



BEACON

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526

850.455.7595

Internet Web Page: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

E-mail: bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Vol. LIV

2025

January

January 6
January 13
January 20
January 27

February

February 3
February 10
February 17
February 24

March

March 3
March 10
March 17
March 24
March 31

April

April 7
April 14
April 21
April 28

May

May 5
May 12
May 19
May 26

June

June 2
June 9
June 16
June 23
June 30

July

July 7
July 14
July 21
July 28

August

August 4
August 11
August 18
August 25

September

September 1
September 8
September 15
September 22
September 29

October

October 6
October 13
October 20
October 27

November

November 3
November 10
November 17
November 24

December

December 1
December 8
December 15
December 22
December 29



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 1

January 6, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

Morality Without Godliness

Lee Moses

Have you ever known someone who was not terribly interested in following the Lord yet seemed to have some sense of morality and decency? King Jehoram of Israel was one such person. True:

he wrought evil in the sight of the LORD; **but not** like his father, and like his mother: for he put away the image of Baal that his father had made (2 Kin. 3:2—emp. LM).

Jehoram was not quite like his wicked parents, Ahab and Jezebel. He was not a godly man by any stretch, but he had a certain sense of decency. When a grievous famine struck Samaria, the capital city of Israel, a woman complained of her terrible plight to the king:

This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him to day, and we will eat my son to morrow. So we boiled my son, and did eat him: and I said unto her on the next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him: and she hath hid her son (6:28-29).

Obviously, this is a scenario that would disgust you and me, and it did King Jehoram as well: “And it came to pass, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he rent his clothes; and he passed by upon the wall, and the people looked, and, behold, *he had* sackcloth within upon his flesh” (6:30). Jehoram’s sense of moral decency had been violated. But morality without godliness—reverence for God and adherence to His Word—can never be consistent.

Morality without godliness cannot be consistent in its assessments. If one were to ask the eight billion people in the world to formulate their system of morality, there might not be a pair of them to have identical systems. What we would essentially have is anarchy and chaos. We know that man cannot determine on his own what is right (Pro. 14:12; Jer. 10:23; Rom. 7:18). While we can generally agree that it is wrong for a mother to eat her son, why can we not agree whether it is wrong for a mother to kill her son **before** he is born? Some acknowledge it is wrong but will gladly use the murdered babies’ corpses for stem-cell research. “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” provides a consistent and flawless system of morality (Heb. 13:8).

Without a Divine origin for morality, how should one respond when he believes the system of morality has been violated? Jehoram answered, saying, “God do so and more also to me, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stand on him this day” (2 Kin. 6:31). He wanted to respond to murder with murder—and that of an innocent man of God. The Bible provides the general rule for conduct—the golden rule (Mat. 7:12)—and provides more specific rules to govern our responses when we have been wronged or when we have known others to be wronged (Rom. 12:17-13:5; 1 Pet. 4:15-16; et al.).

A so-called *morality* without godliness, while it may cringe at some of the debauchery and

atrocities in the world, tends to overlook one's shortcomings. When Jehoram heard what the woman said about her son, he blamed God's prophet, Elisha. Perhaps he should have considered whether his **own** wickedness might have brought on the famine Israel suffered. But really, how can we assess our morality without an external standard? Longfellow observed:

Morality without religion is only a kind of dead reckoning—an endeavor to find our place on a cloudy sea by measuring the distance we have run, but without any observation of the heavenly bodies.

But once we have the Word of God, we each have “a lamp unto my feet, And a light unto my path” (Psa. 119:105).

Without God and godliness, there can be no morality. Indeed, some would wish to rid us of God, but that is often because they more urgently want to rid us of morality. Radical feminist Gloria Steinem said, “The art of morality is behaving as if everything we do matters.” But this

morality is an illusion—True morality only exists if everything we do **does** matter. Indeed, it does because God exists. He has given us a standard and will judge us according to our works. One can observe that with the removal of God and His Word from public bastions has come the degradation of morality. Morality is essential to the welfare of our society, and godliness is crucial to the existence of our morality. Let us determine to see the promulgation not only of morality but of godliness. “Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come” (1 Tim. 4:8).

Works Cited

Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth. Notable Quotes.com. Accessed 29 Aug 2024. <http://notable-quotes.com/l/longfellow_henry_wadsworth_ii.html>.
Steinem, Gloria. AZQuotes.org. Accessed 29 Aug 2024. <<https://www.azquotes.com/quote/812719>>.

Union City, TN

Our Secular Society

Johnny Ramsey

Call it materialism, hedonism, or humanism; our number one problem in America today is a lack of spirituality that clearly shows our emphasis is in the wrong place. We serve mammon rather than God (Mat. 6:24), and the most popular philosophy in our era goes back to Epicurus. His shallow ethic taught men to wallow in the vagaries of today because there would be no tomorrow. How startled such folk will be when God brings every work into Judgment (Ecc. 12:14) on that appointed Day (Acts 17:31). It is impossible for people who only stress physical pleasure “in the here and now” to be very sincere about any serious situation. Such folk agree heartily with Oscar Wilde, who wrote a century ago:

“A little sincerity is a dangerous thing and a great deal of it is absolutely fatal.”

When one's highest value is the furtherance of material progress, he will make no actual contribution to any community or nation. In fact, the selfish—even brutal—world we live in is the result of spoiled, ego-centered brats who never grow up. In Romans 12 and the second stanza of Philippians (2:2), we are told to esteem others better than ourselves and to look beyond our needs to help others. Rather than greedy, grasping personal thrust, our sojourn should be one of contentment and not covetousness (Heb. 13:5). The one thing we should pursue is to please our Maker (Psa. 27:4). We must realize, as Hezekiah did, that all mundane things are “Nehustan”—only a piece of junk! (2 Kin. 18). W. O. Cushing brilliantly wrote:

Under His wings, what a refuge in sorrow:
How the heart longingly turns to His rest!

Often when earth has no balm for my healing,
There I find comfort and there I am blest.

In this life, the devoted Christian finds peace beyond compare (Phi. 4:7), while the teeming masses seeking wealth, ease, and fame lead a chaotic, misspent existence on this earth that holds no real joy to those with no eternal purpose. Since “the earth is the Lord’s,” only those who seek to glorify the Creator truly understand we are only here to glorify him (1 Cor. 10:31). The genuine riches of the earth are found in Christ Jesus. The Laodiceans of the first century had everything but the Lord and were, therefore, poor and miserable in the midst of great material wealth (Rev. 3:14). Like the rich men of James 5:1-3, they would not live to enjoy their secular love. Covetousness is idolatry (Col. 3:5), and such emphasis makes fools of us (Luke 12:15-21). Two centuries ago, William Cowper wrote sterling words: “Riches have wings and grandeur is a dream.”

