @ \$5.00 (spiral-bound)	_____
___ Christian Fellowship (1998) @ \$5.00 (spiral-bound)	_____
___ Leadership (1997) @ \$5.00 (spiral-bound)	_____
___ Preaching God Demands (1996) @ \$5.00	_____
___ Postage/Handling (\$3.75 per Book):	_____
___ Books-on-CD (1988-2018) (PDF format) @ \$37.75	_____
(includes postage/handling)—call for upgrade price	

Total: _____

Send To: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

44th Annual Bellview Lectures

Making The Case For

June 7-11, 2019

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Terry Hightower
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- 11:00 am Christianity
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Doug Myrick (Terri Myrick's husband)	
Sophie Taylor (Pam Busch's cousin)	
Don Schleppe (Joyce Johnson's friend)	

Door Knocking

May 18

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

Please Remember

May 19

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be
handed out by Ray Foshee.

May 19

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



BEACON

Vol. XLVIII / No. 20

May 20, 2019

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

Signs of the Breakdown, Even in the Theater...

Johnny Oxendine

An article in the *Wall Street Journal* gave some insight into the direction we are going as a society that likes to do as it pleases and not have anyone tell us what to do or how to act. Here are some excerpts from the article that help us see that our culture may need the Lord more than one would think from the behavior described:

During a Saturday matinee of the Holocaust drama “Irena’s Vow,” **a man walked in late and called up to actress Tovah Feldshuh to halt her monologue until he got settled.**

“He shouted, ‘Can you please wait a second?’ and then continued on toward his seat,” recalls Nick Ahlers, a science teacher from Newark, N.J., who was in the audience. During a recent matinee of “God of Carnage,” which explores the lives of two couples, a woman in the mezzanine screamed, “How ‘bout those Yankees!”—filling one of the play’s intense silences.

Earlier this year, Patti LuPone lit up gossip blogs when she broke character in “Gypsy” to scream at an audience member taking pictures. Ms. LuPone says her frustration

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boiled over. “I had just had 10 months of pointing out to ushers texting, pointing out to ushers videoing, pointing out to ushers somebody on a phone,” she says. “I just freaked.”

What is this about? Rudeness. Our society, where we are trying to preach the Gospel is becoming more and more selfish to the point of no return—how can this be turned around? One lady took her shoes off and placed them right in front of another person’s face because

the woman had an injured knee and there was no place else to put it! Worse, according to the article, her feet smelled! The Lord would not want us to act this way, and we are now dealing with people whose actions are largely conditioned by their own living rooms behaviors and *standards*. With the Gospel as our guide, perhaps we can help make the world a better place.

San Mateo, CA

Can I be a *Witness* for Christ?

Brad Green

Many in the religious world refer to themselves as *witnesses* for Christ. In some cases, these individuals claim that they are being led by the Holy Spirit to do or say something to lead others to Christ. Others claim that they are *witnesses* by giving a *testimonial* of the event that led them to believe that they were saved. Let us compare these thoughts with what the Bible teaches regarding witnesses of Christ.

According to *Webster’s Dictionary*, the word *witness* means, “a person who sees” or one who can attest to the truth of something based on their eyewitness account. For a person to be a witness for Christ, the individual must have been able to see and hear Jesus in person. After Jesus had come to John to be baptized, John was able to proclaim, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Shortly before His ascension to Heaven, Jesus told His apostles that they would serve as His witnesses (Acts 1:8). Later, Peter would preach,

we are witnesses of all things which he

did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; **Not to all the people**, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, *even* to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead (Acts 10:39-41).

Notice that not all people were witnesses. Only those who saw the things that Jesus did were referred to as witnesses. One of the qualifications to be an apostle was that of being an eyewitness to the things which Jesus said and did. There was only a select group of men who had accompanied Jesus and the apostles “beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us” (1:22) who could serve as a witness for Christ. Those who had not been with Jesus from the time of His baptism until the time of His ascension could not be considered as a witness. The apostle Peter would once again declare,

we have not followed cunningly devised

fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were **eyewitnesses** of his majesty (2 Pet. 1:16).

From the Biblical perspective, no one today can honestly claim that he is a witness for Christ. No one alive today walked and talked with Jesus from the time of His baptism until the time of His ascension. Fortunately, those who were witnesses for Christ and inspired of God preserved their eyewitness accounts in written form (cf. Rom. 1:16-17; 10:17; John

12:48). No man today receives any information from God other than that which was “once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). Today, our mission is to stay true to the message and doctrine of those who were eyewitnesses. When we practice and preach only those things which are authorized by God in the Bible and are “rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15), we are continuing steadfastly “in the apostles’ doctrine” (Acts 2:42) and are speaking “as the oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11).

Lenoir City, TN

Wrong Is Wrong

In a time of sagging morals, Satan provides many rationalizations for improper behavior. Those who would live faithful Christian lives must not be “ignorant of his devices” (2 Cor. 2:11). Wrong is wrong despite our efforts to excuse our actions.

Wrong is wrong, even if you do not get caught. From *little things* like littering the highways and breaking the speed limits to *more serious offenses* such as adultery and stealing, our society seems to think the only wrong is getting caught. It just isn't so. “The eyes of the Lord *are* in every place, Beholding the evil and the good” (Pro. 15:3).

Wrong is wrong, even if you do it for a good cause. The honorable purpose does not justify a dishonorable deed. Many who would not think of gambling have no resistance to buying a raffle ticket or playing bingo if the proceeds go to a *good cause*. Stealing is stealing even if it is done by a mother who does it

to feed children neglected and abandoned by their father.

Wrong is wrong, even if others do worse things. It will be little comfort to you in judgment, if you should be lost, that others you know did things which you consider to be worse than your sin.

Wrong is wrong, even if it does not bother your conscience. Conscience can be trained to accept wrong-doing, but sin is a transgression of God's law (1 John 3:4), and whoever transgressed God's law has sinned, even if his conscience does approve.

Wrong is wrong, even if it is commonly considered alright. “Thou shalt not follow a multitude to *do evil*” (Exo. 23:2). The Christian should “Enter not into the path of the wicked, And go not in the way of evil *men*. Avoid it, pass not by it, Turn from it, and pass away” (Pro. 4:14-15). “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil” (1 The. 5:21-22).

Author Unknown

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Tina Foshee	Ray Foshee
Linda Parks	Cary Parks
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Doug Myrick (Terri Myrick's husband)	
Sophie Taylor (Pam Busch's cousin)	
Don Schleppe (Joyce Johnson's friend)	

Please Remember

May 29

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

June 2

Visitation cards for Group 1 will be
handed out by Ray Foshee.

June 9

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



BEACON

Vol. XLVIII / No. 21

May 27, 2019

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A Controversialist?

Roelf L. Ruffner

How do you envision Jesus Christ? Many see Him as the pale, limp figure of Renaissance art. We know this is not correct because the New Testament pictures Jesus as a hard-working carpenter for some thirty years before He began His ministry in Galilee.

Another misconception about Jesus is that He was not a man of controversy and merely went around consoling the sick and the down-trodden with encouraging words. Yet, again, this is not the Jesus Christ of the Bible. The Jesus of the Bible has rightly been called the “Great Controversialist.” Everywhere He went during His 3½ year ministry there was

a whirlwind of controversy and debate. Jesus was not a troublemaker, but the soul-cleansing questions He asked turned His world upside down. He confronted young and old, rich and poor, believer-in-God and infidel with the Word of God—a mirror to their souls. As He said, “Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division” (Luke 12:51).

Many Christians today see religious controversy (i.e., legitimately promoting and defending the Truth regardless of opposition) as “unloving and un-Christ-like.” They run from it. They hold to a *Jesus* who never chal-

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lenged or rebuked anyone. Yet, Jesus loved His critics enough to say to them, “Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?” (Mat. 23:33).

Why is this? It may be because they do not know their Bible, Old or New Testaments. Or perhaps they have accepted the prevailing philosophy of religious pluralism, which maintains that all religious beliefs are of equal value. Others have bought into the idea that all truth is relative and there is no such thing as an absolute. Yet, Jesus Himself refuted these outlooks when He said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).

After Jesus ascended into Heaven, the church He established also became the center of controversy. She was persecuted by the religious authorities and later the civil authorities. Christians challenged the beliefs of others in truth and love. For example, the

apostle Paul spent a good deal of his time debating and in heated discussion with opponents of Christianity. When he was in Ephesus, the historian Luke records:

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).

Even today, if Christians truly follow Jesus, they will find their lives often embroiled in controversy, whether it is over the necessity of baptism for salvation or same-sex *marriage*. Yet, I wonder if any of us could have survived one day in the life of Jesus Christ?

Columbia, TN

The Church Is Different

Franklin Camp

God has always taught His people to be different. One of the major problems of His people has been forgetting this truth and losing their distinctiveness. The nation of Israel wanted to become like the other nations around them (1 Sam. 8). They became like them and God cast them off. Surely there is a warning for the church.

The Church Is Different from the World

The church is different from the world in its attitude and ambitions. “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world” (John

17:16). The values of Christians are different from sinners. Sinners live for self. Christians live to glorify God and serve others (Mat. 16:24; Mark 10:45). Are we losing this distinctiveness today? Are the attitudes and ambitions of Christians different from non-Christians?

The Church Differs from Judaism

Judaism was carnal, the church is spiritual. Then verily the first *covenant* had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.... *Which stood* only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and car-

nal ordinances, imposed *on them* until the time of reformation (Heb. 9:1, 10).

Look carefully at the word, *carnal*. The church is spiritual (Eph. 1:3). It is heavenly (2:6). Its worship in spirit and truth (John 4:24; Rom. 1:9). This is one reason that mechanical instruments of music have no place in Christian worship. If one granted that it was right in the Old Testament, it does not suit the spiritual worship of the New Testament. Christian worship must be from the heart. "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19).

The Church Is Different from Catholicism

The church differs from the Catholic church in that it accepts the authority of Scriptures. Catholics do not accept the authority of the Scriptures. Consider the following quotation. "One must keep the commandments of God and the church" (*Catechism of Christian Doctrine*, No. 1, pl. 31). The Scriptures are an authority but not the only authority. In truth, it is no authority since the pope must interpret it. Catholics teach that 2 Peter 1:20 denies the right of individual interpretation. This is a perversion of the passage. Peter is speaking of how Scripture was given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit (1:21). Paul commanded the Thessalonians to "prove all things; hold fast to that which is good" (1 The. 5:21). He did not say prove all things by what Peter said. The church differs from Catholicism by "*speaking as the oracles of God*" (1 Pet. 4:11—ASV). The church urges all to have an open mind and "search the scriptures daily" to see if what is heard is in harmony with what they have read.

The Church Is Different from Protestantism

The church differs from Protestantism in that it accepts the completeness of the Scriptures. The church has no creed but Christ and no book but the Bible. All teaching is based upon the Book. All questions are decided by what the Bible teaches, not a manual or discipline. It also differs from Protestantism in accepting the completeness of the Scripture and denying the need for a direct operation of the Holy Spirit to be able to understand it. Protestants generally misapply 1 Corinthians 2:14. They think the natural man is the sinner without a direct operation of the Spirit he cannot understand the Bible when he reads it. It has always been strange to me that even though the Bible is made of words just like one finds in the school books or the newspaper one can understand them in the book or paper but not in the Bible.

The Church Is Different from the Christian Church

The church differs from the Christian church in its respect for the silence of the Scriptures. The Christian church teaches that where the Bible is silent we may speak or act. This opens the door for anything that is not specifically forbidden. This is a real difference between it and the church.

Conclusion

We should not be afraid or ashamed to be different from the world, from Judaism, from Catholicism, from Protestantism, and even from the Christian church. Without a doubt one of the greatest problems we are facing in the church today is the fact that most people are afraid to be different.

Deceased

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Carla Burleson	Bill Busch
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Cary Parks	Joyce Johnson
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Lanie Crowe (Bill & Peggy Crowe's granddaughter)	
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Doug Myrick (Terri Myrick's husband)	
Sophie Taylor (Pam Busch's cousin)	
Don Schleppe (Joyce Johnson's friend)	
Jim Moses (Dot Brantley's brother)	

Please Remember

May 29

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

June 2

Visitation cards for Group 1 will be
handed out by Bill Crowe.

June 9

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prior to the afternoon service, in
room 1.



BEACON

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Homosexuality: Sin in Every Age of Man

Charles Pogue

In their ignorance, the LGBT community falsely accuses Christians of hating them. The truth is, those in that crowd hate their own souls, and they hate what the Bible teaches about homosexuality. Homosexuals hate what the Bible teaches concerning the identity of sin, and the consequences of engaging in it. It almost certainly is the case that with some of those people, the system of Calvinism also enters into their defense of that offensive life-style.

Just think of what all homosexuals must dismiss from the inspired Word of God in

their failed attempts to defend their sin and accuse Christians of hating them. They have to dismiss the truth that God has condemned homosexuality in every age of man. In essence, they either have to be people ignorant of what the inspired text records, or they have to be persons who disbelieve that the Bible is inspired of God. In all probability, there are some of both.

In the Patriarchal Age, God destroyed the cities of the plain for this very sin. One of the most sickening things about that situation was that when two of God's angels, in the form of

2019 Bellview Lectures Canceled

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men, went to warn Lot, the men of Sodom wanted to know them as a man does a woman (Gen. 19:1-5). Lot made the ridiculous offer to send his two virgin daughters out to them instead. The men of Sodom turned that wicked offer down. No wonder God destroyed those cities. Their wickedness over the sin of homosexuality can probably only be rivaled by the attitude of America toward it today. Do you not wonder if that sin will contribute to the ultimate downfall of this nation? I do. That reality hit this writer in a very sickening way, when the television aired a Zales commercial in which two women were being *married*.

Under the law of Moses, homosexuality continued to be identified as sin. Under Moses' law, it came with extreme consequences. Leviticus 20:13 says that if a man were to lie with another man as a man lies with a woman, both were to be put to death. It takes a willful blindness on the part of man to miss the fact that homosexuality is a rotten offense in the eyes of God, who created the woman to be man's mate (Gen. 2:20-25).

Sometimes those who are guilty of the sin of homosexuality claim that only the Old Testament condemns homosexuality, that the New Testament does not. That claim could not

be more false. To begin with, the Lord Jesus condemned it by implication in Matthew 19:4-5, when He said that in the beginning that God created them male and female, and that a man was to leave father and mother and cleave to his wife. Paul condemned the sin of homosexuality in Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9, and yet again in in 1 Timothy 1:10. It is as false as it can be to claim that homosexuality is only condemned as sin in the Old Testament.

Christians do not hate homosexuals; we hate the sin. Homosexuals are in the category of those of whom the prophet Micah spoke who love the evil and hate the good (Mic. 3:2). Under the law of Christ, it is not our lot to put sinners to death. God is longsuffering not willing that any should perish but that all would come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9). However, all of those who do not obey the Gospel and leave sin behind will be punished with everlasting destruction when the Lord calls all men to stand before Him in judgment (2 The. 1:7-9). For the love of their souls, we plead with all who are engaged in this sin, which is not of birth but of choice, to come out from it, and obey the Gospel.

Beeville, TX

"Don't Need Any Campbellites"

Cled E. Wallace

If being dipped in water is essential to salvation, then every Baptist that has ever lived or died will go to heaven, for they have all been dipped. Therefore, we don't need any Campbellites for the dipping business on a confession of faith, for

Baptists have long been in the affirmative on this proposition—the faith of the Bible alone being the rule and guide of our faith and practice (American Baptist).

We have our doubts about a Baptist or anybody else going to heaven who speaks of one

of the Lord's ordinances as "the dipping business." Baptism is a picture of the burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is shockingly irreverent to sneer at it as "the dipping business." And it is inconsistent in one who belongs to a church which can be entered in no other way but by "being dipped in water ...for they have all been dipped." Paul says that Christians have all been "baptized into Christ." I have heard Baptist preachers sneer and leer about "finding Christ in the creek or tank." Where are Baptist Church privileges found? "We don't need any Campbellites," and we don't need any Baptists, either, for the New Testament does not say anything about either. How would it do for the "Campbellites" and Baptists to just be Christians like the followers of Christ were that we read about in the New Testament? "If being dipped in water is essen-

tial to salvation." There is no *if* about it for the man who believes what Jesus says. Jesus says: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Baptists can mock at the statement, but they cannot answer it. They "have all been dipped," but it will take something besides water to wash the sneer off their faces before some of them "will go to heaven." The American Baptist ought to be ashamed of itself (*The Bible Banner*, July, 1943).

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If One Were Saved Before Baptism

- He would be saved before his sins are remitted. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).
- He would be saved before his sins are washed away. "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (22:16).
- He would be saved before he is born again. "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).
- He would be saved outside of Christ. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27).
- He would be saved before he is saved. "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).
He would be saved sooner than the Lord promised. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16).

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Cary & Linda Parks Bill Busch
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Born's grandson)
Lanie Crowe (Bill & Peggy Crowe's
granddaughter)
Danielle Diehl (Aleacia Godwin's
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Bob Stancliff (Rheba Stancliff's son)
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Jim Moses (Dot Brantley's brother)

Please Remember

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

June 16

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be
handed out by Ray Foshee.

June 16

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June 17

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p.m., in the zone room.



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“We Doubt the Veracity of Your Information”

Lee Moses

By mid-1939, war and the threat of war had spread throughout the entirety of Europe and beyond. On August 23 of that year, the Adolf Hitler-led Nazis and the Joseph Stalin-led Soviets signed a non-aggression pact—a pact that the Nazis clearly intended merely as a postponement of hostilities.

In September 1940, talks fell apart between the two sides, and Hitler made plans to invade the Soviet Union.

Stalin was warned by his spies of Hitler's impending attack, but Stalin refused to believe these warnings. He permitted limited fortification of his western border, but otherwise deter-

mined not to do anything that might provoke the Germans. Stalin's spies kept warning him, but he refused to believe that the Nazis would attack. Richard Sorge, a German spy with Communist leanings, microfilmed detailed reports of Hitler's planned invasion, including troop numbers and even the date—June 22, 1941. However, Stalin brusquely dismissed Sorge's efforts, responding, “We doubt the veracity of your information.”

The Americans and British both tried warning Stalin of an impending attack, to no avail. Stalin would not even listen to British prime minister Winston Churchill's warn-

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ings, as Stalin believed Churchill, particularly, was trying to provoke Hitler's attention to the east and away from Britain.

On the very eve of invasion, a German deserter crossed the border into the Soviet Union and informed the Red Army of the Nazis plans. Instead of first thanking him for the warning and then making the necessary preparations, Stalin instead ordered the German shot for spreading misinformation. Stalin continued to send food and metal exports to the Germans, as agreed in their pact, and forbade evacuating civilians living near the German border or setting up defenses.

So, on June 22, 1941, when Nazi forces crossed into the Soviet Union, they found bridges unguarded, aircraft not dispatched, and defensive positions unmanned. Nearly 60 percent of the Soviet front-line armor was in Kiev, hundreds of miles from the front line of battle. Why? Stalin simply refused to pay any attention to the warnings they were given.

Stalin's stubborn denial of the truth almost gave the Nazis the easy quick-strike victory they sought (Colley "Stalin's" 23-36, "World"; Lukacs 28; Willmont 156-158).

People continue to make the mistake of refusing to heed legitimate and vital warnings. At this very minute, men and women all over the world face momentous impending danger. Every man and woman have within them a spirit that will exist forever (Zec. 12:1; Ecc. 12:7; Gen. 35:18). If that spirit is found in any way tinged by sin when one's physical life is over, that spirit cannot go into the eternal fellowship of the One who made it and in whose image it was made, as God is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, And canst

not look on iniquity" (Hab. 1:13). The only alternative to eternal life with God is eternal destruction in hell fire (Mat. 25:31-46).

So, is it not appropriate and beneficial that God warns us in His Word of dangers regarding our spirits and our eternal destinies? Is it not appropriate that faithful Christians warn their brethren and the world of these dangers? "[Christ] we preach, **warning every man**, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col. 1:28).

At this very moment, numerous and dire spiritual threats face individual brethren, entire congregations, and the brotherhood at large. There is the threat of denominationalism and compromise with denominationalism (Mat. 16:18; Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:23, 25; 1 Cor. 12:13; 1:10). There are the threats of unscriptural divorces and unscriptural *marriages* (Mat. 19:3-12). There is the threat of worldliness infiltrating the church in the form of *social* drinking, immodest dress, dancing, and covetousness (Rom. 12:2; Jam. 4:4; 1 Pet. 1:13-16; 1 John 2:15). There is the threat of fellowship with and endorsement of false teachers (2 John 10-11). Unfortunately, this is far from a comprehensive list of present spiritual threats to the precious bride of Christ, but these threats are certainly among those of which brethren absolutely must be warned.

Yet, when faithful Christians attempt to warn others of these dangers, all too often people respond as did Stalin: "We doubt the veracity of your information." Sadly, the day has come in which spiritual Israel has become like rebellious fleshly Israel of old:

To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it (Jer. 6:10).

As the late brother Ira Y. Rice, Jr. used to say, “You just can’t warn some brethren.”

We would agree that one is well served to confirm allegations he hears about another brother or sister before accepting them as true (Pro. 14:15; 20:19; 1 The. 5:21). But one should not reject another’s warning outright and

Your Child Deserves...

Your child deserves to hear you pray earnestly and often.

Your child deserves to go to worship and Bible classes with you regularly.

Your child deserves to see you sacrifice for the Lord.

Your child deserves to hear you talk to others about becoming Christians.

Your child deserves to go with you to visit the sick and bereaved.

Your child deserves to be taught the Bible by you.

Your child deserves to hear you praise the church and her leaders.

Your child deserves to be encouraged by you to seek and obey the truth always.

Your child deserves to see you putting the Lord first in your giving.

Your child deserves to know the Christ living in you.

Your child deserves the best!!!

Author Unknown

refuse to consider it further simply because he does not **want** to believe it is true. “Some shall depart from the faith” has always been the reality to some extent or another, and presently it is reality to a far larger extent than we wish were the case or than was the case a few decades ago.

Few nations have been better warned of impending invasion than the Soviet Union in June 1941, yet despite this, and despite the fact that the Soviet Union had spent more than two decades trying to insure herself against surprise attack, the Soviet Union was totally surprised by the German invasion on 22 June 1941 (Willmott 157).