And one of Fanny Crosby’s greatest songs tells us:

Not for ease or worldly pleasure
Not for fame my prayer shall be;
Gladly will I toil and suffer,
Only let me walk with Thee.

Esau was a profane or secular person (Heb. 12:16) who thought more of food and folly than his spiritual welfare. Millions in our day are closely related to him! Lot’s decision in favor of Sodom as a hometown was based upon the same value system most of us follow. The passionate speech of Demetrius in Acts 19 reminds us of folk we have known who cry loudly when their pocketbook is threatened. Those who erected the infamous Tower of Babel (Gen. 11) only tried to make a name for themselves! Does that sound familiar? Conversely, apostles of Christ desired spiritual health for their friends (Gal. 6:18; 3 John 2), and Jesus taught us to be willing to give up all worldly possessions to be a part of His kingdom (Mat. 13:44-45).

Materialism is a subtle but genuine enemy of the Gospel system. May we be wise enough to identify it in our lives and crush it lest Satan gain an advantage over us (2 Cor. 2:11). For the Bible clearly teaches that as long as we truly seek the Lord, we shall prosper in the things that count (2 Chr. 26:5).

May we never forget these valuable words:
Christ must be Lord of all, or He will not be Lord at all!

Deceased

We must plan to do good, not evil. God’s example demonstrates the importance of planning. He purposed man’s redemption (Rom. 8:28), the church (Eph. 3:10-11), the temple (Heb. 8:5), etc. (cf. Gen. 12:1-7). Likewise, God’s servants need a plan to succeed in His service (Luke 14:26-33; Dan. 1:8; Psa. 17:3; Acts 11:23; 2 Cor. 9:7). What other important endeavors will we succeed without a plan?

Consider the forethought needed to build a house, run a business, a household, program a computer, etc. Worthwhile activities, to be successful, require planning. Likewise, to change your life, you need a specific, practical checklist of steps you will take to change. Analyze the circumstances or causes that lead you to fail to do right, then plan how to avoid those causes. It may help you write down your plan and modify it as needed. This plan will include some specific points we are studying and other points that fit your problem. Many people fail to change to please God because they never planned to succeed. They did not plan to fail, but they failed to plan!

Author Unknown

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermon Outlines

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

Bible Class: Christian Doctrine

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/Christian_Doctrine.html

Bible Class: 1 Thessalonians

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/1_Thessalonians.html

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Sauflay Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Nelda King

Carla Burleson

Dot Dodd

Bill Busch

Please Remember

January 19

Birthdays and Anniversaries Get-together will be held after the afternoon service, in the zone room.

January 29

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

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 2

January 13, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

Narrow-Minded

Brad Green

Often, faithful Christians are accused of being “narrow-minded.” It is a heinous attack that is, most times, untrue. Still, however, the claim is made and promulgated as fact to all who will listen. How many times has Satan successfully damaged (in the eyes of the world) the reputation of a faithful servant of Christ with a simple claim based on little or nothing at all? In our brotherhood today, elderships are “marking” and “withdrawing fellowship” from men based only on claims, rather than evidence. Whether the claim is true or not, those who have been *marked* have had their character tarnished in the eyes of individuals who do not know them. So, it is with the claim, “narrow-minded.” It is a pejorative. It is a belittling label that no one desires to own. It is an assertion that usually places the accused on the defensive and “back on their heels.” Perhaps, that is the primary purpose of the term—to avoid answering Scriptural questions, the onus is transferred from the one being questioned to the questioner. Sadly, many in error have been able to “slide under the radar” by hurling a “You are narrow-minded,” or “You are a ‘legalist.’” I was once accused of being a *legalist*. I told my accuser to name what I had done that was legalistic, and I would confess my sin and repent publicly on Sunday morning. The man’s reply—silence. It was just a claim.

As Christians, we must be “Christ-minded” (Phi. 2:5). Jesus and His Word must be our standard for how narrow or broad-minded we are.

Whatsoever has been bound and loosed by God in Heaven is what we should teach, and practice as being bound or loosed here on Earth (Mat. 16:19). God’s Word, and all that is to be bound or loosed, is and has always been “settled in Heaven” (Psa. 119:89). One who narrows or broadens God’s boundaries sins and must repent. We must not be narrow-minded nor broad-minded and the only judge is God’s Word (John 12:48). Those who are truly “narrow-minded” or “broad-minded” according to the standard of God’s Word may be shocked. Those who make such allegations may be met with a “Thou *art* the man” (2 Sam. 12:7), after a sincere and honest examination of the Truth (John 17:17).

Consider:

- One who teaches that man is saved by faith (or grace) only, eliminates God’s requirements of repentance (Luke 13:3), confession (Acts 8:36), baptism (2:38), and faithful living (Rev. 2:10). Those who teach such are “narrow-minded” because they have narrowed God’s laws where God did not.
- One who teaches that Jesus only shed His blood for those He predetermined to be saved (Limited Atonement), limits the power of God’s love, grace, and mercy. Jesus said He died for the sins of the whole world (John 3:16-17; 1 John 2:1-2). Therefore, teaching Limited Atonement is Scripturally “narrow-minded.”

- One who teaches that an act of the Holy Spirit, separate and apart from the Word of God, is needed for one to be saved, limits the power of the Gospel (Rom. 1:16-7) and is therefore “narrow-minded.”
- One who teaches that there are many faiths and not just one (Eph. 4:5), there are many churches not just one (4:5; 1:22-23), and that fellowship can be shared with anyone who is *religious* (cf. 2 John 9-11), broadens God’s boundaries and are therefore loosening where God did not.

No one wants to be called an ugly or unflattering name. Sadly, Jesus warns that His faithful servants will receive the hatred of the world (Mat. 10:22). It must be our contention, however, to not be swayed by mere claims and pejoratives. We must be true to the Heavenly standard of God’s Word. We must not be narrow-minded (i.e., bind where God did not) and we must not be “broad-minded” (i.e., loose where God did not). We must have the mind of Christ (Phi. 2:5).

Lenoir City, TN

Who Is the Antichrist?

Wayne Jackson

Dispensationalism, which is currently the most popular form of premillennialism, has much to say these days about the antichrist. According to dispensational theologians, the “antichrist” is a man, *now living*, who will soon rise to the position of a worldwide dictator. In his book, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (Zondervan 1970), Hal Lindsey asserts that the antichrist, whom he styles “The Future Fuehrer,” will “come to power just before the return of Christ” (140) and, as Lindsey further says, “we believe that according to all the signs, we are in the general time of his coming” (133). Numerous other books, as well as cultic movies, have similarly suggested that a fierce individual, identified in the Bible as “the antichrist,” is soon to make his dreadful presence universally felt by launching a program of terror and suffering.