Why did Stalin refuse to heed the warnings he was given? He simply did not want to believe that he faced a serious threat. As a result, numerous lives, and almost the nation, were lost to Hitler.

If we insist on refusing accurate spiritual warnings, whether given directly by God’s Word or by human agency, we give Satan the easy quick-strike victory he seeks.

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June 30

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What's That I Hear?

Brad Green

Is it a knocking sound? Perhaps it is a good opportunity just waiting for us to simply open the door. Sometimes, opportunity knocks but we fail to recognize what stands available to us right behind the door. Many sit and wait for something to introduce itself as an opportunity while successful people see every little possibility in front of them as a potential opportunity. Successful people expect wonderful opportunities to show up and knock rather than sit around saying, "If I could only..."

The apostle Paul took advantage of all of his opportunities.

Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: And Paul, **as his manner was**, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, Opening and alleging, that

Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ (Acts 17:1-3).

Paul could have seen the synagogue as a hindrance to the teaching of Christ. Instead, he saw an opportunity to speak to a multitude of people already gathered to study religious matters.

Some people are immediately *soured* when they see a bag of lemons. Even the strongest of faithful men can be discouraged if they are not careful. Elijah ran into the wilderness to save himself from the evil Jezebel.

But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I *am* not better than my fa-

thers.... And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, *even* I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away (1 Kin. 19:4, 10).

Elijah was in despair and had come to a point of thinking that there was no more reason to live. However, Elijah's work was not done. God revealed, "Yet I have left *me* seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him" (19:18). For a

moment, Elijah's eyes had been distracted from the good opportunities that lay ahead.

While some see a bag of lemons, others see a nice, cold glass of lemonade or a new recipe using lemon zest. Rather than lament over what we do not see, let us take what we have been given and see the opportunity for something greater. Let us use the abilities we have been blessed with and realize our greatest potential (Mat. 25:14-30). In doing so, our abilities will grow and strengthen and so will the opportunities.

Lenoir City, TN

In Season and Out of Season

Ben Franklin

There are times when general apathy prevails—when it appears impossible to rouse the people to anything like an appreciation of the things of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ and when the hearts of the people appear to be closed against all that can be said or done to save them. They frequently hear at such times, act as orderly as ever, and show as much respect to the Gospel, but they do not have the heart and soul in it and cannot be **moved to action**. Their emotional nature appears to be utterly inaccessible. There are again times when the hearts of the people are open. They not only hear the Truth, pay a decent respect to it, and admire its beauties, but also with joy they receive it into good and honest hearts and believe it to be the salvation of their souls. It melts them down, fills their hearts to overflowing, and moves them to obedience.

This much we know to be **fact**. We have tried to see the cause of this fact, but do not claim that we can see it. Nor do we see any particular importance in seeing the cause, but we ought to turn the **fact to account**. How can this be done? Paul has a period, or state of things, that he styles *in season*, and another that he styles *out of season*. There is a time to sow and a time to reap, a time to dress the vineyard and a time to gather the fruit. These periods, when the hearts of the people are open, are the harvest times—the

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time for gathering in the ripe grain ready for the harvest—for turning sinners to the Lord. No matter about the cause of it; there is the **opportunity**, and we should be ready and go into the harvest and gather precious souls into the fold of Christ.

Never mind explaining **how** the Lord opened the heart of Lydia so she attended to the words spoken by Paul, nor **how** the Lord

now is opening the hearts of the people in our day. It is enough for the man of God to find that the hearts of the people **are open**, and that they will attend to the Word of the Lord when it is spoken. Go on and speak to them the Word of the Lord—the words of everlasting life—turn them to God and save them.

Deceased

Marriage and the “Common Law” Union

Bill Jackson

So much has been discussed over these last several years about God’s marriage law. There seems to be no end to the question, and we should always be grateful that men want to know the Truth about it. A question now is most interesting—and especially appropriate—in this day of the *live-in* arrangement (which is still fornication) and “palimony” lawsuits. The question is this: “Most states will recognize that, without benefit of legalization, a couple living together for a certain length of time become ‘married’ through virtue of common law. Does God also recognize this as ‘marriage?’”

We have no hesitancy in stating that **God does not!** When the couple moved into their relationship, they became fornicators and they continue in fornication by living together. Paul said it: “They lived in such” (Col. 3:5-7). Now according to civil law in many places, **if a couple fornicates for a certain period of time, the law will recognize that as marriage.** That determination is made as regards rights, support, responsibility, and such like. But let us remember that civil law

and civil courts can pronounce many things to be *marriage* when God does not do so and courts can also “free one with right to remarry” when God gives no such remarriage right.

The simple fact is that fornication, engaged in for two years, ten years, thirty years, or a lifetime, does not, **presto** become blessed by God. Perhaps some who live in such unions develop love for one another, intend to remain together, and intend to have the essence of an actual marriage. But it is still a **sinful** relationship. Should we have an opportunity to advise such couples, it would be for them to cease their fornication and conform to the legal requirements of civil law and God’s law for parties entering into marriage. The main point is that the sin of fornication (or any other sin) does not lose its sinfulness with the passing of time. Sinfulness, for the years of one’s life here, if not corrected, will still be sinfulness in the Day of Judgment (Rev. 21:8).

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Jim Moses (Dot Brantley's brother)
Billy Tom Muldoon (Pam Busch's
 cousin)
Stephen Taylor (Pam Busch's cousin's
 husband)

Please Remember

June 30

Fifth Sunday Dinner; singing and
a devotional service at 1:00 pm.

God's Plan of Salvation

HearRomans 10:17
BelieveMark 16:16
RepentLuke 13:3, 5
ConfessRomans 10:9-10
BaptismActs 2:38
Be Faithful1 Corinthians 15:58



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Christ Has All Religious Authority

Michael Hatcher

We generally recognize the need for a standard. It would cause mass confusion if each person was allowed to set his own standard as to measurements (how long is one foot or the area of one acre, etc.), weights (how much is one pound or one ounce, etc.), and other areas of our lives. Religiously we have such a standard. Man has not been given the right to do as each one pleases. In the days of the Judges it often states, “In those days *there was* no king in Israel, *but* every man did *that which was* right in his own eyes” (Jud. 17:6; cf. 18:1; 19:1; 21:25). Because each tried to do that which was right in their own eyes, God would send an oppressing nation upon them. A great question for each of us today concerns our religious standard: What is our religious standard?

The Bible establishes that Christ and His Word is that standard of religious

authority for all men today. After His resurrection, Jesus informs His disciples, “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Mat. 28:18). He is claiming for Himself all religious authority (both in heaven and on earth). Paul adds that God “hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:22-23). Headship denotes authority. Since Christ is the head of the church, and headship denotes authority; Christ is the sole authority relating to the church. Additionally, since Christ is in heaven, and He is the one who is head of the church, there are no earthly headquarters for Christ’s church. Any religious group which claims to have headquarters here on earth cannot

be the church which Christ built (Mat. 16:18) and which He is going to save (Eph. 5:23).

The authority of Christ in religious matters resides in His Words. Jesus said:

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. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I

speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak (John 12:48-50).

Those words of Christ are found in the New Testament, and it is the New Testament which will judge each one of us on the last day. "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel" (Rom. 2:16). Let us realize that Christ has all religious authority and make sure that all we do religiously is in harmony with what He has revealed and authorized within the pages of the Bible.

Pensacola, FL

Forgiveness—Without Repentance?

Guy N. Woods

Children of God should love all men, even their enemies, and when they repent, forgive them. Occasionally, I am asked if it is our duty to forgive those who sin against us when they neither ask for nor desire forgiveness. It is not only **not** our duty to do so, were we so disposed, but it is an utter impossibility.

The question recurs because many people persist in disregarding what the Scriptures teach is involved in genuine repentance and by substituting their concept of what they feel forgiveness should include. Those who do this imply, whether they intend to or not, that forgiveness is simply the cancellation of all bitter, revengeful, and uncharitable feelings toward those who sin against us, and the substitution of a disposition of kindness, love, and warm regard for the offending one or ones—a disposition, they urge, which

should always be characteristic of faithful Christians.

But many devoted and dedicated disciples of the Lord never experience bitter, revengeful, and uncharitable feelings toward those who sin against them; however, cruel and heartless such actions may have been. This attitude of a kind disposition is not forgiveness anyway. God never entertains "bitter, revengeful, and uncharitable" feelings toward even the most vile of sinners, but He forgives only those who repent.

Our Lord, in the shadows of Gethsemane, prayed for those who hated Him so much they sought and obtained His execution, but He did not forgive them until they repented. Amid the agonies of the cross, He said to His Father, "forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34), a petition not unconditional in nature, since by His own

words first uttered in the Great Commission (Mark 16:15-16) and later applied by Peter it was intent that pardon be bestowed only on the basis of repentance and obedience to the commandments He gave (Acts 2:36-38).

The words *remission* and *forgiveness* often translate to the same Greek word *aphesis*, the

meaning of which is “release,” and “sending of sins away,” and the consequent restoration of the peaceful, cordial, and friendly relationship formerly existing. Unless the offender wants this “peaceful, cordial, friendly” relationship, it is impossible for the offended to affect it, however much he may desire and seek it. It is this point people often say, “Yes, but we must be ready to forgive always,” as indeed we ought, but it should be recognized that such readiness is not forgiveness. Our Lord made crystal clear our obligation in all such cases when He said:

Take heed to yourselves: if thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he sin against thee seven times in the day, and seven times turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him (Luke 17:3-4).

Thus, the divine edict is, if one sins against us, we are to rebuke him; and when he repents, we are to forgive him.

It is the duty of all children of God to love all men, even their enemies, actively to seek their good, and pray for their well-being; and, when they repent, to forgive them. It should ever be borne in mind that reconciliation is an integral and essential element of the relationship resulting from penitence on the part of the offender and forgiveness on the offended, and that is occasioned by an adjustment and settlement of all differences that led to the alienation. We must be sure that no action or attitude of ours deters the proper response of others to us because our fellowship here on Earth and our salvation in Heaven are matters intimately involved.

My Soul To Keep

H. L. Gradowith (Tim Smith)

Tis time to lay me down to sleep
I pray the Lord my soul to keep
My stomach grumbles as it swells
But still I know that all is well...

This thing I have cannot be cured
And so it must but be endured;
It comes with worry, fear and pain,
But thus we must endure to gain

All worthwhile goals; there's no escape
If we'd find Heaven's Pearly Gate!
I know my time is not my own
Tis but from my dear Lord on loan...

I'd like to think tis many years
Before my family bows in tears
O'er my dead form, so cold and still,
But that is subject to the will

Of one who's wisdom outshines mine,
On Whose Word all the faithful dine,
My mind is set: my will stands firm,
Forget the box, forget the worm,

For if I live for many years
Down here with all life's joys and fears,
I'll live for Him who died for me
Then live with him eternally!

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- Ray & Tina Foshee Heather Stark
- Cary & Linda Parks
- Wyatt Blancheri (Henry & Paulette
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- Bob Stancliff (Rheba Stancliff's son)
- Sarah Noel (Dot Dodd's friend)
- Don Schleppe (Joyce Johnson's
friend)
- Jim Moses (Dot Brantley's brother)
- Billy Tom Muldoon (Pam Busch's
cousin)

Please Remember

June 30

Fifth Sunday Dinner; singing
and a devotional service at 1:00
pm.

God's Plan of Salvation

- HearRomans 10:17
- BelieveMark 16:16
- RepentLuke 13:3, 5
- ConfessRomans 10:9-10
- BaptismActs 2:38
- Be Faithful1 Corinthians 15:58



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Humanism Effect on the Church

Paul Vaughn

One of the most dangerous teaching affecting the church of Christ today is Humanism. Humanism is a system of doctrines based on mankind's interests and ideals of humanity. They reject God, Jesus, and the Bible. Their basic doctrine is rationalism, the teaching that knowledge is acquired by reason rather than divine revelation; yet, the truth comes only from God. "Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar" (Rom. 3:4). Humanists are not the first "who exchanged the truth of God for the lie" (1:25).

In the Lord's church today most of our young people have abandoned their faith by the time they get out of college. This is a designed effect of humanism. Dr. C. F. Potter, the author of the book *Humanism: A New Religion*, said:

Education is thus a most power ally of Humanism, and every American public school

is a school of Humanism. What can a theistic Sunday school's meeting, for an hour once a week, and teaching only a fraction of children, do to stem the tide of five-day program of humanistic teaching (Hightower).

Dr Potter wrote those words over twenty-five years ago and Christian parents have been witnessing the results of Humanism as their children by legions leave the church.

What must be done to stop this assault on the lives of all Christians? First, it must begin in the Christian home. Parents have the main responsibility for their children. That means Bible study along with a good study of Christian Evidences. Paul said:

And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4).

Dr. Potter was right, an hour a week in Bible school will not stop the attack of

Humanism. Second, the church must take the education of all Christians extremely seriously. Congregations must develop the education programs to combat the enemies around us. Jude said:

Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3).

There should be a plan of education covering basic Christian doctrine, a study of the church, morality, ethics of Jesus, Biblical inspiration, inerrancy of the Bible, plan of salvation, Christian evidences, and verse by verse study of God's Word. This will take one, five, and ten years plan of course of instruction. It is written:

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the

whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand (Eph. 6:10-13).

Putting on the armor of God **will not just happen**. It takes work and a lot of it. Is the church in which you are a member planning for success or just drifting with the wind? Humanist are more than willing to take our young people.

Work Cited

Hightower, Terry. "Who Really Wrote The Bible?" Biblical Inerrancy. Ed. Jerry Moffitt. Gulf Coast Lectures, 1993. 55.

Centerville, TN

Wealth or Poverty

Ken Chumbley

From time to time one hears preachers that teach that all who become Christians will become prosperous, materially, that God will bless them with wealth. On the other hand, there are those who preach that a Christian is one that does not have much of this world's goods and that any Christian who prospers materially is surely not living a faithful life. However, what does the Bible teach?

Nowhere does the Bible condemn wealth. Indeed, faithful men of old were prosperous and wealthy. For instance, Abraham, the friend of God, was certainly a wealthy man.

It is not material things that are wrong in and of themselves, but rather it is how we use them. An old song states that "Money is the root of all evil" and that we should not "contaminate" ourselves with it. However, Paul did not tell Timothy that money was the root of all evil but that the love of money is the root of all evil—"For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Tim. 6:10). We can love money whether we have a little or a lot. It is our atti-

tude towards what we have that is important. If a man's heart is right with God he will seek first the kingdom of God (Mat. 6:33). A wealthy man will use what he has for the furtherance of the kingdom; one who is not wealthy will also use wisely what he has for the furtherance of the Gospel of Christ.

What we need to remember above all is what Paul also told Timothy—"But godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Tim. 6:6). No matter what we have, or have not, materially speaking, our goal should be to seek after godliness and be content to know that we are living our lives in harmony with the will of God. In the very next verse, Paul

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points out to Timothy a vital truth that all, rich or small enter this world with nothing and we carry nothing out (6:7). When the Egyptian Pharaohs died all manner of riches and food was placed in the pyramids that were built to house their tombs, but when these pyramids have been opened up, all of these material things were still there. In verse 8, Paul tells us that we should be content with having food and raiment that is, having that which is necessary for life. When we have these things, we have all that is necessary.

The tragedy is that in this country we have more than the essentials of life, but yet, too often we are not content, we always want more. It seems that the more we have the more that we want. Materialism is devastating to our faith, we need to learn to be truly thankful for that which we have and if the Lord has seen fit to bless us materially, we should use these blessings for His glory.

Deceased

Whose Fault Is It?

A preacher and an atheist barber were walking through the city slums. "This is why I cannot believe in a God of love," said the barber. "If God was as you say, He would not permit such poverty and disease. He would not allow these poor bums to be addicted to drugs and other sinful habits. No, I cannot believe in a God who would permit such things."

The preacher was silent until they met a man who was especially unkempt and filthy, his hair was hanging down his neck and he had a half-inch beard on his face. Said the

preacher, "You can't be a very good barber, or you would not allow a man like that to live in this neighborhood without a haircut and shave." The barber replied sharply: "Why blame me for this man's condition? I can't help it, and besides he has never given me a chance to help him. If he would only come to my shop, I could fix him up." The preacher said, "Then don't blame God for allowing people to continue in sin when He is constantly inviting them to obey the Gospel."

Author Unknown

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Jim Moses (Dot Brantley's brother)
Billy Tom Muldoon (Pam Busch's
cousin)

Please Remember

July 7

Visitation cards for Group 1 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

July 14

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

July 15

Visitation Get-together at 6:00 p.m., in the zone room.

July 21

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out by Ray Foshee.

July 21

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A Soldier or a Captive?

Jim Miller

We have all heard the phrase, “Dumbing Down America.” I have come to believe that this has also gone on in the Lord’s church for many, many years now. The dumbing down of the church has had a frightening effect. Christians used to be able to rattle off book, chapter, and verse for the things they believe without batting an eye. However, today they are lucky if they can even get the verse correct when quoting it.

Over the years congregations have come to rely on the preacher knowing his Bible and teaching it properly and thus many never even cracked open their Bible to see if what is being taught is correct. A failure to study on their own has made it possible for the wolves dressed as sheep to creep in and teach error unchecked.

The adoption of denominational practices is rampant among God’s people because

of the lack of study on the part of the members of the Lord’s church. This is one of the reasons—if not the biggest reason—that churches are falling off into liberal apostasy today.

Here in the northeast where I live, a man is hard pressed to find a sound congregation. It is disheartening to those who seek to worship God in spirit and truth not to be able to worship with others as they should. Well-spoken men who teach nothing but the love and mercy of God and only those things pleasing to the ear have crept in and brought with them denominational practices that look like good things and teach that surely if it is good it is acceptable to God whether there is authority for that given practice or not.

Folks, I am not seeking to win a popularity contest and because I feel we must stand on

the truth of God's Word, no more and no less, I have made many enemies over the years. You cannot be afraid to stand on God's Word because you will lose friends or be called names. You have to put these men out of the church and go back to doing things in the manner God has stated, if you want to be saved and make it to heaven when that time comes.

I Must Go Shopping

One of these days I must go shopping. I am completely out of self-respect. I want to exchange some self-righteousness I picked up the other day for some humility, which, they say, is less expensive and wears better. I want to look at some tolerance which is being used for wraps.

Someone showed me some pretty samples of grace, we are a little low on that and one can never have too much of it. And, by the way, I must try to match some patience that my neighbor wears. It is very becoming to her, and I think it might look well on me. I might try on that little garment of long-suffering. They are displaying it. I never thought I wanted to wear it, but feel myself coming to it.

Also, I must not forget to have my sense of appreciation mended, and look around for some inexpensive everyday goodness. It is surprising how quickly one's goodness is depleted.

Author Unknown

There is no room for apathy and looking the other way in the Lord's church. The idea that you can allow a little error in and then say, "Well I just won't take part in that bit," is unacceptable.

Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump (Gal. 5:7-9).

We all make errors in judgement, but when it is brought to our attention by others or by the Word we have to change. We must stand and be willing to say, "Wait! This is wrong, and we need to stop this now." We cannot worry about losing a friend or being called names or even being ostracized by those around us because we stand on the truth of God's Word. Who here reading this now would trade his soul for popularity for temporary things of this earth? Have we been dumbed down to the point that we no longer can see error at all?

Christians are not called to peace they are called into battle. We have been given armor and the sword. Each and every one of us must determine if he is going to fight the good fight.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand (Eph. 6:12-13).

We need desperately to realize that the wolves are not just at the door but have

entered in and are devouring the truth and making shipwreck of our assemblies. We must teach the truth to those who are blindly following error and bring them back as James said:

Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know,

that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins (Jam. 5:19-20).

Ask yourself, "Am I a soldier or a captive?"
Your soul depends on it.

Gray, ME

The Kind of Teacher Needed

Our Lord does not expect a Bible teacher to please everyone. For example, a teacher cannot please the one who is prejudiced against the truth and at the same time please God. Likewise, the same would be true of a drunkard, liars, false teachers, adulterers, homosexuals, etc. A faithful teacher of God's Word will teach that the above mentioned sins separate one from God and will cause him to be lost unless he obeys the Gospel and lives faithfully before God (Isa. 59:1-2; 1 Cor. 6:9-10). Jesus said, "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets" (Luke 6:26). Like Peter and the other apostles, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

On the other hand, let us notice some things the Lord does expect of us as teachers. He expects us to have deep respect for the Bible. "Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, And a light unto my path" (Psa. 119:105). Students in our classes need to see us as teachers who love God's Word and who have convictions based upon it (119:97; Jude 3). Our Lord wants us to have a sense of urgency in our teaching. We need to prepare and present the best Bible lessons within our capability. Do

not be a lazy teacher! Be ready to teach and treasure the opportunity to help further our Lord's work. Paul said, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (2 Cor. 5:11).

As teachers we need to be living lives that set the proper example for our class and others (Mat. 5:13-16). "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (5:16). You, as a teacher, are being watched. Does your class see you as one who is living a life consistent with God's Word? What about your home life? Do you attend all of the worship services? How about your speech when at work? Someone has said, "Christianity is caught as well as taught."

Also, our Lord wants us to grow and put forth the effort to improve ourselves as teachers of His Word, "But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18). Keep studying, pray, be courageous, and enthusiastic.

Will you not be a faithful teacher of God's Word? **Be** the kind of teacher that pleases God.

Author Unknown

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“There’s a Great Day Coming”

Brad Green

The Bible teaches that Jesus will “come again” (John 14:3) to receive those who have been faithful to Him. Jesus told His apostles that He would return “in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11). Jesus will not set foot on earth; everyone will be received “in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air” (1 The. 4:17). Gathered in the air, “every knee shall bow...and every tongue shall confess to God” (Rom. 14:11), and “he will judge the world in righteousness” (Acts 17:31). The prophet Joel referred to it as “the great and the terrible day of the LORD” (Joel 2:31). According to *Brown, Driver, & Briggs Hebrew Lexicon*, the Day of Judgment will be great regarding magnitude and extent, in intensity, in sound, and in importance. The Last Day will be terrible in the sense that the events will inspire reverence, astonishment, and awe in some, while in others, it will instill

fear and dread. There is a Great Day coming, and the Bible gives us insight into what will make it so *great*.

It Will Be *Great* In Grandeur

The inspired Paul states:

the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord (1 The. 4:16-17).

The eyes of man have never seen the grand spectacle that awaits us on the Last Day. It is a day that is circled on no one’s calendar, for it will “come as a thief in the night” (2 Pet. 3:10). Those who are in the grave will be resurrected and those who are yet alive will have their bodies changed “in the twinkling of an

eye” (1 Cor. 15:52). Every eye will see Jesus in the clouds and every ear will hear the trump of God. No doubt, it will be the greatest event ever witnessed by man.

It Will Be *Great* In Scope

God says that:

we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that **every one** may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad (2 Cor. 5:10).

Every human who has ever lived will participate in this Great and Terrible Day. No other event in history can compare to the greatness in scope of the Great Day of Judgment. Not only will all humans be involved, the earth and all else that remains will be affected as well. We are told that “the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Pet. 3:10). Without controversy, this will also add to the grandeur of that Great Day. On this Day, everything will change and all that exists will be affected.

It Will Be *Great* In Joy,

If We Have Been Obedient

No greater joy can exist than that of knowing that we will spend the rest of eternity in Heaven with God, His Christ, the Holy Spirit, and every faithful saint who has ever lived. The joy that awaits the faithful Christian is expressed by Jesus, “Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: . . . that they may rest from their labours” (Rev. 14:13). What greater joy can one imagine than that of receiving “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. 4:8)? Those who love God

The Willful Absentee

He prefers the friendship of people of the world more than the people of God.

He disdains the Lord’s fellowship, thou he may desperately call for Him when he is on his death bed.

He is not interested in preaching the Gospel to save the lost, in spite of any claims to the contrary.

He does not care about strengthening new converts, thou he would resent being called a “stumbling-block.”

He really does not care about the spiritual welfare of his own children, thou he lavishes educational and social luxuries upon them.

He is more interested in the growth of his lawn than the growth of his soul; more concerned about his golf-swing than his off-spring; more concerned about the jingle of coins in the cash register than the songs of the saints in the meeting house.

And—in spite of all his pretensions otherwise—he does not care about the church, nor his own soul, nor is he interested in going to heaven. (If he is unhappy in worship to God one hour in church, he would be most miserable in giving praise to God continuously in heaven.)

Author Unknown

and keep His commands (John 14:15), will hear Jesus say, “Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant: . . . enter thou into the **joy** of thy lord” (Mat. 25:21).

It Will Be *Great* In Terror
for the Disobedient.

Sadly, for those who “know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power” (2 The. 1:8-9), it shall be a most dreadful Day.

As joyful as the Great Day of the Lord will be for the faithful few (cf. Mat. 7:13-14), it will be just as terrible and frightening for those who are not obedient to God.

The “Great and the Terrible Day of the LORD” is coming. When? No one on earth knows. Heaven is a place prepared by Jesus for those who are willing to prepare themselves to go (John 14:1-3; 2 Pet. 1:10). “Are you ready for that Day to come?”

Lenoir City, TN

Religious Experience

Franklin Camp

Jude speaks of “contending for the faith”—that is, objective faith—the written revelation, upon which personal faith must rest:

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that *ye* should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3).

Any “religious experience” not based upon what God has said is false. One’s “religious experience” must be tested by what God **said**, not by what one **thinks** God “says” through an alleged “religious experience.” Testing what God wills by one’s “religious experience” today is the basis of false religion. Abraham had a “religious experience,” but it was based upon what God said (Gen. 22:1-13). Salvation is a “religious experience” when it is based upon what God said. Worship is a “religious experience,” but it must be based upon what God said (Acts 17).

The Athenians were having a “religious experience,” but it was not acceptable unto God, because it was not based upon revelation. One can find people gathered everywhere in worship engaging in some kind of “religious experience,” but this does not mean that their experience is acceptable to God. Every “religious experience” one has must be in harmony with what the Bible teaches and must rest upon what God said. When one has some kind of *experience* unknown to the Bible, it is false and deceptive—and is not accepted by God.

It is time for men to turn back to the Bible, find out what it teaches, and then act upon it. The action then will be a “religious experience” that harmonizes with what God said. This will be acceptable unto God. Nothing else is or can be.

Deceased

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Marge Williams	Nancy Travis
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Rheba Stancliff	Carla Burleson
Ray Foshee	Tina Foshee
Cary Parks	Linda Parks
Bobbie LaBryer	Heather Stark
Wyatt Blancheri (Henry & Paulette Born's grandson)	
Danielle Diehl (Aleacia Godwin's cousin)	
Bob Stancliff (Rheba Stancliff's son)	
Sarah Noel (Dot Dodd's friend)	
Billy Tom Muldoon (Pam Busch's cousin)	

Sympathy

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Dot Brantley in the death of her brother, Jim Moses, on July 9. Please keep Dot and her family in your prayers.

Restored

Pete Sisil was restored to Christ on July 7. Please keep him in your prayers and offer him encouragement.

Please Remember

July 21

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



BEACON

Vol. XLVIII / No. 29

July 22, 2019

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

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850-455-7595

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The Power of God's Word

Roelf L. Ruffner

The early church of Christ was an evangelistic dynamo. They had God's "power to save"—the Gospel (Rom. 1:16). However, the Gospel was unwritten as yet and needed confirmation. How could their audience be certain that what the early evangelists preached concerning the risen Christ was true? "Then said the high priest, Are these things so?" (Acts 7:1).

God provided a way to *certify* (Gal. 1:11) the Gospel by the miraculous. These miracles were not the so-called *miracles* of today: birth of a baby, a beautiful sunset, recovery from an illness, etc. These were supernatural or acts of God outside the laws of Nature. Their purpose was to confirm the Gospel. "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following" (Mark 16:20).

A case in point is the work of the evangelist Philip among the Samaritans in Acts 8. Because of persecution and Jesus' plan (1:8), Philip ventured out among this race of people which the Jews saw as mongrels. He preached unto them "the word" (8:4); not his word but the Gospel (2 Tim. 4:2) and also "the things concerning the kingdom of God" (Acts 8:12). He did not preach a coming kingdom of Christ (premillennialism) but a present one—the church of Christ, the spiritual kingdom of Christ (Mat. 16:18-20; Luke 17:21; Rom. 14:17).

Philip's message was substantiated by miracles (Acts 8:6-7). Shrieking demons ("unclean spirits") were cast out of their Samaritan hosts. Those paralyzed ("palsies") by disease or accident were made whole. The "lame" (literally, "deprived of a foot"—Thayer) had their feet healed or restored to their bodies (Amputees?).

Notice how the inspired penman and physician Luke carefully delineated between the casting out of demons and the physical healing in Acts 8:7. The translators of the King James Version of the Holy Bible chose to separate them by a colon. Modern-day fake-healers often try to combine their pseudo-exorcism with pseudo-healing, implying that demonic possession went along with illness and physical disability. Luke and the Holy Spirit record that they did not.

The Samaritans knew charlatanism when contrasted with God's power. Simon Magnus had misled them with his trickery for a long time (8:9-11). Now they saw the real power of God and it authenticated Philip's message. Even Simon was amazed by it all ("wondered"—8:13).

Today, we have the confirmed Word in our possession—the New Testament of Jesus Christ. It is filled with eye-witness accounts of miracles and eye-witness reports of the risen Christ. It also contains time tested evidence so we might believe.

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name (John 20:30-31).

It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed (Luke 1:3-4).

The Samaritans came to the only reasonable conclusion they could draw from the miraculous—they obeyed to Gospel of Jesus Christ and were baptized. Notice the moment of obedient soul-saving faith found in *but*: "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 8:12). No longer did they believe in a

Instant Everything

Tim Smith

How do you like living in an instant world? It is not like we have much choice, but we can have an opinion about it. I like the idea of being able to know what is happening on the other side of the world almost as it happens. It sounds good. It seems to hold so much promise. What formerly required weeks or months or years to know can be seen live via satellite now. Instant information. Sometimes, however, instant information is not all it is cracked up to be. Sometimes it is just downright depressing. I am tired of hearing a daily death toll from the Middle East. I am tired of hearing about natural disasters and attempted coups and political intrigue and the like. I am absolutely sick of hearing about who in Hollywood is sleeping with who—in fact, I am about tired of the whole lot of them out there! If only we could have instant information used responsibly...

Deceased

charlatan, because they had seen and heard the truth (John 8:31-32). Even a hardened imposter like Simon “believed also” (Acts 8:13).

That, dear reader, is the true purpose of the miracles of the New Testament—to point us to salvation found only in Jesus Christ. The true wonder is that after two thousand years

these miraculous accounts are still as vibrant and thought provoking as ever. They challenge us to make a decision. Will I believe and obey God or not? “Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed *are* they that have not seen, and *yet* have believed” (John 20:29).

Columbia, TN

Sermon Outlines

The majority of the lessons presented by Michael Hatcher are also in written outline form (PDF). The PDF files can be accessed on our website at:

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Sorely Needed Truth in “Mainstream Churches”

Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

The permanent organization of the church is that of elders, deacons, and members. Elders, with the qualifications, set forth by Paul to Timothy and Titus, to rule by enforcing the teaching of the Word of God; deacons, as assistants to the elders, to serve the church in benevolent ministries; members, subservient to the divine arrangement to work out their salvation, God working in us “to will and to do” as we keep ourselves useful. As for preachers, their humble god-fearing task is to faithfully proclaim the Gospel of Christ, leaving the executive administration of the affairs of the church with the elders where God put it. If this divine plan fails to function, the fault is not with the plan, but with our failure to respect it and work it. The plan is perfect because it is God’s and any substitute will prove a failure

because it is man’s. The organization argument has been concisely stated in one sentence, which is eminently true, and is a safe rule of action, namely: Any organization larger than the local church or smaller than the local church is an unscriptural organization through which to do the work of the church. Indeed, there are methods of doing what is commanded, but they must be the church’s methods and within the scope of the thing commanded. The church has no right to do anything, as a church, that God has not commanded the church to do. Nor does a Christian have the right to do through another organization that which God has commanded the church, as such, to do. Organizations are not methods (*The Bible Banner*, May 1941).

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Please Remember

July 31

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



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BEACON

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Freedom from Tyranny

Lee Moses

In 2009, strange events took place in the streets of Iran. Following the results of an apparently rigged election, numerous people took to the streets to protest the tyranny of their government. They felt that their government did not abide fairly by the law when they claimed election victory before the ballots could have been accurately counted. They felt that their government was being unduly oppressive. As if to affirm those protesting their tyranny of the Iranian government, Ayatollah Khamenei threatened to crack down if protests continue.

What is especially amazing about these protests in Iran is that tyranny and oppression had been standard fare there for decades now, yet protests to this extent had never taken place. It was as if the people of Iran had just woken up to the fact that they were being ruled by tyranny.

Tyranny is defined in the *Oxford American College Dictionary* in the following four ways:

1. Cruel and oppressive government and rule
2. A nation under such cruel and oppressive government
3. Cruel, unreasonable, or arbitrary use of power or control
4. Rule by one who has absolute power without legal right

Would not each of these describe the rule of Satan? He incessantly lies to seek his advantage (John 8:44; cf. Gen. 3:4). He sets himself as the adversary of all, whether his subjects or not, walking about “as a roaring lion, . . . seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5:8). This is cruel and oppressive, and yet it is arbitrary: he does not necessarily look to devour only the most deserving, but who-

ever is most available and accessible. The *nation* under his cruel and oppressive government is the **world**: “We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the evil one” (1 John 5:19—ASV; cf. 2 Cor. 4:4). Yet, Satan does not have legal right to his dominion. He lays claim to that which is of God (Rom. 11:36) and will be eternally punished for his usurpation and other sins (Rev. 20:10).

But when is the world going to stand up against the tyranny to which it has been subject all these centuries? It is as if the people of Iran are just waking up, but when are we

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going to wake up? Even to those professing Christianity, Paul had to say, “Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak *this* to your shame” (1 Cor. 15:34). Through the power of God, the blood of Christ, and the revelations of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 1:16), we not only can protest tyranny, but we can throw down tyranny, at least as far as it extends to us.

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness (Rom. 6:16-18).

Union City, TN

Eternal Life—A Promise

W. Claude Hall

Scriptures should not be arrayed against each other. One should have insight enough into the Scriptures to know there are no contradictions. If the Lord did not give us a perfect revelation, then we have no guide in religion. Infidels are made by preachers oftentimes. For instance, one preacher will proclaim that the Book teaches we have eternal life right now and cannot lose it. The other will stoutly deny this and say we have eternal

life in the world to come. Each reads his proof out of the Bible, and the poor listener cannot tell which is right, hence sometimes goes into unbelief. Who can blame him?

These are a few of the passages referred to as teaching one has eternal life now: “He that believeth on me hath everlasting life” (John 6:47); “He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life” (5:24); “He that believeth in me,

though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die” (11:25-26). There are many more such passages. These all seem to teach that actual possession of eternal life comes here and now.

However, there is another set of Scriptures that seem to teach right the opposite. Here are some of them: “But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time,...and in the world to come eternal life” (Mark 10:30). Paul, in writing to Titus, said, “In hope of eternal life” (Tit. 1:2). One is taught by the Bible that he cannot hope for that which he hath in actuality.

What kind of explanation shall we make of these seeming contradictions? Is it the proper procedure to continue to array these statements against each other? The plan more reasonable to pursue is to find a solution which is reasonable and true. This may be done, for John himself, the one who wrote the former passages, makes the matter plain

“The sun shines and warms and lights us and we have no curiosity to know why this is so; but we ask the reason of all the evil, of pain, and hunger, and mosquitoes and silly people” (Ralph Waldo Emerson). Please do not get caught up in the negatives of life—just count your blessings before counting your troubles and you will have no time for counting the troubles. Try it—you will see! God bless.

*Tim Smith
Deceased*

in his last writings. I have often wondered if he did not read his Gospel in later life and decide that some preachers in later centuries would misinterpret those statements, so he made one more which would forever settle the case with those who would desire a harmony of all Scriptures. He may have done this, but we know the Holy Spirit guided his writing and made his meaning clear. Here is a Scripture which makes both sets of statements relative to eternal life easily understood: “And this is the promise that he hath promised us, *even* eternal life” (1 John 2:25).

There are two ways of having anything—one by promise, and the other in actuality. We first have our wives by promise, then by actuality. We have eternal life by promise. That is the way John said we have it. Paul had it “in hope,” and when we get to the city of God we will have it in actuality. This makes all seemingly contradictory passages clear and plain. All discrepancies disappear.

When John says, “he that believeth hath everlasting life,” that is, of course, nothing but the truth. We do have it, but in which way? We have it in promises. When Paul said he had eternal life in hope, he stated the truth. When Jesus said, “and in the world to come, eternal life,” He spoke of the actual possession of eternal life.

One additional thought is sufficient for this lesson. If one has eternal life in promise, then there is a possibility of being cut off from that promise by unrighteous living. Let us, then, “take heed lest we fall.”

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Please Remember

August 4

Visitation cards for Group 1 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

August 11

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

August 18

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out by Ray Foshee.

August 18

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

August 19

Visitation Get-together at 6:00 p.m., in the zone room.



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August 5, 2019

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Patience

J. Noel Meredith

It has been well said, "Patience is not passive; on the contrary, it is active; it is concentrated strength." Shakespeare said, "How poor are they who have not patience! What wound did ever heal but by degrees?" Home said, "Patience strengthens the spirit, sweetens the temper, stifles anger, extinguishes envy, subdues pride, bridles the tongue, restrains the hand, and tramples upon temptations." An old proverb says, "Patience is power. With time and patience, the mulberry-leaf becomes satin." Jean Rousseau, "Patience is bitter, but its fruit is sweet." Hebrews 10:36 says, "For ye have need of patience, that, having done the will of God, ye may receive the promise." We must be "patient in tribulation" (Rom. 12:12). "Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord." (Jam. 5:7). "They that wait for Jehovah shall renew their strength; they shall

mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint" (Isa. 40:31).

Patience Defined

The Greek noun usually rendered patience in the New Testament is *hupomone*. Thayer says of the word:

In the N.T. the characteristic of a man who is unswerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings (*Greek-English Lexicon* 644).

William Barclay comments on the Greek word:

It is the spirit which can bear things, not simply with resignation, but with blazing hope; it is not the spirit which sits statically enduring in one place, but the spirit which bears things because it knows that these things are leading to a goal of glory; it is not the patience which grimly

waits for the end, but the patience which radiantly hopes for the dawn. It has been called “a masculine constancy under trial” (A New Testament Workbook 60).

Vincent says it is not merely endurance of the inevitable, “but the heroic, brave patience with which a Christian not only bears but contends” (*Word Studies* 1:679). A Greek synonym for *hupomone* is *makrothumia* which is sometimes rendered “patience” but usually is translated “long-suffering.” Patience then in the New Testament is “steadfastness, endurance, bearing up under stress or strain, doing right regardless of circumstances and never giving up.”

Other Words with Patience

To get a fuller understanding of the subject of patience we look at the company it keeps, the words that occurs with it.

1. Patience is used in connection with *tribulation*. Paul says, “but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience” (Rom. 5:3—KJV).
2. Patience is used in connection with *faith*. James 1:3 says, “knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience.”
3. Patience is connected with *hope*. “Remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 The. 1:3). “That through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope” (Rom. 15:4).
4. Patience is connected with *joy*. The Christian is to be “strengthened with

all power, according to the might of his glory, unto all patience and long-suffering with joy” (Col. 1:11).

5. Patience is connected with some goal of *glory*, some greatness which shall be. “to them that by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and incorruption, eternal life” (Rom. 2:7). “Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith” (Heb. 12:1-2). “If we endure, we shall also reign with him” (2 Tim. 2:12).

Examples of Patience

In a survey through the Bible some of the well-know examples of patience are: (1) Job (Jam. 5:11), (2) David (Psa. 40:1), (3) the Prophets (Jam. 5:10), (4) the Farmer (6:7-8), (5) Paul (2 Tim. 3:10), (6) Thessalonians (2 The. 1:4), (7) John (Rev. 1:9), (8) churches at Ephesus and Thyatira (2:3, 10), and (9) the greatest example of all, Jesus Christ. Paul says, “And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patience of Christ” (2 The. 3:5).

Patience of Christ here is to be taken as the subjective genitive, i.e., it means the

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patience which Christ evinced in his trials and exhibited under his unparalleled sufferings” (cf. *Pulpit Commentary* 21:63; *Expository Dictionary* 168; Barnes; etc.).

Peter says,

For what glory is it, if, when ye sin, and are buffeted *for it*, ye shall take it pa-

tiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer *for it*, ye shall take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps (1 Pet. 2:20-21).

Deceased

Has Anyone Seen a Plain Old-Fashioned Sinner Lately?

They are getting mighty hard to find.

If the **prodigal son** were living today (as if he were not) he would not be a sinner. A **Juvenile delinquent**, perhaps; but his **parents** would be to blame for that. “There are no bad boys,” you know. “His wild oats are just youthful exuberance, a normal rebellion against an unjust society. He must be free to adjust positively.” There are no **liars** today. Those fine people are simply extroverts, with imaginative talents that should be properly channeled. They evidence creative ability; their instability is a sign of free uninhabited thought. They may become great poets, lawyers...or preachers!

A **drunkard** is not really a sinner. He has an **inferiority complex**, and make a mechanical adjustment (albeit a liquid one) to the problems of today. Besides—**he is sick**. He beats his wife, starves his children, and is a scourge to society...so he needs our sympathetic understanding.

Adultery may be a sin in far-off slum districts; but not among...movie stars or popular public figures. And do not even mention that word when we get close to home. Here

it is simply a case of **biological maladjustment**. The parents were old fashioned and believed in common decency. His sinning, I mean “mistake,” is a **fault** of modern **society**.

But maybe the **murderer** is a sinner...just maybe. On the other hand, he may be the victim of some traumatic experience. His mother was over protective; he was greatly inhibited. He was never allowed to push his oats off the highchair tray, so now he pushed his wife off the Brooklyn Bridge. Poor fellow!

There may be an element of truth in all these descriptions; but one element very necessary for correction is lacking. We are overlooking the moral-element.

Our generation may need psychiatry...but it **more greatly** needs moral responsibility. We must recognize sin for what it is—**Sin**. We must cease to substitute human presumption for Jesus Christ, the “Great Physician” who takes away the sins of the world. With the Prodigal we must be humble enough to say, “I have sinned.”

Author Unknown

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I Believe God!

Roelf L. Ruffner

The apostle Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, was on board a ship bound for Rome to appeal to Caesar. In the middle of the Mediterranean Sea the ship became caught up in a violent storm which lasted many days. Paul stood before the crew and proclaimed that he had received a message from God by an angel. God told him that no one would lose their life because of the storm. Then Paul exclaims, “Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for **I believe God**, that it shall be even as it was told me” (Acts 27:25).

We should have the type of faith Paul had—a simple, child-like faith based on the unquestioned assurance of God’s Word. When unbelieving men challenge our faith we should answer with the response—“I believe God:”

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an

answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear (1 Pet. 3:15).

I believe God when men say, “Man evolved from lower forms of life by blind chance” or “God used evolution to create man.”

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not **made** of things which do appear (Heb. 11:3).

I believe God when unbelievers say, “The Bible is just another spiritual or philosophy book which men have written.”

All scripture is given by **inspiration** of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16).

I believe God when men say, “All good people will go to Heaven.”

And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that **know not** God, and that **obey not** the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 The. 1:7-8).

I believe God when religionists say, “Just accept Jesus into your heart as your personal Savior and you will be saved” and “After you are saved be baptized when it is convenient.”

Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, **what shall we do?** Then Peter said unto them, **Repent**, and **be baptized** every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ **for the remission of sins**, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:37-38).

I believe God when the denominational world says, “You may worship God anyway you like as long as you are sincere.”

God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him **must** worship *him* **in** spirit and **in** truth (John 4:24).

I believe God when some of my brethren say, “It doesn’t matter how you dress or how you live, as long as you love the Lord.”