Such a view finds absolutely no support in the Bible. *Antikristos* is found five times in four New Testament passages—all in John’s epistles (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7). In his chapter on the antichrist, it is quite significant that Lindsey *never once alludes to these verses!* (87-102). And the reason is apparent; the Biblical information simply does not fit his theory. Note:

(1) There is not *one specific person* denominated “the antichrist”; instead, John plainly says that

“many antichrists” have arisen (1 John 2:18; cf. 2 John 7).

(2) The Bible does not affirm that the antichrist is some sinister, prophetic individual *who is to appear in the 1980s*. There were antichrists in the first century. “Even now,” the apostle writes, “have there arisen **many** antichrists” (1 John 2:18; 4:3).

A careful analysis of John’s usage of this term reveals that “antichrist” is a general word employed to suggest a spirit of unbelief and rebellion that manifests in various ways in the past and present.

(1) *Atheism* is antichrist, for it denies the existence of the Father and the deity of his Son (1 John 2:22; cf. Luke 10:16).

(2) The *Docetists* of the late first century were antichrists who denied that Jesus became flesh (cf. 1 John 4:2-3).

(3) The ancient *Gnostics* were antichrists (as are their modern counterparts, the Watchtower Witnesses) in repudiating the deity of the Lord Jesus (cf. John 1:1; 20:28).

(4) The old *Sabellian* sects, together with the so-called “oneness” groups of today, are antichrist for they refuse to distinguish between “the Father **and** the Son” (1 John 2:22) as separate Persons within the Godhead.

(5) Those who have usurped the prerogatives of deity by claiming to *be* God or His *personal representative* are likewise antichrist. Such characters as “Father Divine,” Jim Jones of the Peoples’ Temple, and the Roman papacy fall into this category.

(6) In the final analysis, *any* person who deliberately rejects the authority of the Son of God, thus suggesting, as in the parable of the pounds,

“We will not that this man [Christ] reign over us” (Luke 19:14), is of the spirit of the antichrist.

An intelligent, systematic approach to the sacred text of the Bible would demolish the sensational, near-hysterical theories of many modern-day sects. May we encourage our religious friends to this end.

Deceased

There Is a Homeland

H. L. Gradowith (Tim Smith)

For His special people there is a Homeland,
When we reach its fair shore with Him we shall stand;
With none of the troubles of life...
No heartaches, no sorrows or strife...
That which we’ve committed to Him is secure
By Calvary’s blood we all shall be made pure!
We’ve all made bad errors in our sinful past,
We’ve all been ashamed of the shadow we’ve cast...
But, thanks to His blood, we are free!
The blood He shed on Calvary!

He sees us as innocent, sinless and pure!
Bring your spirits ailments to Him for the cure!
Some wander here aimlessly all their lives thru,
Bewildered, confused, knowing not what to do...
But His special people He’ll guide...
His guidance leads them to His side!
For His special people there is a Homeland,
When we reach its fair shore with Him we shall stand!

Deceased

Why I Want to Go to Heaven

Mike Demory

1. I sure do not want the alternative.
2. I do not want to disappoint the Lord, who died so heaven might be my home.
3. I can live a better life on earth and please my Lord.
4. Because I do not want to encourage the devil!
5. For the sake of my influence now.
6. There will be no evil there—no sin or temptation!
7. To be with God and Christ and all faithful Christians.
8. To meet spiritual family members I have only read and heard of.
9. For the beauty and splendor to be found there.
10. To reach my goal and fulfill my hope.
11. Because there will be no suffering, darkness, or despair.
12. It will be a place of joy, peace, happiness, and eternal bliss.
13. Because there will be no war or hatred to surround us.
14. To continue the sweet fellowship Christians have on earth.
15. So I can praise God in person forever.
16. To express my gratitude to God face to face.
17. Because it will mean that I lived faithfully.
18. To live with God—what could be better?

Mexico, MO

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermon Outlines

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

Bible Class: Christian Doctrine

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/Christian_Doctrine.html

Bible Class: 1 Thessalonians

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/1_Thessalonians.html

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Sauflay Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Nelda King

Carla Burleson

Dot Dodd

Bill Busch

Please Remember

January 19

Birthdays and Anniversaries Get-together will be held after the afternoon service, in the zone room.

January 29

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

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 3

January 20, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

Three Things Standing in the Way of Repentance

Charles Pogue

In Luke 13:3, Jesus said, I tell you, “I tell you Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” When Peter and the other apostles were asked by those on Pentecost who were pricked in their hearts what they must do, the first thing they were told was to repent. No one can be saved except he repents of his sins. Not all will repent of their sins in order to come to the Lord in obedience. Why will they not? There are essentially three things one or more of which may stand in the way of one repenting.

The first hindrance to repentance is a failure to understand what it is. I was once told by a sister in Christ her understanding of repentance was to admit one has sinned. No, that is confession. Some others say repentance is being sorry for sin. There is a sorrow involved in repentance (2 Cor. 7:10). Without one being sorry for his sin he will not repent, but repentance goes beyond merely admitting to or being sorry for one’s sins. Repent, from the Greek *metanoeo* means a change of mind. That change of mind means one has decided to quit sinning and do what is right. His repentance is manifested by his future actions. Preacher brethren used to refer to repentance with the statement, repentance is a change of heart which results in a change of life. One can be sorry he has sinned without repenting because he is sorry for the last act of the sin he committed but has not made up his mind to avoid the next one. Ignorance of what

repentance is stands in the way of some repenting of their sins.

A second barrier to repentance is a lack of knowledge that what one does is a sin. This is exceedingly dangerous because a failure to recognize sin as sin does not make one guiltless of it when he has done it. Ultimately, one can go to his grave believing he is in a saved condition but is not because he never studied, reasoned enough, nor made the necessary application of the Scripture to identify sin as sin. Many members of the church we fear will find themselves lost on the day of judgment because while they say I would not commit the sins of fornication or foul language; they fail to avoid entertainment sources wherein those sins are prominent. I admit to focusing on the issue of corrupt entertainment in much of my writing. I do so because it is a huge problem among members of the church, many of them not recognizing it is sin, but it is.

It is quite possible Simon the Sorcerer did not know his offering to purchase the ability to lay on one’s hands and impart the miraculous gifts of the Spirit was a sin because when Peter told him it was, he immediately asked Peter to pray for him (Acts 8:24). In this context, it would not hurt any of us to have the attitude Simon did when he learned what he tried to do was sinful.

The third thing which interferes with one coming to repentance is an unwillingness to do so. Sin carries with it certain pleasures as Hebrews

11:25 points out. One who loves the world more than he loves God will be attracted to the things of the world which are encapsulated in the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and pride or vainglory of life (1 John 2:16). Verse 15 states if one loves the world the love of the Father is not in him. The lack of that love is manifested by his unwillingness to repent. One may be given to hold on to sin by the attraction of the world's offer of wealth or fame, or purely because he loves things which are evil.