I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. **In like manner also**, that women adorn themselves in **modest** apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array (1 Tim. 2:8-9).

Prove all things; **hold fast** that which is good. **Abstain** from all appearance of evil (1 The. 5:21-22).

Do you believe God and His Son? Are you obeying God or obeying men? As my grandmother used to say, “The proof is in the pudding!”

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).

And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and **do it** (Luke 8:21).

Columbia, TN

Whispers

In Romans 1, Paul gives a vivid picture of people who “did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge” (1:28). One of the characteristics of such is those who are *whisperers* (KJV), translated *gossips* in some later translations. Webster states a *gossip* is “A person who habitually reveals personal or sensa-

tional facts; as well as rumor or report of an intimate nature.”

Whisperers or gossips are doing the same thing as those described in the Bible as “backbiters, slanderers, talebearers, and evil speakers,” only perhaps to a greater degree of secrecy. In Proverbs 20:19, Solomon

declared; “He that goeth about *as* a talebearer revealeth secrets: Therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips.”

This refraining from such individuals in the world would not be overly difficult, but what if they are in the church? Paul was reluctant to return to the church at Corinth, this being one of the reasons, among others. (2 Cor. 12:20). Brethren, people in the Lord’s church who gossip are sinning and are not the Lord’s people (Psa. 15:1-3; 1 Pet. 3:10). People who gossip are disobeying the commandment of God, “Speak not evil one of another, brethren” (Jam. 4:11). God’s people are those who obey God’s will concerning telling things about others (Pro. 11:13; Eph. 4:29-31). They are the ones who, when they have aught against a brother, go to him or

her first to settle the matter (Pro. 25:9; Mat. 18:15-17).

The child of God is only too aware of what sin can do to himself and others, and gossip is no exception. It separates friends (Pro. 16:28), it mars reputations (Mat. 11:19; Acts 24:5), it makes one a worker for Satan (Rev. 12:10), and unless it is repented of, causes one to be lost (Psa. 101:5; Rom. 6:23).

The Lord’s church or body can only be as strong as its members. The Lord’s church at _____ will never be the power it should until every man, woman, and child in the Lord’s church at _____ follows the advice of the inspired pen of Solomon. “Where no wood is, *there* the fire goeth out: So where *there is* no talebearer, the strife ceaseth” (Pro. 26:20).

Author Unknown

The Christian—Part of the “In” Group According to Ephesians

Paul’s important phrase “in Christ,” or its equivalent, appears about thirty-five times in Ephesians. The believer is:

- in Christ (1:1),
- in the heavenly places in Christ (1:3),
- chosen in Him (1:4),
- adopted through Christ (1:5),
- in the Beloved (1:6),
- redeemed in Him (1:7),
- given an inheritance in Him (1:11),
- trusting in Him (1:12),
- sealed in Him (1:13),
- made alive together with Christ (2:5),
- raised and seated with Him (2:6),

- created in Christ (2:10),
- brought near, by His blood (2:13),
- growing in Christ (2:21),
- partaker of the promise in Christ (3:6),
- and given access through faith in Him (3:12).

Now, would you not agree that all of this wealth is worth a walking and talking faith?

Author Unknown

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Billy Tom Muldoon (Pam Busch's cousin)	
Doug Myrick (Terri Myrick's husband)	
Randall Johnson (Joyce Johnson's husband)	

Please Remember

August 18

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

August 18

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

August 19

Visitation Get-together at 6:00 p.m., in the zone room.



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Forgetting God

Brad Green

Man is sometimes forgetful, but it seems outlandish to think that man could forget God. God is the Creator of the universe (Gen. 1), everything in it (Exo. 20:11), and “The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament sheweth his handywork” (Psa. 19:1). Despite all of this, the Bible teaches that man can and will forget God. Moses, by inspiration, writes:

Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day (Deu. 8:11).

Though many know that God exists, by not “keeping his commandments,” they forget Him. The word translated *forget* is from a Hebrew word meaning “to be oblivious of” due to a lack of memory or attention (Strong’s), “to ignore,” or “to cease to care”

(Thayer’s). The majority of folks who forget God still remember that He is, but either (1) stop paying attention to God’s Word, (2) ignore God’s Word, or (3) cease to care about what God says. The Bible teaches that there is only one way by which man can develop and strengthen his faith—“by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). When one stops hearing God’s Word, he forgets God. The apostle Paul exhorts, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). When one ceases to study, he forgets God. In Jesus’ parable of the sower, the seed (i.e., the Word of God—Luke 8:11)

which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of *this* life, and

bring no fruit to perfection. But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep *it*, and bring forth fruit with patience (8:14-15).

Many have tended to the *cares* of the world while ceasing to care about the Word of God. God, through His prophet Hosea, laments, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: Because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: Seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God” (Hos. 4:6). To forget God’s commands is to forget God Himself.

God warns us of several things that can lead to forgetfulness, which, if heeded, can keep us from straying down that destructive path. First, God warns that man can become forgetful during times of **prosperity** (Deu. 8:7-11). During such times, man is tempted to say, “Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, *and* be merry” (Luke 12:19) and forget about the condition of his soul (12:20). Many in the church have propped their feet up in the recliner and have relegated their duties of evangelism, edification, and benevolence to writing a check to some group claiming to do the job on their behalf. God says, “Woe to them *that are* at ease in Zion” (Amos 6:1).

Second, man is warned that **pride** can lead him to forget God (Deu. 8:12-17). Many boast of their deeds and accomplishments and say in their heart, “My power and the might of *mine* hand hath gotten me this wealth” (8:17). When one forgets that “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above,

and cometh down from the Father of lights” (Jam. 1:17), he forgets God.

Third, we are warned not to put **anyone or anything above** God, lest we forget Him (Deu. 8:19). The *gods* (emphasis on the lower case “g”) that man has created to serve have changed in form and idea and are different in every age and in every person. Today, some worship the mighty dollar; others worship that which the dollar can buy. Some have placed their loyalty in “brother so and so” (see Acts 5:29), while others worship the god—self. Many have chosen to worship according to their own “will” (Col. 2:23) and devise their own plans of salvation (Eph. 2:8-9). Many have replaced God’s plan of salvation, which is “by grace” and “through faith” and “once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3), with a plan devised by “yourselves” (Eph. 2:8). In so doing, they have forgotten God.

Though many will scoff at the idea, by not keeping God’s commandments, they have forgotten God. They may claim to know Him and may even profess to have Him in their hearts, but if men do not obey God’s commands, ignore or cease to care about God’s Word, they have forgotten God. Let us heed the warnings—study God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15), humble ourselves before God (1 Pet. 5:6), and constantly put Him first in our lives.

Lenoir City, TN

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Artificial Worship

G. K. Wallace

Artificial respiration is well-known to the average household in America. If a heart failure is apparent, artificial means may save a life. How may our hearts be stimulated? Should we leave the Word of God for man-made procedures? Years ago, I sat in an audience of several hundred brethren and listened to the preacher talk about the Lord's Supper. He laughed and joked about "three songs and a prayer." He ranted about formality, routine, and form. He suggested that worship could be made meaningful by simply changing procedure. He thought weak hearts could be revived by artificial means. We know that the routine does not stimulate the Bible heart.

For over sixty-five years I have been taking the Lord's Supper, and it never occurred to

me that I might be engaging in a ritual. My mind, at the Lord's Table, goes back over two thousand years to the death of Christ. It never dawned on me that the order of the worship had anything to do with the solemnity of the Lord's Supper. For over thirty years I have visited the graves of my mother and father. I need no artificial means to stir memories at the graveside. It makes no difference at which gate I enter the cemetery or the direction I approach the graves. The denominations use candles, shout and burn incense, use quartets and solos, testify, and play the organ. Paul said, "let a man examine himself, and so let him eat" (1 Cor. 11:28). May God have mercy on us if we have to have some *form* to stir our memories.

Deceased

The Family Meal

In her book, *The Surprising Power of Family Meals* (Steer Forth Press, 2005), Miriam Weinstein explains that eating ordinary, average, everyday supper with your family is strongly linked to lower incidents of bad outcomes such as teenage drug and alcohol use, and to good qualities like emotional stability. It correlates with kindergartners being better prepared to learn to read. (It even trumps getting read to.) Regular family supper helps keep kids out of hospitals. It discourages both obesity and eating disorders. It supports your staying more con-

nected to your extended family, your ethnic heritage, your community of faith.

The 2003 survey indicated that children and teens who share dinner with their families five or more nights a week were 32% likelier never to have tried cigarettes, 45% likelier to have never tried alcohol, and 24% likelier never to have smoked marijuana. "Those who eat lots of family dinners are almost twice as likely to get A's in school as their classmates who rarely eat as a family," Weinstein added.

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Please Remember

September 1

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September 8

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

September 8

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The Longing For “New” Things

Bill Jackson

It was said of the men of Athens, and strangers located there, that they “spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing” (Acts 17:21). With that appetite for something new, they allowed Paul to speak to them. For once, some were completely satisfied, desiring to hear no more from Paul; they were those who mocked the message (17:32).

The things we possess and use, of a material sort, are affected by time and there is a need to replace them. There is indeed a proper desire for new things that, within the bounds of our faithfulness to God and our stewardship, does not displease God. In furthering our desires along those lines, we obtain new homes, new automobiles, new clothes, etc. Even fulfilling those desires pose a danger, if all is not kept within the limits

spirituality demands. The ruling principle in our lives must be the seeking first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness of God, and the material needs of this life will come as a matter of course (Mat. 6:33).

The tendency, though, is that man will tire of God’s things, and will give in to a desire for constant change and constant newness in religious matters. Such has been a desire born, not in heaven, but in the other region. Adam and Eve ventured into new areas, and through their sin brought awful consequences upon mankind. Israel, in the brief absence of Moses, turned to fashion and serve a new god. The history of that nation is the history of instances of faithfulness, followed by instances of turning toward the new, the different—the change men desired. Always, punishment from God followed.

In just such a time, with men possessed of the longing for newness, the prophet Jeremiah made the appeal:

Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where *is* the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls (Jer. 6:16).

He follows that by the declaration that, “they said, We will not walk *therein*.” We notice these points from this very great passage: (1) Man will travel, walk in some path. All men are responsible and accountable before God concerning their lives and conduct. (2) Man’s will enters the picture, for man is a creature with freedom of will, and can, and will, make the determination as to the way he walks. (3) The call is for man to walk in the **old paths**—the paths of God, the paths established and set forth from old. (4) God reveals to us that this is the **good way**. There are many false ways, hurtful ways, non-spiritual ways. God reveals to man that which is good (Mic. 6:8). The ways of God are the ways of good. And, (5) at the end of this way is salvation—rest for the soul!

As was true in Jeremiah’s wording, it has been true of mankind in all of his history on this planet. He, possessed with a desire for the new and different, turns from the ways set forth by God. This is exactly why brethren

will turn to denominationalism for the borrowing of its means and methods, but also explains why, in time, they begin to pick up and use denominational theology. In all of it, we find a growing discontent with the things of God, and thus, the cry is, “Give us something new, something different!”

Behind this, of course, is defective faith. Men with proper faith always have the desire toward God and His Word that says, “Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth.” And such will always want to take great care to abide by the pattern. They have no desire to re-do, alter and change the pattern. They do not desire to change the plan of salvation, the New Testament pattern of worship, church organization, etc., nor do they *tire* of abiding by the patterns set forth by God.

It is decidedly a non-spiritual attitude that desires *newness* to the extent that there is developed a change from God’s will that men might be pleased. The very idea of those proposing to belong to God, and then developing a desire of “newness at any price,” is completely contradictory. It is a sad time in spiritual Israel when so many of our people can be satisfied with so little Bible in the congregations’ teaching and preaching work and can be pleased with entertainment and social activities because such, in its departure from the Word, is *new*. Indeed, Jeremiah’s words are so appropriate in this day, and this very hour: “ask for the old paths...and walk therein!” We shall lose our souls if we turn from those paths in the quest for constant newness.

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On Things That Are Empty and Need to Be Filled

Franklin Camp

Empty Pulpits

The Bible is a revelation from God containing the mind of God (1 Cor. 2:10-13). It contains the thoughts and ways of God (Isa. 55:8). The purpose of preaching is to proclaim the Bible. When the great fundamental truths of the Bible are ignored and the wisdom of men is substituted for the wisdom of God, preaching is empty. The very word for preaching in 1 Corinthians 2 refers not to the delivery of the sermon, but to its content. Preaching that does not deal with what the Bible says about sin, faith, repentance, confession, baptism, love, hope, the church, worship, Christian living, falsehood, and error is just an empty form. A great amount of the emptiness in religion can be traced to empty preaching. We can never cure the empty hearts and lives until we fill the pulpit with Bible preaching again.

Empty Faith

Much that goes for faith today is only a shell, empty of all contents, for it is without any Bible basis. Paul uses *vain* again in verse 17 of this same chapter (2 Cor. 15). “Your

faith is vain,” but *vain* here does not come from the same Greek word as the one in verse 14. The word used here means “wanting in results, fruitless, futile.”

Empty Worship

Gimmicks are not the solution to the problem. Preachers are in the lead in trying to think up something new to try to make “worship meaningful.” Holding hands, turning out the lights, chain prayers, and women leading will not produce faith and no worship will ever be anything but empty that is not worship “in faith.” One cannot get “nigh unto God with his mouth, nor honor God with his lips, while his heart is far from God.” The doctrines of men, substitutes for Bible preaching, will not create a faith that is necessary for spiritual worship. Faith is not magic. It is Bible based and only a Bible faith gives meaning to worship.

Empty Lives

A faith is only a shell cannot make a life that is full. To expect satisfaction in living from a dead faith is to expect the impossible. One hour sitting on a pew on Sunday morning is the outcome of empty faith. It leaves life empty on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. The round starts over again if one happens to feel like making it for the one hour on [the next] Sunday. Such lives will be empty in time and eternity. This is the root of empty lives.

Sermon Outlines

The majority of the lessons presented by Michael Hatcher are also in written outline form (PDF). Which can be accessed on our website at:

<http://www.bellviewcoc.com/sermons.html>

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September 8

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Back to School

Ken Chumbley

By now all of the public schools in the area are now in session for the new school year. Also, it will not be long before those who will be attending college and university will be back in school. For some of the younger ones, they are just starting to climb the ladder to educational success. Others are entering upon their senior year and looking forward to graduation, either from high school or college next spring.

As Christians, we should, as it were, always be *in school*. We cannot take the summer off and be pleasing to God. Even when we are away from home on vacation, we need to be faithful in our attendance and take time to worship with the Lord's people. Also, we cannot afford to cast aside the Lord's dress codes and join those who will flaunt their bodies wearing clothing that leaves very little to the imagination!

We also need to remember that in the Lord's school of learning, there is no graduation in this life. School is always in session and we need to be continuing, as children of God, to learn more of the Lord's ways and Word. When we were living in Texas, there were many who had been members of the Lord's body who had retired and made their homes in the area and a large number of these must have believed they had graduated for they rarely, if ever, darkened the doors of a congregation of the Lord's people. Even the great apostle Paul did not think that in this life he had graduated from the school of Christ for he wrote:

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not

myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing (Phi. 3:12-16).

He continued to “press toward the mark.” Some years ago I came across a preacher who said that it was pointless for him to go to a Gospel Meeting as he knew all that he needed to know. How sadly mistaken he was!

As God’s children, we are exhorted to be diligent in our study of the Word of God: “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). Let us then “apply *our* hearts unto wisdom” (Psa. 90:12). We should seek to be in attendance any time that the Lord’s people

meet whether in worship or Bible Study that we might “grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18).

However, if we remain faithful to God throughout this life, we will “graduate to glory.” At the end of his earthly sojourn, the apostle Paul wrote the following words to Timothy, his son in the faith:

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).

When we come to the end of our earthly sojourn will you be able, along with Paul, to make that statement? If we have been faithful and diligent in His service, we will. May we always be making that preparation so when the Lord calls our name will be on the roll of graduates in the book of life.

Deceased

The All Powerful Gospel

Thomas F. Eaves, Sr.

God’s Word was given to man by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16). First Corinthians 2:10-13 tells us how. Paul says that the inspired Word furnishes man completely unto every good work (2 Tim. 3:17), while Peter informs us that God’s divine

power hath granted unto us all things which pertain unto life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3). This inspired Word is all powerful (Heb. 4:12) and when obeyed, will save man from his sins (Rom. 1:16; Jam. 1:21; 1 Pet. 1:22-23). To obtain salvation, man must be obedient to the

Word (Heb. 5:8-9). When sinful man rejects the Gospel, the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16), there is nothing else to offer.

On one occasion a rich (Mark 10:22), young (Mat. 19:20), ruler (Luke 18:18) came to Jesus asking Him the greatest question man can ask, “Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” (Mark 10:17)? Because the young man lived under the law of Moses the Master referred him to the teaching of Moses (10:19). The ruler replied, “Teacher, all these things have I observed from my youth” (10:20). Jesus did not challenge or deny the statement, but loving him (10:21) told him, “One thing thou lackest: go, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me” (10:21). Upon receiving the answer to his question (10:17) the rich young ruler’s “countenance fell...and he went away sorrowful: for he was one that had great possessions” (10:22).

The great lesson from this incident (in the life of our Lord) is that when the question

had been asked, the answer given and rejected, Jesus stood and watched the young man walk away lost. Jesus did not call him back and change his instructions so the terms would be acceptable. After the terms of divine inspiration had been given, the choice was the ruler’s: obey and be saved, reject and be lost.

The Word given by inspiration cannot be changed by man or for man (1 Cor. 4:6; 2 John 9; Rev. 22:18-19). Whether it concerns the way of salvation, discipline, marriage, divorce and remarriage, instrumental music in worship, purity of life, etc., God’s Word will be the standard of judgment (John 12:48-49).

When men reject the Word of God there is nothing else to offer. To change God’s Word or make man’s word authority in religion is to lead man into perdition (Jer. 10:23; Pro. 14:12; Mat. 15:7-9).

It is the Word of God only, and only the Word of God that can lead man unto salvation.

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Courtesy

Tim Smith

From time to time in these short articles I have written about courtesy, or rather, the lack of it. This is such a time. Have you noticed that people are not as courteous as we once were? I notice it almost every time I go to the grocery store. The clerks do not smile. The stockers do not smile—and you better not ask them to show you where something is! The only “thank you” you get is the

one in the script the cashiers are required to recite just as they hand you the receipt. While this is not true of every grocery store employee, it seems to be true of those who have waited on me of late. I hope that those of us who are Christians remember the lessons our grandmothers taught us in this respect!

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Randall Johnson (Joyce Johnson's husband)	

Sympathy

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Tina Foshee and her family in the death of her beloved husband, Ray, who passed from this life on August 27. Ray and Tina were baptized into Christ on August 14, 1989 and placed membership with the Bellview Church of Christ. Ray will be missed by his family, friends, and the Bellview congregation. Please keep Tina and her family in your prayers.



BEACON

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Jesus Is the Answer

Charles Pogue

Man's life is short and full of trouble (Job 14:1). There are disappointments, grievances, and out and out heartaches in this life. How does one deal with such difficulties? People attempt many different man-made resolutions. Some drown their troubles in drugs, some consume themselves with pleasure, or the pursuit of wealth and possessions. Some, seek the assistance of humanly trained individuals who do not have the answer to their own problems, much less those of anyone else.

There is only one answer to life's troubles and that is Jesus Christ. If an individual has the assurance of eternal life in the grandeur of heaven and in the presence of God, why should he be destroyed by the difficulties and sorrows of the here and now. Jesus said in just a few words, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father,

but by me" (John 14:6). If the answer to this life's problems is to take care of the concerns about the next one, and it is, then Jesus is the answer.

Jesus stated, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly" (10:10). When, in that passage, Jesus says that He lays down His life for the sheep, we know that the life He is referring to is primarily eternal life. If, however, one does not enter in by Him, who stated in verse 7 that he is the door of the sheep, there is no resolution for the eternal punishment in hell, and certainly none for the difficulties in this world.

The child of God has a blessed privilege that the world does not have. With wonderful words of life, Peter describes that privilege. "Humble yourselves therefore under

the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (1 Pet. 5:6-7). The Lord Jesus took our sins upon Himself when He went to the cross, and He will bear our anxieties of this life if we are just willing to let Him do it His way.

Again, the Christ said, “Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mat. 20:28). This promise takes us back to Matthew 11.

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 (11:28-30).

There is no way the yoke and burden of the Lord compares to the weight that the burdens of this life present to us. Why not then, exchange the heavy load of this life for the light one He has, and accept the rest that He alone can give?

To receive the answer to this life’s problems, and to avoid those that will come to be lost in the next one is not complicated. Believing on Him, repenting of sins, confessing His name, being baptized for the remission of sins, and living faithfully to Him (John 8:24; Luke 13:3; Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 2:38; Rev. 2:10) is much easier than bearing alone the problems in this world and being tormented in the next. Jesus is the answer!

Beeville, TX

Evidence of Salvation

E. M. Borden

All the evidence that we have that God has pardoned our sins is that He tells us to do certain things and promises to save us when we do them. Knowing that God is not slack concerning His promises (2 Pet. 3:9), when we have obeyed His commandments, we trust in His promises for salvation. We believe that He has saved us because He said He would. We do not know when we are pardoned except as God has promised in His Word.

We grant that a man feels good when he is saved, but the evidence of that salvation is what makes him feel good. Since the evidence comes before the feeling, how can the

feeling be the evidence? Remission of sins takes place in heaven and not in us, and there is only one way to find out that we are pardoned. That is by the promises of God.

I cannot any more feel salvation from my sins, than I can feel God writing my name in the Lamb’s Book of Life in heaven. Jesus says, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). Here, salvation is promised to the baptized believer. If we are baptized believers, we have God’s promise that our sins are pardoned.

I have had men tell me that they would not give their feelings for all of the New Testaments in the world. They pat themselves

on the breast and say, “I’ve got it right in here.” I have had them try to tell me how they were converted, but it would all wind up in *feelings*.

A man will feel good when he repents, and he will feel good when he gets to where God has promised to meet and bless him.

The evidence of pardon will cause a man to feel good, but feeling is not the evidence. In this case, good feeling is the result of evidence. When we obey the commands, we have the promise of Jesus that we will be saved.