There is no question this third thing standing in the way of repentance is the most difficult to deal with because it involves a stubborn heart which must be changed before repentance can take place.

As Christians, we must understand what repentance is, be knowledgeable as to when repentance is needed, and be willing to leave the grips of sin in order to have the desire to repent and have forgiveness.

Deceased

Daniel, A Man of Indisputable Character

In Daniel 2:1, Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that troubled his spirit, but none of his men could recall and interpret his dream (2:2-12). However, with God's help, Daniel could do so. The dream consisted of a "great image" made of various materials (2:28, 31-45). According to the dream, the Babylonian Empire, represented by the head of gold, would be destroyed by the Medo-Persian Empire, represented by the breast and arms of silver. In Daniel 5:30-31, the dream came to fruition when Belshazzar was killed, and Darius the Median took the kingdom.

In most instances, a ruler of a conquered kingdom would not be preserved to serve in any capacity in the occupying kingdom. Yet, Daniel, now second ruler of Babylon (5:29), was made one of three presidents who reported directly to Darius to ensure that the kingdom was operating efficiently (6:1-2). Daniel's reputation must have preceded him. From his youth, he was dedicated to God first, allowing his dedication to lead him in every aspect of his life (1:8-9). He challenged the king, when necessary (1:8-9), told the truth even when it hurt (4:19; Pro. 27:6), and maintained a reputation of dependability (Dan. 5:10-11).

Unfortunately, many people soil their reputations and have difficulty influencing others for good after that (Ecc. 12:1; 10:1; 1 Cor. 9:27). After a period, Darius noticed that Daniel's reputation was warranted. His true character was consistent

with his reputation, and the king promoted Daniel to "chief" president (Dan. 6:3). Have you ever revered someone only to determine that their character was far different than their reputation (Luke 6:26)? Daniel was a man whose character matched perfectly with his reputation. The promotion of Daniel provoked jealousy and envy among other servants in the kingdom. Envy is a powerful force and can cause one to go to great lengths to destroy the well-being of another (Pro. 27:4; Mat. 27:18). The other servants sought any pretext ("occasion") in Daniel's life to bring accusations against him. However, they had a problem. There was no error or fault to be found (Dan. 6:4). They determined, then, that the only pretext for punishment would have to derive from Daniel's faithfulness to God's Law. Wouldn't it be wonderful if all Christians could maintain such good conduct that their unwavering devotion to God was the only accusation against them? Their influence would be extraordinary (Mat. 5:16; 1 Pet. 3:16-17).

Like most plans originating out of envy, the plan to harm Daniel began with a lie. The other servants approached the king and told him that "all the presidents" and servants had met and determined that a decree should be made that prayers could only be offered to the king for thirty days. If the decree were broken, the violator would be thrown into a den of lions (Dan. 6:7). Daniel, the most influential president, was conveniently left out of

the meeting. Blinded by his ego, Darius signed the law according to the Medes and the Persians, preventing it from being changed (6:8-9). The trap had been set; would Daniel be caught?

Daniel was not “caught,” but he knowingly violated the decree. After the decree had been signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open...he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime (6:10).

What courage! Many excuses could have relieved his conscience from urging him to serve his God. Instead, with deep-seated trust, he did according to his custom and humbly prayed to Almighty

God three times daily. What is your custom? Is it one of service to God (Luke 4:16)?

Daniel’s dependability was noticed not only by the king but also by his enemies. They found him just where they expected, on bended knee in prayer to his God (Dan. 6:11). Where would the world expect to find you? Daniel was thrown into the lion’s den, but the God he continually served delivered him unscathed (6:16, 26-27; Heb. 11:33). Daniel’s reputation, character, courage, and dependability serve to challenge God’s people today to maintain faithful lives before Him.

Author Unknown

“Some contend that prayer is acceptable to God only when one kneels.”

Guy N. Woods

This contention is based on the view that kneeling is a more reverent posture in prayer than standing, but this is not necessarily true. Humility is an attitude of the heart, not a position of the body. Often, in the Biblical period, petitioners prostrated themselves on the ground in worship, and, to this day, this is the posture assumed by Muslims in their devotion to Allah. This is the position of the elders before the Lamb in Revelation 5:8-14. John fell down before the feet of the angel who gave him a preview of the River of Life and the Throne of God (22:8).

Kneeling is often mentioned in the Scriptures as the position taken in prayer (2 Chr. 6:13; Ezra 9:5; Dan. 6:10; Luke 22:41; Acts 7:60; Eph. 3:14), but so also is *standing* (Mark 11:25; Luke 18:13); and our Lord on the cross, prayed in a position which was neither standing nor kneeling. Those who insist that the proper posture in prayer is kneeling concede that in offering thanks for the emblems on the Lord’s table and during the dismissal of the congregation, it is to stand, and they attempt to distinguish between the giving of

thanks on such occasions and prayer. These views result far more from custom than from Scripture. Even the great and good David Lipscomb wrote:

The scriptural declarations and examples are that we should stand up to give thanks but kneel down to pray. When the leading purpose is thanksgiving, it is proper to stand up; when the design is prayer, kneeling is proper.

It is indeed proper, and while not in keeping with custom, it would be equally proper to kneel in thanksgiving before the Lord. However, it is not required that any exclusive bodily position be taken as an acceptable prayer. The state of the heart and manner of life determines whether our prayers are heard and not physical or bodily positions. One may and ought to pray often. Prayer may be uttered while reclining in bed, seated at the wheel of an automobile, or flying at incredible speeds miles above the earth in an airliner.

Kneeling in prayer is pleasing to God, but we must not make laws touching these and any other matters respecting our relationships with God.

Deceased

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermon Outlines

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

Bible Class: Christian Doctrine

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/Christian_Doctrine.html

Bible Class: 1 Thessalonians

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/1_Thessalonians.html

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



A good influence is one of the noblest things we can possess in life, and one of the greatest blessings we can leave after death.

W. W. Bustard, Deceased

Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Nelda King

Carla Burseson

Dot Dodd

Bill Busch

Please Remember

January 29

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

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 4

January 27, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

The Establishment of the Church

N. B. Hardeman

When the battle was being fought between the church of Christ and denominations, and when brethren were willing to contend earnestly for the faith in public discussion, no questions were of more importance than the time when and the place where the church of our Lord was inaugurated, set up, and established. A clear conception of its origin has much to do with a correct understanding of what the will of the Lord is.

By the church, we mean that spiritual realm over which Christ reigns as head and in which the Holy Spirit dwells. Let it be firmly stated that no such institution existed on this earth until the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ. Denominationalism is founded upon the opposite of this fundamental truth; hence, their minds are blinded, and a veil is over their faces until this day.