Deceased

Leaving Father’s Religion

A man operated a general store. On his countertop, he had nailed a yardstick. He measured yard goods, rope, etc., by that measuring stick. Finally, the man died, and his son moved back and took over the operation of the little store. One day, an employee of the Department of Weights and Measures came by, examined his *yardstick* and pronounced it a full inch less than a yard in length. All those years the old gentleman had honestly thought that his measuring stick was accurate—but he was wrong. His honesty did not make him right.

Now the son was faced with a decision. He could refuse to admit his father was wrong and, therefore, be wrong himself. Or, he could say, “My father honestly thought he was right. I now know something my father didn’t know. If I don’t live up to the knowledge I have I will not be as honest as he was.” (No doubt, most people would make the second decision.)

Strange as it may seem, in religion many people reason differently. Some learn “the way of God more accurately” than their parents. However, they refuse to make any changes from their parents’ religion because they fear any change would cast upon the mother and father an unfavorable reflection.

Let us say that man’s God-fearing parents taught him to reverence the Bible. Yet, they were misinformed upon some vital points. His parents were honest. If they had understood the truth as he does, would they not have obeyed it? If he turns his back upon recognized truth in the Bible, is he as honest as they?

Our parents cannot save our souls. Christ is our only Savior. Have you really compared your religion with the Bible? Remember, Christ will be your judge, not your parents!

Author Unknown

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Louise Billiot	
Wyatt Blancheri (Henry & Paulette Born's grandson)	
John Godwin (Aleacia Godwin's husband)	
Bob Stancliff (Rheba Stancliff's son)	
Billy Tom Muldoon (Pam Busch's cousin)	
Doug Myrick (Terri Myrick's husband)	

Please Remember

September 15

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

September 15

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

September 16

Visitation Get-together at 6:00 p.m., in the zone room.

September 29

Fifth Sunday Dinner; singing and a devotional service at 1:00 pm.



BEACON

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Jesus Said One Thing, But Many Want Something Else: Looking at Luke 24:47

Johnny Oxendine

When we tell others that we are a Bible-abiding people, they want to know what that means. If we explain that we are trying to do what the Bible instructs, to teach others of Jesus, and to lead lives worthy of the Gospel, they may not be hearing exactly what they want to hear. Many people today will say they are looking for God, but what they really want is for someone to portray Him in a way that leaves out a lot of the Bible.

Today, we are in a sugar-laced world of “group-hugs,” “everyone is OK” or “a *Christian*,” or has a “disease.” There is little accountability expected or responsibility taken for actions (regardless of their effects), and to try to show how God makes man righteous (through the Gospel!) runs counter to the prevailing winds of “how can

He say He loves me if He won’t let me continue in sin?”—God forbid!

When Jesus was talking to the men of Emmaus, He had to dispel many of their “private interpretations” of the events that had taken place in Jerusalem. Their expectations of Jesus were very far removed from what they needed to be told. They understood very little about Him actually. Once He opened “their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures” (Luke 24:45), He explained that what man needed to know was that “repentance and remission of sins” should be preached in His name.

In Luke 24:21 the men said that they had “trusted” in a certain (incorrect) impression and expectation they had of Jesus. They had leaned unto their own understanding. No

doubt many want a Jesus who is all **love**. Many do not want to know that they are sinners because they do not want to repent (in today's society it is almost asking to be labeled a bigot if you oppose sin). For some *churches* to grow they have to choose between telling the "truth," or avoiding it altogether.

We have seen the evidence of those *churches* that do not tell people to repent—they allow people to wallow in sin. They give a false sense of security, and are not teaching the true Gospel, but "another" gospel (of a different kind). Once that happens, the walls of holiness are sure to tumble, and that *church* is no longer without blemish.

We need not ever be fearful of preaching and teaching the **whole** pure and undefiled Gospel. The example in this chapter show that people who are sincere in their desire

to learn of Jesus, will be rewarded by eyes that are "opened" (24:31) and hearts that burn (24:32) with an appreciation of being more enlightened in their understanding of God's Word (24:45).

There are still people (seekers) who will respond to the Gospel in the same manner as we did and will be thankful for the efforts of others to give them the "whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

Many will still want (and seek) *baby formula* religion (Joel Osteen), but Jesus said we must know and understand repentance and remission of sin.

This means that we understand clearly our responsibility to change our lives (repent) before He will forgive us our sins—it really does not happen any other way.

San Mateo, CA

God's Plan for Religious Unity

Dub Mowery

In the first century there was not all of the division among those who profess Christ as there are today. In that the church is made-up of fallible humans while the apostles were still living there were both error taught and unauthorized practices. Probably the church at Corinth was at the top of the list of digression. Among other things that congregation had factions within it caused by those who

were attempting to show allegiance unto mere humans. The apostle Paul condemned this in no uncertain terms at 1 Corinthians 1:10-13.

Such division is still condemned in the inspired Word of God. Even the very night in which the Son of God was betrayed by Judas Iscariot, our Lord was concerned those who professed Him would become divided. In John 17:20-21:

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and

YouTube Channel
<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

You and I know for a fact that those who profess Christ are divided into hundreds of different religious organizations. The Lord's prayer will not become reality for all who profess Him as long as there is conflicting doctrines among what is referred to as Christendom. Just to agree to disagree will not unite those who profess Christ. You might have a form of union, but not unity. If someone tied the tails of two live cats together, you would have a union but not unity.

What is the answer to this dilemma? It will be necessary for each religious group to cast off its peculiar doctrines and embrace only a "thus saith the Lord," the Bible. Each religious group will not accept the creeds of

others, but all acknowledge the Bible as the inspired Word of God. Our Lord declared in Matthew 15:9, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men." The seven principles of unity acceptable unto the Lord are stated by the apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:3-6:

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

Anything less than all seven of those basic truths will not provide the unity pleasing unto the Lord.

Deceased

Preaching Contrasts

G. K. Wallace

Preachers of yesteryear possessed the conviction that they had a message for the denominational world. Their convictions were so strong that their preaching often led entire congregations out of denominationalism. As a young preacher, in a little town in Oklahoma, I baptized all the members of the Methodist church, save nine. The Methodist preacher stood on the bank of a pond and wept while I baptized his organist.

We have almost lost our convictions concerning the Gospel. We are preaching the restoration plea with an air of apology. There are many today, who would call Paul a "traditionalist" and a "proselytizer." They would

tell him that if Apollos and the people at Ephesus who had accepted John's baptism were sincere and satisfied, he should have let them alone. Suppose Paul had said to these people at Ephesus who had received John's baptism:

It makes no difference what you do just so you are sincere. The baptism of John is as good as any other baptism if your heart is right. You may leave this matter to each individual to act as his conscience directs.

Paul would not dare preach such a thing and neither should we.

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God's Plan of Salvation

- HearRomans 10:17
- BelieveMark 16:16
- Repent.....Luke 13:3, 5
- ConfessRomans 10:9-10
- BaptismActs 2:38
- Be Faithful1 Corinthians 15:58



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Desecrating a Corpse

Lee Moses

Some of you recall the worldwide outrage generated a few years ago when a few United States Marines desecrated the corpses of some foes they had just slain in battle in Afghanistan. The outrage was understandable, and the acts were undoubtedly in poor taste. However, these corpses were those of Taliban militants, known for their numerous intentional atrocities against innocent civilians, and who had perhaps been involved in killing some of these Marines' comrades. How much greater should the world's outrage be when it is not just a few rogue Marines who desecrate that corpse, but the vast majority of the world participates in its desecration? How much greater should the world's outrage be when the corpse they are desecrating is that of the Son of God, who loved them and gave Himself that they might be saved from eternal damnation? This is

exactly what those do who reject the Gospel of Christ. Of some who were turning away from the Gospel, Scripture warns:

He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? (Heb. 10:28-29).

When people reject the Gospel, they trample the Son of God under their feet. His Deity they mock. His human body which suffered so greatly for them they treat like rubbish. It is by death His body endured that we are delivered from condemnation:

Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law **by the body of Christ**; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God (Rom 7:4).

Elsewhere it is said of those who turn away from the Gospel of Christ that “they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an open shame” (Heb. 6:6). It is public desecration they make of Christ.

When people reject the Gospel, they profane the holy blood of Christ, which enacted the new and “better covenant” (8:6; 9:12-17), and which cleanses the faithfully obedient of their sins (Rev. 1:5; 1 John 1:7). When people reject the Gospel, they add insult to injury by “doing despite unto the Spirit of grace”; that is, they insult the Holy Spirit who offers grace in the Gospel He inspired.

The body of Christ cannot well be called a corpse, because it ceased to be such on the first day of the week following His Friday

crucifixion (Luke 24:1-7, 39-43). But His precious body can still be desecrated, and still commonly is.

Indeed, the rejection of the Gospel of Christ results in desecrating the body of someone wholly innocent: “[Jesus] did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth” (1 Pet. 2:22). It is the vast majority of the world who participates in the rejection; Jesus said, “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before *it hated* you” (John 15:18; cf. Mat. 7:13-14; 1 John 5:19). It is the Son of God who loved them and gave Himself for them whom they desecrate.

Let us not be among those who desecrate the priceless body of Christ by rejecting the Gospel.

For the time *is come* that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if *it first begin* at us, what shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God? (1 Pet. 4:17).

Union City, TN

The Pharisees Were Offended

The scribes and Pharisees asked Jesus why His disciples transgressed the tradition of the elders by not washing their hands before they ate. Jesus began His reply by putting His own question to them. He asked them, “Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?” (Mat. 15:3). By the use of *also*, Jesus admitted the accuracy of their charge concerning His disciples. Well He should admit its truthfulness, for such action on the disciples’ part

did not constitute sin against God. After pointing out to the accusers how by their traditions they had violated Exodus 20:12, Proverbs 23:22, and verses of like sentiment, our Lord further rebuked them by declaring to their face that they were hypocrites. Indeed, He pointed out to them that 700 years earlier their hypocrisy had been foretold (Isa. 29:3). He concluded His remarks by emphasizing that their worship of God was *vain* (empty, pointless, worthless). This was

the case because the commandments of men governed them and not God's commandments (Mat. 15:1-9).

The Blind Leading the Blind

Following these events, our Lord assembled the people and continued His teaching on these matters. The disciples then came to Christ. They asked Him if He knew that His remarks had offended the Pharisees. With great boldness and candor Jesus made it clear that any religion (including that of the Pharisees) that did not have God's approval did not deserve to exist and would be overthrown. Indeed, the Pharisees were blind guides leading the blind. Their destiny was "the ditch." Then, at the request of the apostle Peter, Jesus explained the parable to them (15:10-20).

With this account before us, let us focus on the concern of the disciples which they expressed to the Lord with the question, "Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended?" (15:12). Our English word *offended* translates the Greek word *skandalizo* of which Vine states that it "signifies to put a snare or stumbling block in the way, always metaphorically in the N. T." (*Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* 130). By the meaning of the word, and the context wherein it is found, it is obvious that the disciples were asking Christ if He realized that His censorious remarks of and to the scribes and Pharisees had served as a hindrance to their belief and acceptance of Him. In His answer to the disciples, Jesus made it exceedingly clear that in obligatory matters God does not practice

that in which some preachers and elders in the church today have become quite proficient, specifically in the ability to water down the Gospel to accommodate about every doctrine known among the sectarian denominational churches. Frankly, whether it be those who bind on men what God in the Bible has not bound (such as the Pharisees), or those who by their doctrines loose men from what God in the Bible binds on them, they all have taught for doctrines the commandments of men. Thus, their worship is vain, not founded by God, and all who follow such blind teachers will end up in a spiritual ditch. Furthermore, if they stay in that ditch until they die, they will lose their soul in a devil's hell. This is all the more reason to uphold the truth and expose error. In view of our study, woe be to those who are *offended*.

Author Unknown

"We all live with the objective of being happy; our lives are all different and yet the same" (Anne Frank). No matter where one lives or what one does; most people just want to live and be happy. If we'd all keep that in a dealing with others, I believe we would get more done and be happier in the process. He wants to be happy, you want to be happy—keep that in mind while dealing with each other. God bless.

Tim Smith

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A Mind to Build and Do Battle

Bill Jackson

One of the more frequently heard complaints in our day is this: “I am so discouraged! We are hearing of church problems and of various threats to the faith. Why can’t we have peace? Why can’t we just concentrate on building, and growing, and forget about the fighting and militancy?” Oh yes, we do hear it! And more are thinking along these lines than just those who will express it verbally. Indeed, we have a good number of both preachers and elders who cry, “Peace, Peace (when there is no peace!),” and some are willing to fashion for themselves a real dream world wherein they tell themselves: “There are no problems!”

Such an attitude is most certainly that of the world of dreams! God’s servants, in all periods of history, have not been able to afford this *world of dreams*, knowing that it is false to the core! Peter spoke of an ongoing threat:

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5:8). The apostle gave no encouragement to the idea that we say, “There are no problems, no dangers.” Rather, he spoke of the same afflictions being evidenced throughout the world.

Occasionally, we will hear from someone who takes the stance that says, “I’m going to build, not do battle. My job will be to upbuild rather than to tear down.” Again, it is, in this case, a *world* fashioned by Satan, and therefore is not of God! The truth of the matter is that God’s servants are to be engaging in the things that build up, and at the same time are doing battle so as to tear down every work that Satan puts forth! Let our minds go to the work being done in Nehemiah’s day. Let us remember that there was so much accomplished for God because they received His instructions, pre-

pared themselves to do the work (Neh. 2:18), and despite all opposition, built the wall! (4:6). The latter part of the verse is powerful: “the people had a mind to work!”

In time of opposition, with the threat of battle as an imminent thing, the building went on as the spears, swords, shields and bows were kept nearby. They intended to build, and they also were prepared to fight, and yes, perhaps to do both at the same time! We find, in Nehemiah 4:16, that half of them worked, while the other half kept the weapons at the ready. The work of God was to go on, and the fight for God was to go on as well. In this regard, we are reminded of the selection of those soldiers who would accompany Gideon to the battle, and their being selected by God based on their conduct at the watering stream—the wise ones taking their water in a position that indicated that they remained alert to any danger, to any move an enemy might make (Jud. 7:4-7).

In the Christian age, and in our very time, we have a charge from God requiring that we both build and do battle. It is an amazing truth that we have the one instrument that accomplishes both ends, when that fact would not be so in endeavors of a purely temporal sort. A sword or spear would be most excellent for running an enemy through but would be poor tools were one trying to saw timber or drive nails. A hammer or screwdriver are exactly fitted for functions of building and repair but would be entirely unsatisfactory in meeting an enemy armed with the bow and ready to shoot forth the fiery darts of an enemy, and useless against

rifle fire from a great distance away. Again, God has provided us a weapon that serves both purposes—yea, serves in all good purposes!

There is never a time when the Word of God is laid aside, and when the saints can rightly decide that no more building, no more growing, no more abounding, etc., needs to be done! Building never ceases! And, there is never a time when the saints of God can decide that Satan no longer exists, his influence is no longer at work, and thus no real opposition abounds, and we can lay the sword, the Word of God (Eph. 6:17), down! Never does that time come! God’s people are to be directed by the wisdom God supplies, and never can we ever be so foolish as to decide that “I will do one of two things: Either build or do battle.” As soon as one decides in that manner, he ceases to be what the Lord wants him to be, for we must do both—now, always, continually.

Interestingly, in 2 Corinthians 10:5, after Paul has stressed so many things of the nature of upbuilding and growth, he points out the need to do battle. He has stressed “abound toward you; that ye...may abound to every good work” (9:8), increasing the fruits of righteousness (9:10), subjection to the Gospel of Christ (9:13), liberal distribution to those in need (9:13), and prayers (9:14). Then, he speaks of a warfare that must continually go on—as long as we live in the flesh. It is a spiritual warfare, and not a carnal one (10:4). It is directed toward battle, toward tearing down—that is, the tearing down of things promotive of Satan and his

devices. It is seen as a pulling down of strongholds and a casting down of imaginations; it is seen as a battle against any and everything Satan uses to fight against the knowledge of God! (10:4-5).

The child of God, either upbuilding or doing battle? That idea is false. The child of God both upbuilds **and** does battle, and he does both continually. He must, if he is to be faithful to God!

Deceased

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The Power of Prayer

A current bulletin of the American Lung Association has an article on “Best Medicine.” Here are a few excerpts:

Who said that laughter is the best medicine? Laughter is good, yet maybe there is something even better. A survey released by the Southern Medical Journal indicates that hospital patients do better when someone prays for them.

A total of 393 such patients were treated at San Francisco General Medical Center’s coronary care unit during 1982-83; the test was non-personal and as scientific as possible.

Patients were chosen randomly. Those doing the praying never met those they were praying for. They were given first names and diagnosis only. The patients themselves did not know who was being prayed for and who wasn’t. Even the conductor of the experiment did not know who was in each group. What happened?

Though patients were as equally ill as it was possible to group them, the half specifically prayed for had fewer episodes of congestive heart failure, pneumonia, or cardiac arrest. In the control group, 12 patients needed lubes inserted for breathing or feeding. In the prayed-for group, no tubes were needed. Nine control group patients required antibiotics; none in the prayed-for group required them. Fifteen percent of patients in the control group needed diuretics, compared to only five percent of the group prayed for.

The Journal of the American Medical Association published a summary of the study—proof surely that prayer is the most powerful force in the universe today. Let us see, what was it the Bible said about that? “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (Jam. 5:16).

Author Unknown

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Bobbie LaBryer	Tina Foshee
Cary Parks	Linda Parks

Louise Billiot

Wyatt Blancheri (Henry & Paulette
Born's grandson)

John Godwin (Aleacia Godwin's
husband)

Bob Stancliff (Rheba Stancliff's
son)

Billy Tom Muldoon (Pam Busch's
cousin)

Doug Myrick (Terri Myrick's
husband)

Restored

Doug Myrick was restored to Christ on September 28. We rejoice with him in his decision. Please keep Doug in your prayers and offer him encouragement.

Please Remember

October 6

Visitation cards for Group 1 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

October 12

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

October 13

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



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Internet Website: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

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The Divine Principle of Free Moral Agency

Franklin Camp

Free moral agency does not mean that there are no limitations. There is no such thing as absolute freedom without any limitations. Someone may say, “Is not God utterly and entirely free without limitations?” My answer is: No. There are some limitations that belong to God. There are certain limitations that characterize Him in some ways. There are some things that God cannot do:

that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have a strong encouragement, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us (Heb. 6:18).

It is impossible for God to lie. The character of God places this limitation upon Him. The character and the nature of God are truth. This limits God and makes it

impossible for Him to lie. His character forbids lying.

Since God’s character places some limitations upon Him, one should not be surprised that, though man is a free moral agent, it is not without some limitations. While man is free to make his choices, there are limitations that apply to him. God determines the consequences of the choices that man makes. One is free to make the choices, but then certain consequences, rewards or curses, come with the choices that one makes.

The prodigal son was free to go to the far country, but he was not free to determine the consequences that come from his choices. There was no way he could make the wrong choice and avoid the difficulties and suffering in the hog pen.

I mentioned that there is a simple side to this subject, but there is also a difficult side. The difficulty comes in being able to reconcile God on the one side and the free moral agency of man on the other. I am convinced that one of the real problems of the religious world today is its failure to reconcile these two. Some of the inconsistencies of the denominational world are tied to its failure to reconcile the sovereignty of God on the one side and the free moral agency of man on the other. The failure to reconcile these leads to all kinds of erroneous doctrines.

No man can defend Calvinism consistently and at the same time uphold the free moral agency of man. Man cannot be free in the Calvinistic system. If before man was ever created God decided that certain ones would be saved (and that without any responsibility on their part) while the non-elect would be lost (and they could do nothing about it) where is the free moral agency of man? He is only a machine that is maneuvered by God. This false doctrine of Calvin-

ism leads to further doctrines that are false which also deny the free moral agency of man.

Calvinism teaches that man is totally depraved, and, being totally depraved, he cannot make a right choice. If man is totally depraved and cannot make a right choice, where is his free moral agency in doing anything that is right?

There are some other subjects that are related to the one that we are studying. Man's accountability is determined by his free moral agency. If man is not a free moral agent, then one eliminates his accountability. For example, here is one who is an idiot, insane. Such a one is not held accountable for one's actions because of one's inability to make the proper choices, to make the proper decisions. Therefore, accountability is eliminated. It is only upon the basis of one's being able to make choices that accountability can be sustained.

Deceased

Are Women Permitted to Teach?

W. L. Totty

What may women Scripturally do in the worship and work of the church? This question over which there has been much contention. There are some who say that a woman has no place in the active role of teaching in the church while others go to the opposite extreme and say there are no limitations on the women's work in the church. But the question is: What does the Bible teach?

There was confusion in the church at Corinth, and Paul wrote to correct it. He admonished the prophets to speak by two or three and that by course, whereas, they apparently had been all speaking at one time and causing confusion, and the brethren were forbidden to speak in tongues which the audience did not know unless they had an interpreter, for Paul said, "For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace" (1 Cor.

14:33). In reference to the women in the church at Corinth, Paul said:

Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church (14:34-35).

Apparently, they were asking questions during the worship, also causing confusion. Paul told them if they would learn anything to ask their husbands at home.

In Paul's instructions relative to women in the church at Corinth, he said, "but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as also saith the law" (14:34). He referred to the Old Testament law that women, as a result of Eve's sin in the garden of Eden, would be ruled over by her husband. However, women were permitted to teach in certain capacities under the Old Testament law, but not over the man. Moses' sister, Miriam, was a prophetess (teacher) (Exo. 15:20), but when she tried to usurp authority over Moses, she was smitten by God of leprosy not because she was teaching, but because she usurped authority over **the man** (Num. 12:1-2).

In 1 Timothy 2:12, Paul discussed the question of women's teaching. He said, "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." **Over the man** modifies both infinitives, *to teach* and *to usurp*. She cannot teach over the man; she cannot usurp authority over the man. We might illustrate it this way: An offi-

cer of the law, placed at a bridge which was needing repair, would tell a motorist, "I don't allow you to drive nor to tow a car over the bridge." Would the motorist assume that he could not drive the car anywhere? Of course not. He would readily understand that *over the bridge* modified his driving.