Daniel prophesied 600 years before the birth of Christ that the time would come when the God of heaven would set up a kingdom. The Jews expected such and were ever looking for someone who, in the power of God, would proclaim himself king. When finally, Jesus appeared, He declared, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is **at hand**" (Mark 1:15). Daniel said, in Daniel 2:44, that the God of heaven would set up a kingdom in the days of the fourth earthly kingdom—i.e., in the days of the Roman kings.

When we open the New Testament, we find, in Matthew 3:1, that in those days came John the Bap-

tist, saying, "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Those were the days when the Caesars were on the throne of Rome, and the Herods were over Palestine. The time is AD 26. Jesus also said, in Matthew 4:17, "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." This was AD 31. In Matthew 10:7, Jesus sent forth the 12 under the first commission and bade them say, "The kingdom of heaven is **at hand**." In Luke 10:9, He ordered the 70 to say, "The kingdom of God is **come nigh unto you**." In Matthew 6:10, He taught the disciples to pray, "Thy kingdom come." In AD 32, He said to His disciples, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (18:3).

All of this shows that the kingdom, or church, had not been established, but such an event was **at hand and had come nigh unto them**. In Matthew 16:18, after Peter confessed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God, He declared, "upon this rock I **will build** my church." It could not mean He intended only to enlarge it since, in the statement, He referred to the foundation.

Time passes, and the Saviour says in Luke 22:18, "I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God **shall come**." In Mark 9:1, Jesus said, "That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God **come with power**." Christ here plainly says that some to whom He was speaking would live to see the kingdom "come with

power.” The kingdom was to “come with power.” But **when** did **the power** come? After His resurrection, Christ said, “Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). In Acts 1:8, He said, “Ye shall receive **power** after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.”

Now note:

1. The kingdom and power were to come together.
2. The power and the Spirit were to come together.
3. The Holy Spirit came on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ (2:1-4).

From these statements of undeniable facts, the conclusion that the church was established on the day of Pentecost is forced upon us. No living man can refute the arguments thus made.

In Acts 2:30, Peter said that God had sworn to David that of the fruit of his loins, He would raise up Christ to **sit on His throne**. The purpose of the resurrection is here clearly stated. If, indeed, Christ today is not on David’s throne, the resurrection might have been postponed for thousands of years. Furthermore, in Acts 15:16-17, James quotes Amos as saying:

After this [the sifting of Israel] I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will **set it up**: That the residue of men **might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles**, upon whom my name is called.

The *tabernacle* of David means his house, family, and lineage. The last of David’s lineage to occupy the throne was Zedekiah. With his being carried away, in 587 BC, David’s tabernacle fell and passed into ruins. Six hundred years passed, but God had made an oath to David that another of his lineage should take his throne; hence, he “raised up Christ to sit on his throne.” If Christ is not now on David’s throne, the Gentiles, of whom we are, cannot seek the Lord and, therefore, are hopelessly lost. Any teaching contrary is

“Drifting? “Yes, that is what some people are saying. Some people are drifting, and it is a blessing in some ways. Some denominational preachers are drifting away from their former, favored doctrines and have come nearer the truth. Some of these well-loved and favored doctrines are now only relics of the past. It is true that some of our people have drifted into hurtful theories and have caused division and strife, while others have seen the error of their ways and have drifted away from errors. We should accept the truth wherever we find it, and that truth is always in the Word of God. Of course, some have gone on a “sit-down strike” and complained about the mistakes of others. Some of us need to drift away from stagnation.

E. M. Borden, Deceased

dishonoring to God and destructive to our fondest hopes and holiest desires.

When Jesus was thus exalted at the right hand of God, where He was made “King of kings, and Lord of lords,” He sent forth His Holy Spirit to give life and energy to that material made ready by John the Baptist. The Gospel was proclaimed that day, and Peter used the keys of the **kingdom** to open the door of the **church**. The kingdom is always called a matter of prophecy throughout the Old Testament and thus far in the New. Ever thereafter, it is spoken of as a historical fact.

Begin with Revelation and trace events backward. John says, “I...am...in the kingdom” (Rev. 1:9). Paul wrote Timothy how to behave himself in “the church of the living God” (1 Tim. 3:15). Again, he said the Colossians were delivered from the “power of darkness” and translated “into the kingdom of his dear Son” (Col. 1:13). In Acts 8:1 we read of a “great persecution against the church.” Acts 5:11 says that “great fear came upon all the church.” Acts 2:47 states that “the Lord

added to the church.” This brings us back to Pentecost, in the year AD 33, where the church, or kingdom, was established in Jerusalem where Zechariah said, “My house shall be built in it” (Zec. 1:16).

God raised up Christ to sit on David’s throne (Acts 2:30). Daniel said:

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to [to, not from] the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a **kingdom**, that all people, nations, and lan-

guages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his **kingdom** *that* which shall not be destroyed (Dan. 7:13-14).

Christ received this kingdom when He was borne heavenward with the clouds and came to the Ancient of days. His reign began when He sent the Holy Spirit from heaven to earth on Pentecost. He will continue to reign “till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death” (1 Cor. 15:25-26). Then shall He deliver the kingdom up to God.

Deceased

Negatives in Christian Living

Ken Chumbley

We hear a great deal about the power of positive thinking. There is an old song that tells us to “Accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative.” Certainly, no one who thinks clearly would want to take issue with the concept of one thinking and acting in a positive manner. Indeed, it is essential for Christian living that one think positively. No amount of negatives will make one a Christian.

However, it is impossible for us to “eliminate the negative” from our lives because there is a negative aspect to Christianity. Those who think that the negative has no place in the Bible needs to read the Bible again. The Ten Commandments of the Old Covenant and the Sermon on the Mount in the New Testament are two of many places where a negative aspect can be found in the Bible’s teaching.

Christians must realize that there are some things that they cannot do and still live lives that are pleasing to Almighty God. As we study the Scriptures, we find that there are long lists of sins which are set forth and we are plainly taught that “they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal. 5:19-21). Someone at one time made the statement that it takes “horse

sense” to say “nay” to certain things. For one to be a faithful Christian, it is necessary to say “no” to some things.

Let us look, for a moment, at that list in Galatians 5. Some of the things that we find mentioned in that list are envy, fornication, strife, hatred, drunkenness, and revellings. In the age and time in which we live there is a tendency to look upon these things without thinking about them too seriously, yet God’s Word plainly states that those who practice these and other like things will not enter into the kingdom of God.

Men have changed, but God does not change. Wrong practices can become so commonplace that we grow accustomed to them, we have become hardened. Our God is a holy God and thus is so opposed to the unholy that immorality is always an offense to Him. His thoughts are not our thoughts and neither are His ways our ways.

Yes, let us be positive in areas where we can be positive, but let us never forget the negative aspect of the Christian faith and, by so doing, steer clear of those things which God has forbidden us to engage in.

Deceased

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermon Outlines

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

Bible Class: Christian Doctrine

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/Christian_Doctrine.html

Bible Class: 1 Thessalonians

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/1_Thessalonians.html

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Christ loves love into us. His love kindles ours as the sun kindles all the fires upon the planet. Every bit of love is but a fragment of the infinite love.

Author Unknown

Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Nelda King

Carla Burleson

Dot Dodd

Bill Busch

Please Remember

January 29

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

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 5

February 3, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

Bible Authority—What Is It?

Michael Demory

Pentecostalism has so pervaded society that religion has become subjective rather than the objective view God intended. Spirituality and religion in general are more about one's feelings, than about the truth and how or when the truth should be ascertained. Most people believe it is their *pastor* or *priest* who is the authority when it comes to religion and its doctrine. Forget about God and His inspired Word (revelation) to man.

Paul enjoined, in Colossians 3:17: "And whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (NKJV). In other words, in everything we believe, teach, or practice we are to have the Lord's authority (approval) for it. In the name of equals by the authority of (Acts 4:7). All Christians are obligated (required, duty-bound) to "walk by faith" (2 Cor. 5:7). In Romans 10:17 we find that "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Therefore, since God said we acquire our faith by hearing the Word of God, then common sense informs us that if there is no Word from God on any given subject, there can be no faith, and when there is no faith, there is no pleasing God (Heb. 11:6).

This matter is so important, that individuals are jeopardizing their souls by being members of religious groups that care nothing about God's authority. These groups have not taught their members about having Bible authority for what they believe, teach, and practice. Our purpose in

our articles is to bring to light subjects most of you dear readers have never heard or been taught. God has always required His authority in religious matters and daily living. You have heard the story of Nadab and Abihu in Bible classes, how they died by offering strange fire on the altar (Lev. 10:1-2). Why did God consume them with fire? Because they offered "strange fire" that was not authorized by God.

Our faith comes from hearing the Word of God which rests upon sufficient, conclusive, and compelling evidence that the Bible is exactly what it claims to be: the inspired, infallible, inerrant, and all-sufficient Word of the living God. Our faith is not a blind faith, but rests solidly upon conclusive and compelling evidence (Heb. 11:1). Faith does not mean absence of evidence. Therefore, there can be no faith if evidence does not exist. Yes, Thomas refused to believe the Lord had risen, but when Jesus presented him the evidence, Thomas believed (John 20:24-25). The evolutionist has faith, and as a Christian I have faith, my faith just happens to be supported by evidence, which the evolutionist does not have.

Since purpose of life on earth is to prepare each of us for eternity, God, through His Word, has provided us with the building blocks that will help us during our training. The New Testament is God's divine pattern for righteous living. Just as God gave Noah the pattern or blueprint for building the Ark for the saving of his household, and Moses

the pattern for building the tabernacle; so, He has also provided us the pattern for the church, Christian worship, and living. Sadly, most people cast aside God's Word in favor of man's creeds, manuals, statements of faith, catechisms, and methods. They choose to do that which is right in their own eyes (Jud. 17:6) rather than by God's authority, which means without Biblical faith.

Logically speaking, the Scriptures teach that in Christian work and worship we must do only that which is authorized by the Word of God. Therefore, it is possible for human beings to ascertain what is and what is not authorized by the Word of God. There is no authority from God to change, substitute, add, or subtract, from the New Testament Law of Christ. We are not authorized by God to allow what God condemns (alcohol, gambling, homosexuality, adultery, divorce for any reason, etc.), nor are we authorized to condemn what God allows (eating all meat, marrying, working on the sabbath, no foot washing, or women not wearing veils, etc.).

Since God's inspired Word, the New Testament is provided for all human beings today to follow, anything not found in the New Testament is not authorized. God will not accept the worship of anyone taking part in acts that He has not approved of. Cain's worship was not accepted by God (Gen. 4:2-5). God did not accept the worship of the Israelites when He said, "try offering that kind of sacrifice to your governor!" (Mal. 1:8). God does not authorize based upon our likes or dis-

likes, our erroneous conclusions about Scripture, what is popular, or majority rule. He does not authorize by human tradition, long-standing practices, silence of the Scriptures, or what some highly respected individual believes or teaches.

The Bible authorizes by what it says—not by what it does not say! Nowhere does the Bible authorize counting beads, praying to dead saints, or praying to Mary. Nowhere does the Bible authorize praise teams, the use of instrumental music, women preachers, elders, deacons, prayer, and song leaders. Nor does the Bible authorize more than one church to exist. Jesus gave authority for only one church, **His** church—the church of Christ (Mat. 16:18), and that is the only church that is discussed in the New Testament. All denominational churches today, are anywhere from 1500 to 2000 years too late, with founders of their own churches. If we are wrong, then we would appreciate someone showing us where the Bible authorizes more than one church, or anything else we have said in this article.

Instead, individuals will choose to hide behind their anonymity when they disagree. Is your doctrine that weak, that you are unable or unwilling to demonstrate it is superior to what we have been teaching? Our purpose is not to cast aspersions upon any one person, but to expose the errors of the doctrines you have been taught. If you believe they are not errors, then please, let us reason together (Isa. 1:18).

Mexico, MO

The Sin of Envy

Envy is defined as the "Discontent at the excellence or good fortune of another. Frequently in the Bible with the distinct idea of malice or spite" (*Cruden's Complete Concordance*). Envy is distinguished from jealousy. "We are jealous of our own; we are envious of another man's possessions. Jealousy fears to lose what it has; envy is pained at seeing another have" (*Crabb's English Synonyms*).

The Bible catalogs envy among "the works of the flesh" (Gal. 5:19-21) in distinction from "the fruit of the Spirit" (5:22-23). It is satanic in nature and origin. In Romans 1, envy is classed as covetousness, maliciousness, strife, deceit, malignity, and murder, which are among the deadly sins of the pagan world. No vice is more ruinous to a character or more condemned by God's Word. It

is a sin of disposition, which is both mean and wicked. Envy is outrageously malicious because it seeks to deny or destroy the good it sees in others. It “traduceth even the best Actions thereof and turneth them into an ill Odour” (Bacon). A man who lacks a certain admirable quality may envy that virtue in others. “Men’s Mindes will either feed upon their owne Good or upon others Evill” (Bacon), and envy tries to turn others good to evil to feed upon it.

Solomon declares, “But envy is the rottenness of the bones” (Pro. 14:30). Like a cancer, it eats the soul’s life. Envy has committed some of the foulest deeds in history.

(1) Envy committed the first crime in history. It was envy that caused Cain to slay Abel (Gen. 4:1-8). Some men today envy the positions and talents of others and murder their reputations.