We know that the apostle did not forbid women's teaching in every capacity, for they did teach. Philip "had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy" (Acts 21:9). Those daughters of Philip were teachers of the Word of God. However, the Bible forbids women to usurp authority over men. That does not mean they cannot teach man, for Priscilla helped her husband teach Apollos, a mighty man in the Scriptures.

Women have a Scriptural right and duty to help in the work of the church in teaching children and women. Yet, their teaching must be in subjection to the elders, and they must not usurp authority over the men. Let us not try to deprive them of their Scriptural rights.

Deceased

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Meet in the zone room.

October 13

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room 1.

October 20

Visitation cards for Group 2 will
be handed out by Bill Crowe.

October 20

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

October 21

Visitation Get-together at 6:00
p.m., in the zone room.



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A Lesson Learned from Capernaum

Charles Pogue

Capernaum was a town on the northern shore of the sea of Galilee. It existed from about the 2nd century BC until the 11th century AD. At its height it had a population of about 1,500. Archeologists have uncovered two ancient synagogues there, one built over the other. There is also an ancient church building which they claim was at one time a house belonging to the apostle Peter. That we will never know of course.

Capernaum is mentioned 16 times in the Gospel accounts, but not one time in Acts nor any other letter of the New Testament. A close look at the verses in which it is mentioned gives considerable credence to the view that it was essentially the home base for Christ during His earthly ministry. Matthew 4:13 says, “And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the

sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim.”

Several notable events in the ministry of Christ happened at Capernaum. It was there the centurion whose servant was sick who came to Jesus and asked Him to heal the man. He was the one who said I am not worthy for you to come to my house, just say the word and he will be healed, and he was (5:8-13).

It was at Capernaum where Peter was questioned as to whether the Master paid tribute. The Lord instructed Peter to go cast a hook in the water. Peter did so and the first fish he took up had a half shekel in his mouth to pay the tribute (17: 24 ff).

It was there where the four men let the one who was sick of the palsy down through the roof (Mark 2:1). This was the occasion when Jesus said, “Son, thy sins be forgiven

thee” (2:5), then healed the man to prove He had the power on earth to forgive sins.

It was at Capernaum where Jesus asked the disciples what they had disputed about on their way (9:33). What it was, was which one of them would be the greatest in the kingdom. Several other incidents could be mentioned, but we will end this part by noting that several passages mention Jesus teaching

in the synagogue in Capernaum (1:21; Luke 4:31; John 6:59).

One other thing worth mentioning about Capernaum is that it was very near there where Jesus taught the Sermon on the mount. In Luke’s account ending at chapter 6, Luke then records: “Now when he ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum” (7:1).

The point is, the people of Capernaum heard much of the teaching of Christ, and they saw notable miracles that He performed, yet Capernaum had a problem. They, along with Chorazin and Bethsaida did not believe Him. Consequently, Jesus foretold the fact that the city would come to an end. Matthew 11:23 records Him saying:

And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

Luke records it in almost identical words, “And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell” (Luke 10:15). In the next verse, Luke records the Master saying one who rejects Him also rejects the one who sent Him, which was God the Father.

The lesson we learn is we have a choice, we can accept and obey Christ, or like Capernaum, we will be destroyed. We shall be sentenced to eternal punishment in hell if we fail to receive Him and His words. We do not have Christ on the earth with us today, but we have the inspired record of the New

The Soul of a Child

The soul of a child is the loveliest flower
That grows in the Garden of God.
Its climb is from weakness to knowl-
edge and power
To the sky from the clay and the clod.
To beauty and sweetness it grows under
care.
Neglected, ‘tis ragged and wild.
‘Tis a plant that is tender, but won-
drously rare.
This sweet wistful soul of a child.
Be tender, O gardener, and give it its
share
Of moisture, of warmth and of light,
And let it not lack for the pain-staking
care
To protect it from frost and from blight
A glad day will come when its bloom
shall unfold,
It will seem that an Angel has smiled
Reflecting a beauty and sweetness un-
told
In the sensitive soul of a child.

Author Unknown

Testament writers who witnessed His miracles, and we can either believe in Christ and obey the Gospel, or we can refuse to do so and be lost.

Let us not follow the example of Capernaum which had so many opportunities, and yet ended up in unbelief. Let us be like those on the day of Pentecost who cried out “men and brethren what shall we do.” When they were answered to repent and baptized for the

remission of their sins, that is what they did. After their initial obedience Luke records, “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42). We must obey the Gospel and remain faithful to it as they did, lest we end up in destruction at the end as did the city of Capernaum which met its fate in the eleventh century.

Beeville, TX

What We Deserve

A school teacher in a little, drab, mid-western town desired to bring a little bit of beauty into the lives of the children that he taught. He purchased some beautiful pansies, prepared the flowers in a nice garden just outside the windows where the children could see them. But children will be children, and time and time again they would run through the flower garden. The teacher, realizing that steps must be taken if the flowers were to be spared, made the rule that anyone bothering the flowers would receive seven ruler strokes on the hand.

Everything went well until one day one of the older boys approached the teacher, leading his little sister by the hand. In her other hand there was tightly clutched a rapidly wilting bouquet of pansies. “Mary,” asked the teacher, “did you pick the pansies?” Mary nodded her head that she had. “And do you know the punishment?” And again, Mary nodded her head that she did. “Then hold out your hand.”

Slowly the little white hand was extended, but before the ruler could be brought down, a larger hand was extended as the brother asked, “Teacher, is there anything in the rules that says whose hand must be spanked?” No, there was not, and seven times the ruler was brought down across the hand of the brother. When the punishment was ended the little girl, with tears in her eyes threw her arms around her big brother, thanking him for taking her punishment.

How deserving of punishment were we! We could not have endured it if we had had to take it ourselves. It was the Son of God who volunteered to suffer the punishment we deserved on that old cross. What have we done about it? Many have not even **thanked** Him. Still others have been so careless that it seemingly makes no difference to them. The only way that we can show the Lord how much we love Him and appreciate His taking our punishment is to obey His commandments (John 14:15).

Author Unknown

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Bobbie LaBryer	Tina Foshee
Cary Parks	Linda Parks
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John Godwin (Aleacia Godwin's husband)	
Bob Stancliff (Rheba Stancliff's son)	
Billy Tom Muldoon (Pam Busch's cousin)	

Please Remember

October 20

Visitation cards for Group 2 will
be handed out by Bill Crowe.

October 20

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

October 21

Visitation Get-together at 6:00
p.m., in the zone room.

October 30

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



BEACON

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October 21, 2019

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The Gospel vs. The World

Roelf L. Ruffner

And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee (Acts 24:25).

There Paul stood, probably in chains (cf. 26:29), before the Roman Procurator of Judea, Marcus Antonius Felix and his beautiful nineteen-year-old wife, the princess Drusilla, great-granddaughter of King Herod the Great. Felix, a freed slave, had clawed his way to the top of the Roman bureaucracy. He was known as a very licentious person. Along the way to his position he had seduced Drusilla away from her first husband, King Azizus of Emesa. They were now living in adultery (cf. Mat. 19:9). As Procurator he had accepted bribes and had a Jewish high priest assassinated. What does

Paul say to them? Does he proclaim to them the need to “like and feel good about yourself” or “don’t worry, be happy” or “God accepts you the way you are?” Not Paul!

Paul knew that this pair had a knowledge of Christianity (Acts 24:22), which meant that they knew of Christianity’s claim that Jesus was the Christ and had risen from dead. They may have heard of the cry of Jesus to “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mat. 4:17). They knew of the thousands who had repented of their sins and been immersed in water for the remission of their sins in Jerusalem a few years before (Acts 2:38, 41).

Luke records that Paul *reasoned* or gave a strong argument regarding three things: “righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come.” *Righteousness* meant “upright conduct before God.” “Righteousness exalteth a

nation: But sin *is* a reproach to any people” (Pro. 14:34). *Temperance* meant “self-control”; exactly what Felix and Drusilla were not practicing. “Such *is* the way of an adulterous woman; She eateth, and wipeth her mouth, And saith, I have done no wickedness” (30:20). Paul also covered something many forget about today—“the judgment to come.”

Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead (Acts 17:31).

Assuredly Paul spoke “truth to power” before these two august sinners in Caesarea. He did not compromise the Gospel to suit the audience. “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim. 4:2). Some today would accuse Paul of being “unloving and hateful” because he pointed out their sins to these sinners and the remedy. Yet, is that not the loving thing to do with any sinner?

Felix’s reaction to Paul’s message revealed his fear. As a judge of Paul and others he knew what judgment and justice involved. He physically shook or trembled (“was terrified”—ASV) at the prospect of divine punishment for his sins. This pagan understood Paul’s plain preaching. The neo-pagans and hedonists of today can also understand plain, Bible preaching.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad (2 Cor. 5:10).

Sadly, his response was not obedience of the Gospel but procrastination.

Drusilla’s reaction is not recorded by Luke. This pampered teenager may have just shrugged off Paul’s message as “hell fire and brimstone stuff.” As a “Jewess” (Acts 24:24) she probably understood more deeply than Felix what Paul was speaking about. She may have also noticed her husbands’ reaction. Did she tremble, at least inwardly? History records that Drusilla and her son by Felix tragically died in the fire and brimstone from

It Is Hard to Believe There Is No God

“The story is told that during the French Revolution it was determined to abolish all religion and everything that reminded people of God. Someone loudly proclaimed this to a farmer one night. ‘Everything will be abolished—churches, Bibles, priests, everything. We shall remove everything that speaks of religion and God, the speaker said.

The farmer gave a quiet chuckle. ‘Why do you laugh?’ the other man asked.

Pointing upward to the stars, the farmer said, ‘I was just wondering how you’ll manage to get them down.’”

Author Unknown

Mt. Vesuvius' eruption August 24, AD 79. Yet, it is also just as tragic every time a sinner spurns the Truth and dies unforgiven by the

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blood of Christ. "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16—NKJV).

Work Cited

"Antonius Felix." *Wikipedia the Free Encyclopedia*. 16 Mar. 2018.
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antonius_Felix.

Columbia, TN

Obstacle to Truth

Fear, or reverential awe, for our Creator, Sustainer, and Savior is the attitude which precedes and accompanies a life of submission and faithful service to Jehovah and which prompts men to boldly stand for Truth without regard for consequent adversity (Mat. 10:28; Acts 5:29, 40-42; 10:35).

There is, however, a fear which is contrary to God's Will—the fear of what other men will do or say if the Truth is clearly and pointedly preached and applied to the sins of the hearers. This fear is an obstacle to accomplishing what the Lord wants done by means of His powerful Word's being powerfully preached (4:29-31; Rom. 1:16).

Kindness, gentleness, compassion, and tact can and should be employed in preaching, but such do not preclude pointed preaching and should not be used as an excuse for failing to confront the sins of the hearers. The fearful consistently excuse mealy-mouthed, soft-pedaled preaching with statements like "I don't want to offend anyone," "We don't want to drive anyone away," "We want to avoid any trouble," and "There are babes in the audience who won't

understand." Those who fear men (or are otherwise wrongly motivated) advocate "sneak-up-on-'em sales" tactics rather than a straightforward proclamation of God's facts, conditions, and promises.

The preachers and elders who have paved the way for the blatant departures from the Truth we now confront are those who preach and/or encourage preaching that, though not untrue, will do little to stir the souls of the hearers, challenge those who are trying to grow, warn the apathetic, impress men with the urgency of being prepared, prick the hearts of the do-nothing hearers, trouble the consciences of those harboring *secret* sin, or save their own souls. Preachers should be preaching and elders should be insisting on the preaching which God commands. Let such men hear the apostle John's words and repent of their negligence before it is everlastingly too late:

But the fearful, . . . shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death (Rev. 21:8).

Author Unknown

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| Rheba Stancliff | Carla Burleson |
| Bobbie LaBryer | Tina Foshee |
| Cary Parks | Linda Parks |
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cousin) | |

Please Remember

October 30

Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00
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“Providence”

Brad Green

The miraculous age has ceased: whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away (1 Cor. 13:8-10).

However, that does not mean that God is not alive and is not working in the lives of men today. The Bible teaches, “to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will” (Dan. 4:17). We also read of the general provisions necessary for life that God makes available: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust” (Mat. 5:45).

The mistake many make is concluding that if God works in the lives of men today, then He must be working miraculously (i.e., Pentecostalism), or that if miracles have ceased, then God cannot work in the lives of men today at all (i.e., Deism). Both extremes are incorrect according to the Bible. Much of the confusion about providence begins with the question: “How does God do it?” The answer to this may be simpler than it seems: “The secret *things belong* unto the Lord our God: but those *things which are revealed belong* unto us and to our children for ever, that *we* may do all the words of this law” (Deu. 29:29). God does not reveal unto us the **how**, regarding providence, but He does reveal unto us **the fact** of its existence. God does not tell us how He makes “things work together for good” (Rom. 8:28) to them that love Him, but He

tells us in His Word that He can and that He does. God does not reveal to us the **how** regarding answers to prayer, but He does reveal that “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (Jam. 5:16). God, “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). Since God has given us “all things that pertain unto life and godliness,” then the answer to *how*, regarding providence, is not necessary since He did not reveal it to us in His Holy Word. How presumptuous it is of man to think that he could even understand the *how*, in regard to providence, seeing that God chose not to provide that information.

To understand miracles and providence Scripturally, both must be properly defined and distinguished. *Miracles* were instantaneous: “So Jesus had compassion *on them*, and touched their eyes: and **immediately** their eyes received sight” (Mat. 20:34). *Providence*, on the other hand, may take a great deal of time before the result is evidenced. Consider the example of Joseph. Many years passed between the time his life was spared and he was sold into slavery until the time he was given a place of prominence in Egypt (Gen. 37-45). Another big distinction between miracles, which have ceased, and providence is the demonstration of each. Miracles were witnessed and easily certified. Even the enemies of Christ who

beholding the man which was healed standing with them [Peter and John],

they could say nothing against it.

But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them *is manifest* to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we **cannot deny it** (Acts 4:14-16).

In direct contrast, when Esther contemplated a right course of action, Mordecai gave her advice and then pondered, “who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for *such* a time as this?” (Est. 4:14).

Our God, He is alive, and He works in the lives of men today—not miraculously, but providentially. All men are blessed by the general provisions that God has made for us to live and thrive here on Earth, but it should be our desire to seek those Spiritual blessings which are reserved only for those who are “in Christ” (Eph. 1:3). Through faith (Heb. 11:6) and obedience to God’s Word, repenting of past sins (Luke 13:3) and confessing the Deity of Christ (Rom. 10:9-10), one can be immersed in water to have his past sins forgiven and washed away (Acts 2:38; 22:16). God will then add you to His church (Acts 2:47) where you can enjoy the Spiritual blessings of being in the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23). Salvation can be found in no other (Acts 4:12). Let us seek to obey God and be faithful to Him even “unto death” so that we may be given “a crown of life” (Rev. 2:10).

Lenoir City, TN

You Preach First

The first sermon preached each Sunday morning is not by the preacher, but by you:

You...preach a message of good cheer when you say “Good morning!” to those you meet when you park your car and when you are in the hallway and classroom.

You...preach a message of “Welcome!... We have room for you!” when you slide over in the pew instead of forcing others to squeeze in front of you.

You...preach a message of hope and joy when you sing enthusiastically during the song service. Move your lips, sit up straight, and sing out as if God can hear you in Heaven. He can.

You...preach a message of the power of prayer when you fervently enter into our time of prayer together and are not turning pages in the songbook, drumming your fingers on the pew, or fiddling with your children.

You...preach a message of love when you smile, say hello, and introduce yourselves to visitors. If this is the only time you see your family, then schedule other times to be with them for it is truly easy to get so bogged down in family and friends that we forget about our visitors.

You...preach a message about your faith when give your contribution. Remember to be generous, for our Lord was generous with His life.

You...preach a message about the importance of the Scriptures when you bring your Bible, open it, and use it during class and worship.

You...preach a message when you leave the class outline on the pew, go home, and never give another thought to the lesson nor to the material in the outline that is left to be studied.

Many messages are preached before the preacher stands up to bring his message. If your message is positive and consistent, then the message given from the pulpit will be much better received.

May we see each member of the congregation continue to apply these great messages. Come Sunday morning for Bible class with Bible in hand, a warm smile on your face, and an enthusiastic desire to study, sing, and worship God. So, doing will bring about a greater desire to love and do God’s Will.

Author Unknown

The Exiles

In Babylonia the exiles lived in their own settlements in the capital, Babylon, and other towns. They were free to build houses, earn a living, and keep their own customs and religion. They could not return to Judah, but they were not ill-treated. Some Jews even rose to high positions in government service. Many became so much at home in Babylon that when the opportunity came to rebuild Jerusalem they did not want to go. But some Jews longed to return to Judah (*Nelson’s Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Bible* 34).

Author Unknown

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son) | |
| Billy Tom Muldoon (Pam Busch's
cousin) | |
| Ronnie Sanders (Marge Williams'
son-in-law) | |

Please Remember

November 3

Visitation cards for Group 1 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

November 10

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

Daylight Saving Time Ends



Daylight Saving Time ends on November 3. Set your clocks back one hour on Saturday evening.



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Negligence Does Not Preclude Obedience

Roelf L. Ruffner

“He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, Even his prayer *shall be* abomination” (Pro. 28:9).

The Holy Spirit and the wise king Solomon reminds us that not all prayer is acknowledged by God. We must be a doer as well as a hearer of God’s Word (Jam. 1:22). This season of the year many a sinner’s hardened heart runs to find solace in the Nativity scene. They light a candle or mutter a prayer before a semi-idolatrous image. In their minds their religious duty is done and now they may turn to *reveling* or drinking, gluttony, and immorality (Gal. 5:19-21). God does not hear their prayers, however pious sounding. Why not?

They Know the Law

Many people know something about God and the Bible. If not, they are only a *click* away from it. In the Day of Judgment, no account-

able person may claim, “I never knew there was a God or such a thing as sin!”

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed *it* unto them (Rom. 1:18-19).

Many in our world have a more than passing acquaintance with the Word of God and the Gospel. They choose to ignore it.

They Continue to Turn Away from the Law

In their wisdom the translators of the King James Version of the Holy Bible put “*eth*” at the end of some verbs indicating continuous action. “Turneth away his ear from hearing the law” indicates that one’s prayer is rejected by God because he continues to

turn away from hearing and obeying the Word of God (cf. Zec. 7:11-13). Theirs is a pattern of neglect. The sinner who has turned from his evil ways (or repented) and obeyed the Gospel becomes a saint or Christian and may pray to God anytime. "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). Yet, if they go back to their sinful ways and do not repent, their prayers are an abomination to God.

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? (Rom. 6:1-2).

Ignorance is Not Bliss

Others reason that since they do not know God's Word, they do not have to obey it. This fallacy of willful ignorance does not even apply in the material world or the spiritual world. If I am driving 75 mph in a 55 mph zone, I may feign ignorance to the judge, but I am still in violation of the traffic laws. In my law breaking, I knew that traffic laws did exist and I should be aware of them. Like-

wise, the sinner may reason that if he does not know God's Word ("the law") he is *off the hook*.

Foxhole Praying

In times of danger even atheists are known to seek God in prayer. Others seek God because they have a past of religiosity, long neglected. And some folk are downright superstitious. They all are grasping at straws when they attempt to pray. The Bible indicates that God is repulsed by such appeals to Him. He wants that mind which turns to Him in faith, seeking to do His will. "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46).

The faithful child of God can pray to God at any time saying, "Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15). "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth" (John 9:31). We must not expect our merciful, longsuffering Father to accept our prayer if we are continuing in sin. "The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the LORD: But he loveth him that followeth after righteousness" (Pro. 15:9).

Columbia, TN

A Message to the Faithful

Too much of our writing, preaching, and visiting is directed to the weak and unfaithful. We want to reverse that order here. This article is not addressed to you who have to be begged, petted, and pampered before you will attend the services of the church, and still are absent as often as you are present. This is not for those who only give the church

their excuses, and grumble, complain, that category can stop now, for this is not written for you. This is written for the faithful.

The vocabulary is not large enough to tell you wonderful people how much you are appreciated. It does not matter how many meetings the elders call in a week, you will be present. Neither the weather nor com-

pany of any kind is able to keep you from your responsibilities. Whatever attractions or distractions the world may offer, you will not forsake the Lord or His people. You make whatever sacrifices are necessary. You always support fully every program submitted by the elders and deacons. You will accept an assignment, when you do it is a forgone conclusion that you will successfully complete it.

You do not flirt with sin and see how worldly you can become without completely apostatizing. You are appreciated even more

because you demand no special attention or praise or recognition for your service, and you do not consider regular and faithful attendance of each class or worship period in services to God as a grievous burden or a great feat of valor. You are a good example to the youngest member and an inspiration to all. You make the work of an elder, preacher, deacon, or Bible class teacher much lighter. Thank you for being what the Bible describes as a simple New Testament Christian!

Author Unknown

Something Is Wrong

Something is wrong, bad wrong, when we cannot have all the members of the church and their children in attendance for the Bible school. Yes, something is wrong when members refuse to attend the Bible classes.

1. If a person is too sick to go, something is wrong with his health. He should consult a doctor.
2. If he thinks he does not need the help that comes from the Bible study, something is wrong with his education. He does not know enough to know what he needs the most.
3. If he sleeps too late, he is too lazy. He needs to study Proverbs 6:6-11.
4. If he does not have the interest to go, something is dangerously wrong with his attitude. Indifference causes people to be lost.
5. If he is too busy to go, something is wrong with his schedule. The person

who is too busy to serve the Lord is too busy to go to heaven.

6. If he lets company keep him away, something is wrong with his courage. He should have the courage to serve the Lord even if the company is missed or offended.
7. If his clothes are not good enough to go, something is wrong with his pride. This excuse is over exalted, for the people who use it usually can go anywhere else in the same dress, but they refuse to wear the same clothes to the Bible school.

Just why should every Christian not want to be in the Bible school every time it meets? And why should we not want our children and friends to be there? If we do not, something is wrong. Better begin to check upon yourself and see what the trouble is before it is too late.