(2) Envy delivered Christ to be crucified. Pilate “knew that for envy they had delivered him up” (Mat. 27:18). So, envy committed what men have called the blackest crime of history.

(3) Envy sold Joseph into slavery. In Genesis 37, we have the account of Joseph sold by his brethren into Egyptian servitude. This cruel deed was the fruit of envy. “And his brethren envied him” (37:11).

“Love envieth not” (1 Cor. 13:4). This is true because envy has its roots in selfishness. The person who envies is self-centered and self-seeking, but love “seeketh not its own” (13:5). Love is unselfish; therefore, there can be no envy where there is love. A mother does not envy her daughter’s dress or hat; neither does a father envy the success and fame of his son. When there is envy among preachers, elders, deacons, song leaders, Bible teachers, and other members of the church, it is proof that there is a lack of love for each other. Thus, as envy manifests itself, it also reveals other basic sins which produce this malignant evil.

The newborn babe in God’s family is commanded to put away envy (2 Pet. 2:1-2). It has no

Let Us Go On

Some of us stay at the Cross;
Some of us wait at the Tomb,
Quickened and raised together with Christ,
Yet lingering still in the gloom;
Some of us bide at the Passover feast,
With Pentecost all unknown—
The triumphs of grace in the heavenly place
That our Lord has made our own.

If the Christ who died had stopped at the
Cross,
His work had been incomplete;
If the Christ who was buried had stayed in
the Tomb,
He had only know defeat;
But the way of the Cross never stops at the
Cross,
And the way of the Tomb leads on
To victorious grace in the heavenly place
Where the risen Lord has gone.

Author Unknown

place in the life of a Christian. When a man of mediocre ambition and inferior thought spends his life envying another man for his eminent success, his notable influence, and his high ideals, it will dwarf, wither, and shrivel the soul of the envious, fill his life with hatred and bitterness, and make his life miserable and wretched. To love is to rejoice in another’s good and to seek his welfare; this is Godlike. To envy is to cherish the murderous hatred of Cain, who slew his brother; this is satanic.

Work Cited

Bacon, Francis. Bacon’s Essays/Of Envie. Wikisource. Accessed 20 Aug 2024. <https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Bacon%27s_Essays/Of_Envie>.

Author Unknown

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermon Outlines

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

Bible Class: Christian Doctrine

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/Christian_Doctrine.html

Bible Class: 1 Thessalonians

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/1_Thessalonians.html

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sympathy

Our deepest sympathy is extended to the family of Dot Dodd, who passed from this life on January 29, 2025. Dot had been a faithful member of the Bellview congregation since 1964. Please keep Dot's family in your prayers.

Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Nelda King

Carla Burleson

Bill Busch

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 6

February 10, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

God's Warning of Judgment

Marvin L. Weir

Plague after plague fell upon the hardhearted Egyptian Pharaoh. The land was reeling from the mighty hand of God. Water was turned to blood (Exo. 7:20), frogs covered the land (8:6), lice afflicted man and beast (8:17), swarms of flies corrupted the land (8:24), deadly disease killed the Egyptian's cattle (9:6), and then terrible boils broke out upon man and beast (9:9). Four more plagues will follow before Pharaoh reluctantly relents and lets Israel depart from Egypt (hail, locusts, darkness, and the death of the firstborn). But let us focus our study, for now, upon this seventh plague from God!

The **evidence** of God's existence and mighty power is not enough to convince some men to yield to His will. We see:

God Warning of Judgment!

God's words are plain: "Behold, to-morrow about this time I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail" (9:18). First, we see His "I will" was certain and sure. The wrath of hail was coming, but there was still time for protection. Second, the hail was to occur tomorrow, leaving no time to postpone the preparation for shelter.

God warns today that life is short. James says, "whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. What is your life? For ye are a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (Jam. 4:14). Although the Bible says, "The judge standeth before the doors" (5:9) and "now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2), many, today,

procrastinate and live as if there will be many tomorrows.

God's Earnest Entreaty!

"Now therefore send, hasten in thy cattle and all that thou hast in the field; *for* every man and beast that shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die" (Exo. 9:19). The judgment of God was coming (the hail). Still, God offers the people a way of escape (His mercy). First, the people and beasts were to be "brought home" for safety. Every living thing left outside would die. Second, such was to be done with haste lest time run out!

Today, we are reminded that salvation is found **only** "in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 2:10). In case one objects to saying that salvation is **only** in Christ, I refer you to the words of Peter who stated of Jesus, "And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). One who fails to seek refuge **in** Christ will perish. Obeying the Gospel is the **only** way to get into Christ. One must hear God's Word (Rom. 10:17), repent of his sins (Luke 13:3), confess Christ as God's only begotten (Rom. 10:9-10), and be baptized for the remission of his sins (Acts 2:38). Baptism is the final step in God's plan of salvation that puts one into Christ (Gal. 3:27) where salvation is **located!** Baptism is a burial or immersion and occurs

before one has newness of life (Rom. 6:4). Now, to those who delight in teaching that baptism has nothing to do with one's salvation, reread Romans 6:4 and argue with God as to when salvation (newness of life) occurs!

Many today reject God's plan for safety in Christ Jesus. Others, while probably knowing they ought to obey the Gospel, convince themselves God's judgment will not come for a few more days, weeks, or years. Listen to God and seek refuge at once!

The Obedience of Faith!

"He that feared the word of Jehovah among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses" (Exo. 9:20). God was merciful to the Egyptians in giving them one day of grace. All who believed God obeyed His message and fled to their homes for protection. This is a classic example of people being saved by grace through faith. There is nothing mysterious or miraculous about their faith. Their faith came from **hearing** and **obeying** the Word of God. We know the fate of those who heard God but refused to take shelter.

People today must also **hear** and **act** upon the Word of God. Romans 10:17 says, "So belief *cometh* of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." God speaks today only through His Word (Heb. 1:1-2). His Word must be accepted

as truth (John 17:17) and obeyed (14:15). There is a vast difference between believing in God and believing God. Many people believe that God exists but are unwilling to comply with His divine will. Most of humanity still insists on being saved the way they want and worshipping the way they want to worship. One who will not do what God says does not believe God! This truth should be simple enough for any accountable person to grasp!

The Price of Unbelief!

"And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field" (Exo. 9:25). Unbelief leads to indifference and indifference leads to destruction! The hail killed the Egyptians who did not flee to their homes for safety as God had promised. If people humble themselves and are taught, Bible history is a wonderful teacher!

Today, God warns that those who refuse to seek salvation **in Christ** will be eternally lost. Christ is indeed the Savior, but He is the author of salvation **only** to those "**that obey him**" (Heb. 5:9). The question: "Do you believe salvation is **only** in Christ Jesus?" If so, will you obey the Gospel and be added to the Lord's church?