Author Unknown

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| Billy Tom Muldoon (Pam Busch's
cousin) | |
| Ronnie Sanders (Marge Williams
son-in-law) | |

Please Remember

November 10

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

November 16

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

November 17

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

November 17

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

November 18

Visitation Get-together at 6:00 p.m., in the zone room.



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Veterans Deserve Better

Brad Green

On Monday, November 11, our nation observed Veteran's Day. It is a great and honorable deed to celebrate the service of the men and women of the United States Military, both past and present. This past Veteran's Day, after being thanked for his service, a veteran responded, "Being a veteran of the Vietnam War, we get thanked a lot more now than we did right after we came home." Though much is done today to ensure that veterans are given honor, they still deserve better. Our veterans fought and shed their blood that we might enjoy the freedoms with which we are so deeply blessed. Yet, many choose to abuse those blessings and dishonor the service of our veterans. Many a brave soldier fought and died under the banner of the United States flag to ensure that our citizens could delight in having freedom of speech. In turn, rather than remembering

the great sacrifices that are represented by the American flag, it is burned, mocked, and spit upon under the guise of "freedom of speech." The work that our men and women in uniform are performing is still being demeaned by many today. In just the recent past, high ranking politicians have accused our troops of "just air-raiding villages and killing civilians." Our veterans deserve better.

Faithful veterans of the Lord's army deserve better as well. Many faithful Christians who gave their all to the Cause of Christ have passed from the physical life and into eternity. Though we do not serve any of these individuals, serve because of any of these individuals, or serve any doctrine originating with these individuals, their labor should not be left to dishonor. Many faithful Christians stood tall, in the midst of persecution,

criticism, and alienation to keep and leave behind faithful congregations for generations to follow. Their service is being disgraced by a generation without respect for Bible authority who seek to be more like the denominations around about them rather than seek to follow the pattern taught to them by those faithful veterans of the past (1 Sam. 8:5). The hard work of preserving the unique, God-ordained identity of the church has been laid to waste by “progressive-thinking” liberals who are more interested in entertainment than true worship (John 4:24). Schools, which were started by faithful stalwarts of the truth, have long ago been hijacked by the denominational world or by apostates seeking money, power, and prestige. In many cases, these institutions promote themselves by invoking the names of their faithful forefathers who, if they were alive today, would “have no fellowship” with these “unfruitful works of darkness” (Eph. 5:11). Our veterans and our Lord deserves better.

Our loyalties belong to Christ (1 Cor. 3:23). Those who gave themselves to Christ before passing from this life, left behind a

blessing for us. We can honor their labor by simply honoring God’s Word and submit ourselves to Him in humble obedience (Jam. 4:7). We should desire that the next generation be blessed by our labors as we have been by those who have gone on before us. Sadly, in many areas and many instances, the next generation will be left with a hollow shell of what the true church of Christ is required to be by God. Let us do our part (1 Cor. 12:12-26) to be faithful volunteers in the Lord’s army and ensure that the beautiful bride of Christ (Rev. 21:9) is kept pure.

Lenoir City, TN

Sermon Outlines

The majority of the lessons presented by Michael Hatcher are also in written outline form (PDF). Which can be accessed on our website at:

<http://www.bellviewcoc.com/sermons.html>

Calling Names

Bobby Duncan

A reader has written asking that we discuss the practice of calling names of various denominations from the pulpit. In ascertaining the answer to questions of this nature, we should remember the statement of Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:23, “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all

things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.” Clearly this shows that a thing might be lawful, but not expedient. Those of us who preach, as well as other Christians, should exercise caution, lest our efforts, however lawful, should be inexpedient, and do more harm than good.

Is it lawful (in harmony with the Scriptures) to call names of denominations when exposing their error from the pulpit? It is. While there were no denominations as we know them in Jesus' day, the example Jesus set in His preaching shows that it is not sinful to call names. Jesus rebuked the scribes and Pharisees by name (Mat. 23:2; 13-15, 23, 25, 27). In Luke 11:46, Jesus said, "Woe unto you also, *ye* lawyers." The example of our Lord shows it is not sinful to call the names of those whose error is being exposed.

We have also apostolic example for naming those who are in error. Paul specifically referred to those who called themselves after the name of Paul, Apollos, and Cephas respectively (1 Cor. 1:12). In 2 Timothy 4:14 the same apostle named Alexander, identified him as "the coppersmith," and affirmed that he had done much evil. In the same chapter (4:10) Demas is named as one who had forsaken Paul because of his love for this present world. In 1 Timothy 1:19 Paul referred to certain ones who had made shipwreck of the faith. Then in the very next verse he named two who had done so: Hymenaeus and Alexander. Even John, the "apostle of love," called the name of Diotrephes as one who loved to have the preeminence (3 John 9).

One should not be censured merely because he called names in his preaching or teaching. Our Lord and His apostles did so, therefore we know it is a lawful practice.

Is it expedient to call names of those denominations whose error we are exposing in the pulpit? There may be circumstances under which it would be inexpedient to call

names. There may be other circumstances under which the calling of names is demanded. Therefore, it would be most unwise for a church to demand that its preacher never call the name of any denomination. This would place a restriction upon him which the Lord did not place on him and would even hinder his following the Lord's own example! On the other hand, it is most difficult to expose religious error without offending those in error, as is seen in Jesus' offending the Pharisees (Mat. 15:12). In cases where the Truth can be effectively taught without calling names, in which the calling of names might cause some to close their minds to the Truth, then the calling of names should be avoided.

It seems to me, however, that some subjects cannot be given an effective presentation without calling some names. Suppose one wanted to preach a sermon on church history, or the Restoration Movement, or some similar subject. How could he teach effectively without calling the names of denominations?

I do not believe the calling of denominational names is necessarily offensive to members of denominational bodies. If we are **not** arrogant or boastful, if they know we receive no joy from the fact they are in error, if they understand that we love them, and are trying to help them, and not embarrass them, then we will not necessarily be offensive to them.

We must preach the Truth, but in Ephesians 4:15 Paul emphasized the need to speak "the truth in love."

Deceased

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Bobbie LaBryer	Tina Foshee
Cary Parks	Linda Parks
Louise Billiot	Doug Myrick
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Meet in the zone room.

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Questions People Often Ask About the Church and the Bible Response

Johnny Oxendine

When we come in contact with people and try to encourage them with respect to the Gospel, they often have questions that we should in some way try to answer. These questions are quite valid, though sometimes they are the result of misunderstanding or misinterpretation. We want to present a very general overview of some questions that are out there, and some concerns that people have about the church of Christ.

One of the first questions that people ask involves the nature of the church. When did it begin? Who started it? Why do “we” say that there is only one? Is everybody else in the world wrong? What about all of the scientists that believe in evolution?

The answers are right in the Scriptures for all to read for themselves. The real question

is why do they not believe what they read? If Jesus said He would build His church (Mat. 16:18), and we see that this occurred in Acts 2 in the way in which it was announced (not only by Jesus, but also by the prophet Joel in Joel 2:28-32), why would anyone belong to any other *Church* started by men? If He is the head of the “body” (which the Scriptures say is the “church” in Ephesians 1:22-23 and Colossians 1:18), then why would anyone argue that there has to be more than one church when Romans 12:4, Ephesians 4, and 1 Corinthians 12:12-21 explicitly state that there is only one body?

He is the head of the body, the church (Col. 1:18).

There is one body (Eph. 4:4).

all baptized into one body (1 Cor. 12:13).

Another question people ask is why we go to “church” so much? Isn’t once on Sunday enough? What happens if you do not go? Am I a bad person for that? Well, more than anything else, the attitude reflects a lack of appreciation for the blood of Christ. The *idea* that we can give Him *enough* of our time is ungracious at the very least.

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is* (Heb. 10:25).

I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it (Luke 14:18).

I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come (14:20).

In the passages quoted from Luke, we have people making excuses as to why something else was more important than “assembling” when bidden. Jesus simply stated that anyone with that attitude “cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:26), “cannot be my disciple” (14:27), “cannot be my disciple” (14:33). That is pretty clear!

San Mateo, CA

“The ‘Sect’ Everywhere Spoken Against”

Bill Jackson

This was the language the apostle Paul met when finally he arrived in Rome, under charges, awaiting his hearing before Caesar. Paul had called the chief of the Jews together (Acts 28:17), and made explanation as to the events that brought him thus to Rome, pointing out that he was in chains “for the hope of Israel” (28:20). The Jewish leadership pointed out to him that they had received no words there against him, and that they desired to hear from him, “for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against” (28:22).

In their use of *sect*, they no doubt were thinking in terms of the church of the Lord, and the way Paul had chosen in his rejection of Judaism, and saw in the Christian system merely a way of heresy broken off from Judaism itself. Such would naturally be the

thoughts of Jews of that day, being far from Jerusalem, and knowing that the church of the Lord had its beginning in that city and on the day of Pentecost (2:1, 47).

More than merely the *sect* designation, these Jewish leaders admit that they have heard nothing of good concerning Paul’s current fellowship, and that the general feeling (and among the Jews) was that it “was everywhere spoken against.” It needs to be noted that Paul did not immediately apologize and then try to accommodate himself and the message to the think-so’s of men, so that they would then speak well of it all. He

YouTube Channel

[https://www.youtube.com/c/
BellviewChurchOfChrist](https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist)

met with the leadership again (28:23), teaching them the truths of God in the powerful way characteristic of him, and administered them a stern rebuke when he saw hardness in their hearts (28:24-28).

He also made it plain to them that, regardless of how they had characterized the church, thinking of it as a *sect*, and thus not worth much consideration from them, teaching these truths amounted to teaching salvation. Thus, in their hardness and rejection, he promised to turn to the Gentiles and to take salvation to them (28:28). Luke tells us that Paul spent two full years there as he waited on Caesar's pleasure, and all the while he preached the kingdom of God, and the Christ (28:30-31). It is of value to see that while some called the way a *sect*, still Paul preached on the way. Criticism or mockery does not occasion a change in the message or the power with which God wants it delivered.

Those in the kingdom today still hear the charge that we constitute a sect, or a denomination. Years ago a denominational preacher, upset at some things we had printed, in truth, concerning the very unique position the church of the Lord maintains in the religious world, said: "You are a denomination, and you have to be a denomination, whether you want to be or not!" Upon his leaving, I thought,

"Wouldn't it be a tragedy if such was so... that we would have to be exactly what the Lord and the apostles said we must not be? We'd have no chance of being saved, since we could not be all the Lord wanted of us, and in fact had to be what the Lord prayed against and taught against!" (John 17:20-21; 1 Cor. 1:10).

Men make the charge that the church of Jesus Christ is a sect or denomination simply due to (1) Ignorance or (2) Prejudice, or both. Ignorance among religious leaders is no new thing, as evidenced in Matthew 22:29. Prejudice among the same people is again no new thing, as evidenced by the Lord's repeated rebuke of them in Matthew 23. In our present time, we find leaders (preachers, teachers, elders, etc.) who are buying the denominational line that the church is merely a denomination. Once convinced along these low lines, it is not surprising that among such people we find every denominational mark. We are delighted, though, that in believing the Word, obeying the Word, and living by the Word, the church of Jesus Christ exists, and that it is not sectarian and it is not denominational! If it is of the New Testament order, it would have to be free of all sectarian marks!

Deceased

Sermon Outlines

The majority of the lessons presented by Michael Hatcher are also in written outline form (PDF). The PDF files can be accessed on our website at:

<http://www.bellviewcoc.com/sermons-archives.html>

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Louise Billiot	Doug Myrick
Nelda King	
Wyatt Blancheri (Henry & Paulette Born's grandson)	
John Godwin (Aleacia Godwin's husband)	
Bob Stancliff (Rheba Stancliff's son)	
Billy Tom Muldoon (Pam Busch's cousin)	

Restored

Regina Lashley was restored to Christ on November 17. Please keep her in your prayers and offer her encouragement.

Please Remember

December 1

Visitation cards for Group 1 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

December 8

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

December 9

Visitation Get-together at 6:00 p.m., in the zone room.



BEACON

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November 25, 2019

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I Am the True Vine

G. K. Wallace

Isaiah used the vine as a type of Israel, planted and tended by the Almighty as the husbandman (Isa. 5:1). Israel was not the true vine. Christ is the true vine (John 15:1). In John 14, the Lord had just said to the disciples, "Arise, let us go hence." He had just eaten the last supper with the apostles. He said that He would not drink of the fruit of the vine again on this earth. Likely on the table from which they had just risen was the fruit of the vine. And now He says, "I am the true vine."

In the first eight verses of John 15 we find the following outstanding lessons about the vine and the branches.

1. That morality alone cannot save.
2. That there is but one true church.
3. That we should get in Christ, stay in Christ, and stay out of everything else or be lost.

Jesus said, "Apart from me you can do nothing." Morality alone cannot save. Men can be morally good apart from Christ. Yet, apart from Christ, they can do nothing. There is no spiritual life apart from Christ. Cornelius was a moral man apart from Christ, but he was unsaved (Acts 11:14). If morality alone can save then Jesus died in vain. There were just as good men morally to be found in the Mosaic age as there are now. If a man can be saved by his own goodness, then Jesus died for no purpose at all. Why did He die if they could be saved by their own goodness? Let the moral man remember these words, "Apart from me you can do nothing." There is no spiritual life apart from Jesus Christ, the true vine.

Thus, we see that one must get into Christ to be saved. Paul says that we are baptized into Christ. That makes baptism necessary

to salvation in Christ Jesus. You cannot do anything apart from Christ but you cannot get into Christ unless you are baptized (Gal. 3:27).

This “true vine” is the true church. The vine is the spiritual body of Christ. The church is His body (Col. 1:18). There is one body (Eph. 4:4). There is but one body (1 Cor. 12:20). Paul does not say *churches* but “the church.” If one desires to be united with Christ, let him obey the Gospel and thus be added to the “one body,” the church, the “true vine.”

The objector says that Christ is the true vine and all the denominations are branches. Christ said, “I” am the vine and “ye” are the branches. “He” that abideth in me. Note the use of the personal pronoun. Do men refer to churches as “he” and “ye”? Is that the way they talk where you live? Is that the way your preacher talks? Would you say about the Baptist Church—he is a large church? The use of the personal pronoun shows that Christ was talking to His disciples and not to *churches*. Individuals are the branches and not organizations. But just suppose for a minute that the branches are churches. In what branch are you? You say that I am in the Baptist branch. Yes, but wait, Christ said abide in “me.” You should not abide in a branch but in the vine. If you are in a branch you ought to get out of it and get in the vine. Get out of the branch and get in the vine. “If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned” (John 15:6). Abide in the vine

or be burned. Do not abide in a branch. You cannot abide in a branch. A branch is a disciple or a Christian. Individuals are the branches and not denominations.

Did God set denominations in the vine? If so, which ones did He put in? If God set denominations in the vine, it is strange that He never said anything about it. If He did mention them will someone please tell where?

For one to claim that denominations are the branches is an apology for something they know that is not mentioned in the Bible and a rank perversion of the John 15. Denominations came into existence hundreds of years after Christ. They are of human origin and no one has a Bible right to belong to any of them.

The “true vine,” the church, was established by Christ and all Christians are members of it (John 3:5). The church is God’s house. God’s house is His family (1 Tim. 3:15). God has no children outside of His family.

From this chapter, we learn that we must bear fruit to please God. “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples” (John 15:8). You cannot bear fruit apart from the vine. To bear fruit you must be in the vine. How does one get in the vine? He must believe (Mark 16:15-16). He must repent (Acts 2:38). He must be baptized (Gal. 3:27). These steps put one into Christ. Yet, it is not enough to get into Christ. In Christ the branch must bear good fruit. The fruitless branch (disciple) will be lost. He will be cast forth and be burned (John 15:6.) Our

duty in regard to this is clear. We must get in Christ, stay in Christ, and stay out of everything else.

Someone may ask, "Can a man be saved and go to heaven and stay out of the vine?" No, for Christ says, "Apart from me you can do nothing." It is Christ or nothing. It is the

true vine or no vine. It is the true church or no church. Christ here teaches that you cannot be saved out of the church, and you cannot be saved unless you stay in the church.

Deceased

God Speaks Only Through His Word

O. D. Wilson

I believe the Scriptures are inspired and wholly true,
In them God has said, what He wants us to do.

And He has no double standards, makes no difference who,

God speaks only through His Word.

There are those who say the Lord speaks in a quiet voice,

And this inner peace, inspires them to rejoice.

Jesus said the written Word is that we may believe,

I have made His Word my choice.

Others say the conscience is a safe and trusted guide,

But it's uninspired, don't trust what it decides.

It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.

Jeremiah ten, twenty-three

The Lord is speaking unto men today,
But through His written Word this is the way.

The Holy Spirit said what he must say,
So, God speaks only through His Word today.

Deceased

The Missing Picture

A mother was joyously looking through her son's school yearbook when she noticed that his picture was missing. Anger, mingled with disappointment cracked in her voice as she asked him: "Why isn't your picture in the yearbook, John?" John smiled as he replied, "They took the pictures on Sunday morning and I knew that God would rather see me in worship."

He had chosen the good thing, not that which would seldom be shown, soon forgot-

ten, or stored in the family attic. This young man's picture was left out of his yearbook, but in God's record the blank picture space was most beautiful:

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. 10:25).

Author Unknown

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| Louise Billiot | Doug Myrick |
| Nelda King | |
| Wyatt Blancheri (Henry & Paulette
Born's grandson) | |
| John Godwin (Aleacia Godwin's
husband) | |
| Bob Stancliff (Rheba Stancliff's
son) | |
| Lanie Crowe (Bill & Peggy Crowe's
granddaughter) | |
| Beau James Busch (Bill & Pam
Busch's great-grandson) | |
| Billy Tom Muldoon (Pam Busch's
cousin) | |

Congratulations

Congratulations to Bill and Pam Busch in the birth of their great-grandson, Beau James Busch, born on November 20. He weighed 4.6 lbs. and was 18.7 inches long Please keep Beau in your prayers. He will be in the hospital until mid December.

Please Remember

December 1

Visitation cards for Group 1 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.



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December 2, 2019

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“Not Ashamed of the Gospel”

H. Leo Boles

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Rom. 1:16).

Gospel literally means “God” and “spell.” Our English word originally meant to bring one under or into a *spell*. Believers in witchcraft thought that one was brought under the will of another. When one was brought under the will of another, that one was under a *spell*. Satan exercised influence over evil people; they were under Satan’s *spell*. God has His influence over people for good. When they were brought under God’s influence, they were under God’s *spell*; hence, “good spell” or “Gospel.” With the advent of Christ, people were brought more under the influence of God’s teaching, and *Gospel* has received great emphasis in the New Testament.

We do not find the word *Gospel* in the Old Testament. It is used more than one hundred times in the New Testament. It carries with it the idea of “good tidings of great joy” (Luke 2:10). It comes from the Greek *euaggelion* and means “good news” or “good message.” *Gospel* may include the entire plan of salvation; it may embrace the whole scheme of redemption. Sometimes it is applied to the first four books of the New Testament. In a more restricted sense, it includes the facts, commands, and promises of man’s redemption. The fundamental facts of the Gospel are the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-5). Its commands embrace faith in Christ as the Son of God, repentance of sins, and baptism unto the remission of sins. The promises primarily are the forgiveness of sins, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and eternal life. Upon belief of the facts and obedience to the commands

of the Gospel, we are to enjoy the promises of the Gospel. No one has any right to claim the promises of the Gospel who does not believe the facts of the Gospel and obey the commands of it.

The Gospel is declared to be “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” The Gospel is a channel through which God’s power to save is exercised. Nothing can be done without power of some kind. God is omnipotent; He has all power; He is the source of all power. The power that others have is delegated to them. The power that Satan has is a tolerated power. Many beings misuse the delegated or tolerated power. God holds them responsible for the use that they make of the power permitted or granted to them. God has at least two kinds of means through which He uses His power. First, there are the natural means. There is power in the wind, sea waves, earthquakes, volcanoes, sunshine, rainfall, electricity, etc. These are some of the natural means through which God exercises His power over the material realm. We are not concerned at this point with these physical means through which God exercises power.

The second kind of means through which God exercises power is spiritual. God uses spiritual means through which to exercise His power. The Gospel is a power of God—that is, the Gospel is one of the means through which God exercises His power. While the Gospel is a means through which God exercises His power, it is the particular means through which He exercises His power in the redemption of man. Hence, the

Gospel is “the power of God unto salvation.” The Gospel is God’s only power unto salvation of souls. It is not a question as to whether God could save one without the Gospel, neither is it a question of what God will do in the redemption of man. The Gospel is His only revealed agency or means through which He has promised to save man. The Gospel as God’s means or power for saving man is revealed through Christ. Christ has been made the personal agent through whom God redeems man; hence, Christ is the only Savior of man, and the Gospel His only means for saving man through Christ.

It is well to note what the Gospel does for man. When one has been saved by the Gospel, that one is a Christian. Redemption in Christ imposes upon us an interest in others. No one can be a Christian without caring for the salvation of others. The Gospel impels those who have been redeemed by it to pray for others. We cannot pray for others without being interested in them. One of the greatest privileges granted to man is that of prayer; one of the greatest human achievements is to do things through prayer. The Gospel causes us to rejoice in each other’s victories through faith and successes in the Christian life. When we have received the remission of sins through obedience to the Gospel; when we have been bought with the blood of Christ, we are brought under obligations to others. Paul had been redeemed by the power of God through the Gospel. He said: “I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready

to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also” (Rom. 1:14-15). To accept the Gospel is to go into partnership with Christ in the salvation of others.

Obedience to the Gospel brings us into the service of God. We are servants of Christ and servants of each other. Service is the true standard of greatness; it is the badge of nobility as children of God. To be redeemed by the Gospel gives courage to one. The Gospel begets courage. He who preaches the Gospel in faith and love knows no fear; he is

entrenched in “the power of God” and does not fear men nor demons. He has the promise that God will be with him and he has become a humble servant of God. He enjoys the promises of God that are vouchsafed to him in the Gospel. There is no substitute for the Gospel, as there is no substitute for the truth; no substitute for the church; no substitute for Christ; neither can there be any substitute for the Gospel of Christ. Brethren, let us preach the Gospel.

Deceased

Striving for the Crown

The apostle Paul wrote on the necessity of striving for the victorious crown, the one that “never perishes” (1 Cor. 9:25). Like a respected coach in athletics, he urges the Corinthian brethren onto victory in Christ. What refreshing words of encouragement!

Now consider our soul in this matter. Would we take the attitude of our contemporaries in the world and submit to the idea that it is “too hard” being a Christian and therefore forfeit ever trying to live as one? This is a serious conclusion for anyone to make, yet many who do not turn to God’s assuring Word do not understand the destiny of such a decision.

First of all, if God knew that it would be too hard for people to be a child of God, it would be an injustice on His part to have laid down the principles and commands in the New Testament. Instead, He states:

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer

you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it* (1 Cor. 10:13).

Rather than focusing on the “never win” attitude of the world, we should be girded with the strengthening and encouraging words of the apostle! It is with this positive and godly attitude that we can run in such a way to obtain the imperishable crown (9:24-25).

Will you strive for the crown or give up your soul?

Author Unknown

Defender and Beacon

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Lanie Crowe (Bill & Peggy Crowe's granddaughter)	
Beau James Busch (Bill & Pam Busch's great-grandson)	
Mike Bailey (Nancy Loy's brother)	

Please Remember

December 8

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

December 15

Congregation get-together, after the afternoon service, in the zone room. Bring deserts.

December 15

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

December 15

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



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A Matter of Context

Charles Pogue

Not long ago a person on Facebook removed from its context, a passage from the writings of Paul in which he was writing something about himself. The person subsequently applied the passage to people in general, and attempted to make it fit their preconceived false idea. It cannot be stressed enough if we are to properly grasp the meaning of any Scripture it must be understood within its context. Unfortunately, that principle essential to correct interpretation and subsequently application, is either ignored or misunderstood by many.

One of the principles of interpretation which would help the world to grasp the Gospel plan of salvation, and helpful to brethren when instructing the world on that Gospel, is to understand the context of certain sections of the New Testament. While the following may not be the only or even

best way to identify those portions, it is accurate. Notice if you will:

Matthew—John

Matthew—John can be contextually described as **preparation**. By Jesus teaching and His miracles, the then world was being prepared for remission of sins through Christ (Luke 24:47) the only begotten Son of God. It also prepared them for understanding important matters concerning the approaching church kingdom Jesus promised to build in Matthew 16:13-19. In succeeding passages of the New Testament, for instance in Paul's writing, we learn Jesus nailed the old law to His cross, thus taking it out of the way or abolishing it (Eph. 2:14-16; Col. 2:14). This principle was affirmed by Jesus when He stated He came to fulfill the law (Mat. 5:17). The proper understanding of the Gospel accounts

within their context is vital to the understanding of the rest of the new Testament.

Acts

Acts can be contextually described by the word, **evangelization**. Jesus instructed the apostles to go into all the world and preach the Gospel (Mat. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47). Beginning with the Acts 2, the commission Christ gave the apostles began to be fulfilled by them. Examining every specific case of conversion in the book of Acts, if people would go back to the words of Christ recorded by Mark's account, and take note of the fact that everyone converted as a result of the apostles and others evangelism, were baptized, noting Acts 2:38 explains the purpose, the remission of sins, there would be no doubt in anyone's mind that baptism is essential to salvation. Why do people reject the necessity of baptism for salvation? One reason among many is the failure to understand the New Testament within its context.

Romans—Jude

Romans—Jude can be identified contextually by the word **maturation**. While Romans and Hebrews include a great amount of facts directly related to the Gospel as the means of saving the lost, they, along with the other books in this section, have much to say concerning the things which bring the child of God to spiritual maturity. The Hebrews' writer emphasizes the need for growth in Hebrews 5:12-14, as does Peter in 1 Peter 2:2. Much is written in these epistles regarding the things the Christian is to add to his life, and the sinful things he is to avoid.

If people understood that these books are written to individual Christians or to congregations of Christians, and make applications accordingly, errors which originate from taking passages out of that context would be avoided. As suggested, in addition to the instructions in these books to individuals, there are essential directives to congregations of the Lord's people which may be summed up especially in two passages. The first one is where Paul wrote to the church at Corinth informing them that when Timothy arrived he would remind them of the

God, the Creator

A businessman once gave the reasons why he knew there was a God. He had been earnestly considering the wonders of the stars and planets, their system and order. Then he said, "It takes a girl in our factory about two days to learn to put the seventeen parts of a meat chopper together. Some may believe that these millions of worlds, each with its separate orbit, all balanced so wonderfully in space—that they just happened; that by a billion years of tumbling about they finally arranged themselves. I am merely a plain manufacturer of cutlery. But this I do know, that you can shake the seventeen parts of a meat chopper around in a washtub for the next seventeen billion years and you'll never make a meat chopper."

Author Unknown

things he (Paul) taught in every church (1 Cor. 4:17). The other passage is the very familiar Colossians 3:17, which limits the things done in and by the church to those

which are authorized by the Lord. These facts make it very easy to understand why the Spirit inspired Paul to write concerning the inspired scripture and their benefit to the child of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

His Ears Are Opened Unto Their Prayers

H. L. Gradowith (Tim Smith)

I take your name with me when I bow
to pray,

Our Heavenly Father hears of you each
day;

He knows all your troubles and
heartaches and cares,

And we know that He hears His Own
faithful prayers.

Will you pray for me when you bow in
prayer, too?

That I'll have the strength to do all I've
to do?

I trust that if you'll ask Him He'll see
me through...

So please pray for me as I oft to pray for
you.

Let's speak of the Old Ship of Zion in
prayer,

Her enemies bombard her from ev'ry-
where;

If we do our duties—our own faithful
share...

Our Lord will not turn from the faithful
at prayer.

Deceased

Revelation

Revelation, the last book of the New Testament can be summed up contextually by the word **realization**. The child of God can come to realize regardless of persecution, if he will remain faithful to Christ and the truth, he will overcome in the end (Rev. 2:10). This life is full of disappointments, sickness, and death, but the faithful child of God realizes that those difficulties belong only to this life. Not one instance of them will be found in heaven (21:4). When the lost are cast into the lake of fire, and the faithful admitted into heaven, too late the lost will realize they should have obeyed the Gospel, but the saved will realize that despite all of the setbacks and sufferings encountered in this world, heaven is surely worth it all.

The above is only one example of how to use the absolute must of understanding the context of a passage in order to interpret it properly. To fail to study with the context in mind will lead to division and heresy. It will lead to error in doctrine and practice. It will lead to denominationalism on the outside, and to anti-ism and liberalism within the body of Christ. The lesson to learn is when one studies he must regard the context in which the passage he is working with is found.

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Mike Bailey (Nancy Loy's brother)	
Elaine DuLaney (Jason DuLaney's wife)	
Halie Cowdell (Bill & Pam Busch's grand-daughter)	

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BEACON

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December 16, 2019

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Two Are Better Than One

Brad Green

The name of a fictional character always becomes very popular this time of year. His name is Ebenezer Scrooge. The first name *Ebenezer* is from a Hebrew word meaning “stone,” and the last name, *Scrooge*, is defined as “one who is a miser or stingy.” The idea given then is that of a man who is a miserly, old tightwad who has a heart made of stone. Such a man is referenced in the Scripture.

There is one *alone*, and *there is* not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother: yet *is there* no end of all his labour; neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither *saith he*, For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good? This *is* also vanity, yea, it *is* a sore travail (Ecc. 4:8).

The wise preacher, while contemplating the vanities of this world, discusses the life of a man who has decided to work himself

almost to death, is never satisfied with what riches he has gained, has isolated himself from others so he will not have to share his wealth, and even refuses the comforts that he could afford for himself to add to his profits. It is important to note that the Bible commends hard work and good stewardship (2 The. 3:10; Luke 12:36-43). However, Jesus also stated:

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Mat. 6:19-21).

The man referenced in Ecclesiastes 4:8, was laying up treasures here on this earth and they were doing him no good. In fact, the inspired writer states that he was bereaving his own soul and brought upon himself “sore travail.” In other words, he was not benefitting from his labors and hard work rather his drudgery had become an evil affliction.

Solomon, by inspiration, then concludes, “Two *are* better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour” (Ecc. 4:9). In the movie, *A Christmas Carol*, a young Ebenezer is seen choosing his work and desire to accumulate wealth over his first love. A decision he seemed to regret, stating that he almost “ran after her.” Scrooge was alone and in his dream, saw that even at his death there was no one who cared. The reason he had no friends was because he was not friendly (Pro. 18:24). Solomon gives several evidences as to why “two are better than one.” First, he states that their combined efforts bring forth good rewards (Ecc. 4:9). Second, they afford one another with comfort during times of distress (4:10). Third, they benefit from the warmth of friendship and companionship each offers (4:11). Last, they offer security, protection, and added strength to one another (4:12). This idea has been stated in many ways: “two heads are better than one,” “a man without a friend is like a left hand without a right,” etc.

The phrase, “two are better than one,” is proven by the unity which exists in a marriage. God said, “*It is* not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him” (Gen. 2:18). The claim is also proven

by the unity declared by earthly friendships (Pro. 17:17; 18:24; 27:9) as well as the fellowship which is in Christ. Abraham “was called the Friend of God” (Jam. 2:23) because of his faithful service and obedience to God. God emphasizes the importance of keeping fellowship pure by imparting that “whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (4:4). Christians are to be friendly to those outside of Christ and

Great Mistakes

1. To set your own standards of right and wrong and expect others to conform to them.
2. To measure the enjoyment of other people by your own.
3. To expect uniformity of opinion in the world.
4. To look for sound judgment; and experience in youth.
5. To endeavor to mold all dispositions after the same pattern.
6. To expect unity in the church when the leadership is divided.
7. To be discouraged because you do not attain perfection.
8. To worry over mistakes and failures that cannot be remedied.
9. Failure to make allowances for the weaknesses of other people.
10. To consider anything impossible because you cannot perform it.

These are great mistakes!

Author Unknown

those in error, but are not to participate with them in any way that would suggest that the world and those in error are right in the sight of God. Allowing friendliness to morph into fellowship is to bid God-speed to error and thus become a “partaker of his evil deeds” (2 John 11). The prophet Amos asked, “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:3). “Two are better than one,” but only if the two are following the standard of God’s Word and are faithful to it. Otherwise,

there will always be a gulf fixed between the two.

Let us do the Will of God and be in fellowship with Him, first and foremost. Let us enjoy the benefits of friendship, companionship, and Spiritual fellowship with Faithful brothers and sisters in Christ. Let us not be isolated, place trust in self, place emphasis on treasures here on earth and thus exclude ourselves from the riches offered only by sharing the company of one another.

Lenoir City, TN

Your Children

It Is Hard to Convince Your Children— That the work of the church is really important when you are not taking an active part in the work of the church.

It Is Hard to Convince Your Children— That faithfulness to the church is the most important loyalty in life when you permit them to forsake services to engage in other activities.

It Is Hard to Convince Your Children— That the church is the body of Christ when you are indifferent to the welfare of the members of that body.

It Is Hard to Convince Your Children— That they are to respect the church when you constantly complain and criticize the efforts of those who care enough to be doing something.

It Is Hard to Convince Your Children— That the church is the world’s most important institution when you give so little to finance the church’s work.

It Is Hard to Convince Your Children— That they can believe God’s Word if you cannot believe Him enough to place the kingdom of God first in your life,

It is Hard to Convince Your Children— That it is important to love your enemies when you hold grudges and have wrong attitudes toward those who do you wrong.

It Is Hard to Convince Your Children— That we must obey the laws of the land when we lie on our tax form and disregard speed limits.

It Is Hard to Convince Your Children— That it is important to teach others the Gospel when we have never attempted to talk with our neighbors or friends about the truth.

It Is Hard to Convince Your Children— That we must stand against false doctrine and immorality when we remain silent when error is being propagated or practiced.

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Internet Website: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

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God's Plumbline: Will I Be Faithful to God's Word?

Roelf L. Ruffner

Thus He showed me: Behold, the Lord stood on a wall *made* with a plumb line, with a plumb line in His hand. And the Lord said to me, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A plumb line." Then the Lord said: "Behold, I am setting a plumb line In the midst of My people Israel; I will not pass by them anymore. The high places of Isaac shall be desolate, And the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste. I will rise with the sword against the house of Jeroboam" (Amos 7:7-9).

Ancient Israel (Samaria) and their kings did not keep God's Word.

Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River

and in Egypt. Serve the Lord! (Jos. 24:14).

They adopted the idols of their pagan neighbors. "You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness *of anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath" (Exo. 24:4). They engaged in sexual immorality and did not practice justice and mercy (Amos 2:6-7).

Their kings scoffed at the messengers of God.

Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, "Is that you, O troubler of Israel?" And he answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house *have*, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and have followed the Baals" (1 Kin. 18:17-18).

God did not take this rejection lightly. After warning Israel for several years through His prophets He sent many of them into Assyrian Captivity for 185 years in 721 BC, because they failed God's plumb line—they were not faithful to His Word.

Today, we have God's second greatest gift to humanity—the Bible—as the plumb line. Why?

- **The Bible is Inerrant:** “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple” (Psa. 19:7).
- **The Bible is Infallible:** “Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven” (119:89).
- **The Bible is able to cleanse the Soul:** “You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you” (John 15:3).
- **The Bible is Inspired:** “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 complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Without guidance from the Word of God we are “the blind lead[ing] the blind” (Mat. 15:14). “Your word *is* a lamp to my feet And a light to my path” (Psa. 119:105). Within its pages we find God's glorious plan of redemption for humanity—the Gospel of Jesus Christ (John 8:31-32).

On the Day of Judgment what will the Judge say to us, the Christians who read these words? How will we measure up to God's plumb line of faithfulness? Will we be any different from the faithless Israelites of the prophet Amos' day? “He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day” (12:48).

Columbia, TN

“He Really Knows His Bible!”

Dub Mowery

To hear anyone quote Biblical verses should be impressive to everyone who reverences the Bible as being the inspired Word of God. Sadly, there is less and less Scripture used in many sermons heard throughout our nation in recent years. The various philosophies of men are contributing to the confusion among those who are trying desperately to find the answer to life. Even among those who accept the Bible to be the inspired Word of God there is nonconformity.

People who know very little of the Bible are often easily lead astray. They will hear someone quote Scripture and assume that person is “well read” in reference to the Bible. You may hear them say, “He really knows his Bible!” However, before a person becomes gullible, that individual should be noble like the Bereans who “received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” of what the apostle Paul taught (Acts 17:11). Just

because a preacher quotes from the inspired Word of God does not mean he is knowledgeable of the Bible or properly applies its teaching. Why even the devil quoted Scripture, but misapplied it (Mat. 4:6-7). Therefore, we should guard against “swallowing hook, line, and sinker” just anything that is presented to be the Gospel truth.

Each and every one of us is individually responsible unto our Heavenly Father. In writing to the Philippian brethren, the apostle Paul exhorted them to “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phi. 2:12). This does not mean a person can do whatever he or she wants to do religiously and still expect to be pleasing unto God. The ancient Jews attempted to do that very thing. The Scripture reveals: “every man did *that which was* right in his own eyes” (Jud. 17:6; 21:5). Some of them commenced to worship idols. This certainly was not pleasing unto God. We are not to place trust in any human

being above the inspired Word of God (1 Cor. 4:6).

You and I are personally responsible to rightly divide the Word of God (2 Tim. 2:15). Just reading the Bible through from cover to cover one time or several times will not assure an understanding of its contents in depth. We must properly analyze the Scripture for the purpose of learning who is speaking, to whom they are speaking, for what purpose they are speaking, and does it apply to us today. For example: God instructed Noah to build an ark. We understand that was instruction to him as an individual and does not apply to us today. Under the Mosaic Law the Israelites offered sacrifices. Since we are not living under that law, we are not required to offer animal sacrifices. Jesus shed His blood and died upon the cross once and for all as the perfect sacrifice (Heb. 10:1-10). We are to be a living sacrifice in serving dedicated lives for the Lord (Rom. 12:1-2).

Deceased

How Successful Do We Tell People We Are?

Here is a man who says he is successful; He tells those who see his manner of dress, that he is successful.

He tells those who see his home that he is successful. He lacks none of the necessities of life, and he possesses most of the luxuries.

He tells those who see his table that he is successful. He dines sumptuously every day.

He tells those who see his car that he is successful. He drives the latest model auto-

mobile in a price range just above that which he can really afford.

He tells those who see his recreation that he is successful. He must have the finest tackle, the best guns, and the most expensive golf equipment.

But he tells the Lord and those who see his contribution that he is a financial failure, and is able to give only a pittance each Lord's Day.

Author Unknown

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The Funny and Odd Thing About Words: The Same Word Can Differ Greatly

Johnny Oxendine

One word that has always been fascinating is *opinion*, and how people tend to use it. Here is what I mean, according to definitions from the *American Heritage Dictionary*:

1. A belief or conclusion held with confidence **but not substantiated by positive knowledge or proof**
2. A **judgment based on special knowledge and given by an expert**
3. The **formal judgment of an expert on a matter** in which advice is sought

Most people give their (use the word) opinion based on the first definition. They will hold to some belief or way of thinking about something (including religion) without any knowledge or offers of proof on the subject/topic of discussion. It is also with

this first definition in mind that people will argue their *emotions* and family traditions. This *opinion* is one that one wants to hold away (separate) from specific and detailed judgment or analysis.

One example of this can be illustrated on the Biblical subject of *tongues*, which in Acts 2:1-11 is clearly defined (described) as “languages.” Yet, there are people who will argue that they or someone they have seen (or heard) speaks in *tongues* (some gibberish that cannot be discerned, and a clear violation of 1 Corinthians 14). This rarely sways people who have their *opinion* on the matter (*and you, are quite welcome to have your own!*), and if you were to pin them down and ask them to examine and explain the aforementioned verses you would cause

them severe apoplexy. People often **want** to hold their unsubstantiated beliefs to defy or rebel against what is right, which is why the first definition is the most often used.

What many people despise is the use of the word along the lines of the last two definitions: where there is knowledge and proof that can be offered in the presentation of an *opinion*. This resistance harbors a deep-seated resentment toward truth (knowledge and expertise) and is usually summarily (and with an unspoken but seething anger) dismissed as “just your opinion” (to make an attempted mental validation of their own erroneous belief).

We find examples of this in the Scriptures through what must have been the *opinion* of those in Corinth that there was nothing wrong with a man having illicit sex with his father’s wife. Rather than seeing/discerning/judging this for what it obviously was (sin), they were “puffed up”

about it. **In their opinion** the man was doing nothing wrong (“*don’t judge him*”). In Galatians 2, we find Peter acting in a way that must have been fine in the *opinions* of the majority (even Barnabas), but Paul said such actions were to be condemned.

In the church today we (and certainly God) want our actions to be based on Scriptural authority, not “opinions.” Over the years we have seen/heard brethren attempt to justify a range of acts from gambling, to social drinking, immodest attire, drug use, dancing, inappropriate language, and worse (including the various doctrinal attacks on marriage/divorce/remarriage, fornication, the Lord’s Supper, worship, etc.).

As God’s children, let us not be unwise, but understanding of what the will of the Lord is (Eph. 5:17). Let our *opinions* be based on Scriptural evidence, not emotions.

San Mateo, CA

Departing from the Faith

C. D. Plum

All Bible students who have a true knowledge of the church know that the church of Christ was established by Christ, in Jerusalem, in AD 33. They also know that Christ, and not Peter, was the head of this church (Eph. 1:21-23).

The Holy Spirit revealed that “some shall depart from the faith, . . . forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats” (1 Tim. 4:1-3). This departure was gradual, but the final result was that Boniface III was designated pope by the Emperor Phocas.

This was in AD 606. Back in the year 606, neither in the Bible nor out of it, can no man find where any soul on this earth was ever styled “pope”; yet, some try to get us to believe that Peter was the first of that type. The Bible knows nothing about it. History fails to record it. Why should anyone believe it? There is no positive proof in the Bible that Peter was ever in Rome, much less the head of the church. And, too, this Peter, this Cephas, was married (1 Cor. 9:5). That breaks up this supposed pretty claim.

Church of Christ Is Oldest

The church of Christ was established in Jerusalem in AD 33, making the church of Christ five hundred seventy-three years older than its nearest rival, the Church of Rome. Since the denominations, such as we have today, came in after Rome did, the church of Christ is much older than they.

Campbell Not Church of Christ Founder

Christ established His own church. Jesus says: "I will build my church" (Mat. 16:18). Christ built His church at Jerusalem in AD 33, as fully established in Acts 2. Alexander Campbell was born September 12, 1788. Thus, you may readily see that the church of Christ was in existence seventeen hundred fifty-five years before Mr. Campbell was born. By believing and obeying what the New Testament teaches, Campbell became a member of the church of Christ. He also was a preacher in this church.

The Same Church of Christ Today

As in New Testament times, the church of Christ today is teaching sinners who have never been members of this church that they must:

1. Believe unto righteousness (Rom. 10:10).
2. Repent unto life (Acts 11:18).
3. Confess unto salvation (Rom. 10:10).
4. Be baptized "into" Christ (Gal. 3:27).

Jesus says: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16).

Christians Must

As in New Testament times, the church of Christ is teaching Christians today that they must:

1. Attend every church service possible (Heb. 10:25).
2. Eat the Lord's Supper every first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 2:42).
3. Give as prospered on every first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1-2).
4. Sing in the midst of the church (Heb. 2:12).
5. Make melody in the heart (Eph. 5:19). (No mechanical instruments in the New Testament church worship; no mechanical instruments in church of Christ worship today.)
6. Pray without ceasing (1 The. 5:17).
7. Live soberly, righteously, and godly (Tit. 2:11-12).

The Work of the Church

Yes, today, as in New Testament days, the church of Christ must "work the works of him that sent" Jesus.

The Gospel must be preached by or through the church. The manifold wisdom of God must be made known by the church (Eph. 3:10). The church of Christ does missionary work, but we do not have a human missionary society through which to do it. There is no Scripture in all the Bible for such a human society. Where people do missionary work through a human society, in the course of a few years many thousands of dollars that the missionary should have go to the salaries of the unscriptural officers in the unscriptural societies. These things ought not so to be in church affairs.

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