Blossom, TX

Of What Does Worship Consist?

Guy N. Woods

The American Standard Version, at Matthew 2:8, has a reference to a footnote defining *worship* as follows: "The Greek word denotes an act of reverence whether paid to a creature (see ch. 4:9; 18:26), or to the creator (see ch. 4:10)."

1. Worship, then, involves an act. It is incorrect to say that worship is simply and solely an attitude of heart. Since worship consists of acts, such acts are as involved in worship and as essential to it as the attitude which prompts them.

2. The Greek word for *worship* denotes an act...-*paid*. Worship involves an attitude that expresses itself in acts that find acceptance in the will of another. Worship, therefore, necessitates acts. The effort to disassociate acts from attitudes in worship was born of the desire to escape the opprobrium of adding unauthorized practices to the worship of God. Knowledgeable people who use instrumental music in worship know there is no authority in the New Testament for its use, and they seek

to avoid the charge of adding to the divine will by the allegation that, after all, worship does not involve acts but attitudes. Therefore, the instrument is not part of worship.

The effort fails for at least two reasons: (1) We have seen that it is based on the erroneous concept of what worship is; (2) it does not elude but merely postpones the fatal dilemma. This worship, which is alleged to be solely a matter of the heart and expresses itself not by divine law but by the will of the worshiper, is either restrained or unrestrained. If unrestrained, the will of the worshiper becomes the sole arbiter of the suitability of the act, thus leaving the one who worships free to resort to whatever expression they desire. The pompous worshiper behind stained glass windows in a grand cathedral, the Salvation Army lass with her tambourine, and the religious snake handler may all properly claim justification for their choices of expression. Acts 2:42 may be disregarded as the expression of the divine pattern, and thenceforth, we may be governed by our wishes and preferences in our worship of God.

If, however, no will worship is acceptable, but proper worship is restrained (as is the case—Col. 2:20-23), we may inquire, what is the restraining influence? We are thus brought back to where we should have started in any matter involving our

duty to God: What does the New Testament authorize us to do in worship? Under the guidance of inspired men, the early church continued *steadfastly* in the apostles' teaching, which included singing, the Lord's supper, the contribution, and prayers. These divinely given items are specifically said to have been how the first Christians worshiped (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2). Less than these, we cannot offer Him and be in conformity to His will; more than these, it is an unwarranted and officious intermeddling with the will of God.

It follows, therefore, that in this the Christian age, instrumental music is unauthorized and unacceptable in worshiping God. "It was used in the Old Testament." Yes, along with the burning of incense, the offering of animal sacrifices, and the practice of polygamy. These are not patterns we may properly follow today. The shadows of the old order have given way to the substance of the better way, and under the clear light of Christianity, such matters are conspicuous by their absence (Heb. 8:613). Let it be remembered and never forgotten that our Lord never commanded the use of instrumental music in worship, no apostle ever sanctioned it, no New Testament writer ever authorized it, and no apostolic church ever used it!

Deceased

Baptism in water was not for the Jews only, as some preachers seem to think. Baptism is for the remission of sins and is to all nations. "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39). At the house of Cornelius, Peter said: "I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (10:34-35). If God is not a respecter of persons, why demand baptism for the remission of sins of the Jews and then save the Gentiles without baptism? Cornelius was baptized. "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (10:48). "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16) was to both Jews and Gentiles. The Gospel was to the Jew first and then the Gentiles. The same Gospel that was preached to the Jews on Pentecost was the Gospel that was preached to the house of Cornelius.

E. M. Borden, Deceased

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermon Outlines

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

Bible Class: Christian Doctrine

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/Christian_Doctrine.html

Bible Class: 1 Thessalonians

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/1_Thessalonians.html

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Nelda King

Carla Burleson

Bill Busch

Please Remember

February 16

Birthdays and Anniversaries Get-together will be held after the afternoon service, in the zone room.

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley
Michael Hatcher
Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 7

February 17, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

How Long Halt Ye Between Two Opinions

Kent Bailey

The prophet Elijah was truly a man of great courage. Living in a time when compromise was the name of the game, Elijah stood both firmly and forthrightly for the cause of God's Truth, stating: "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord *be* God, follow him: but if Baal, *then* follow him. And the people answered him not a word" (1 Kin. 18:21).

In noting this situation, we observe that God's covenant people were without excuse for their compromise. They had adequate evidence to draw proper conclusions about God, the Law of Moses, and the exclusive nature of Israel's covenant relationship with Jehovah God. They did not need an endless amount of time to "study the issue" as such relates to Baalism, nor did God grant them the prerogative to determine the issue of fellowship with Baalism upon the basis of these false prophets being both "sincere and honest" in their convictions. The time had arrived for immediate action! They needed to make up their minds! Would they follow God or Baal?

As we note the condition of spiritual Israel (the New Testament church) in today's setting, we note the same attitude as Old Testament fleshly Israel. Among those involved in sinful practices, there are two different classes: (1) The outright apostate who openly avows false doctrine, and (2) The unstable, double-minded compromiser who alleges to believe the Truth, yet his actions speak to the contrary.

Can one imagine the godly prophet Elijah refusing to oppose the false prophets of Baal coming in to speak to an assembly of Israel on the pretext that "They have agreed not to preach or teach their views regarding Baal here?" Furthermore, could one possibly imagine Elijah extending fellowship to a fellow member of the nation of Israel compromising with his brethren in allowing a Baal worshipper to speak to an assembly of God's people with the mental rationalization, "Well, we don't agree with him on his views, but he is a man of integrity, so let's show him some patience and tolerance?" Or, perhaps, "Yes, I am aware of your past association, but I believe he is backing off from Baalism?" Brethren, "backing off" will not solve the sin problem. Repentance is what is needed!

The same situation of compromise exists within various congregations of God's people today. Have we grown so ignorant of the Word of God that we have forgotten that compromise with sin is just as wrong as the sin itself? In fact, one to be a partaker of sin is within itself a sin as well.

Elders, how long will you tolerate weak-kneed, worthless, spineless, generic preaching that would never offend the devil himself and that never distinguishes truth from error?

Preachers, how long, while professing to believe the Truth, will you continue to promote false teachers as men of integrity and cease to oppose them coming into the assemblies of God's people?

How long will you continue to attend apostate gatherings and, while in attendance, lead a prayer of blessing upon the enemies of God's Truth?

Church members, how long will you continue to support such open rebellion with time, talent, and hard-earned money, all because of your emotional attachment to brick and mortar?

When the final curtain of God's judgment falls, those among us who failed to be individuals of courage and conviction and have instead chosen to walk the paths of silence and compromise will undoubtedly be held accountable for their failure to stand (Jud. 5:23; Eph. 5:11; 2 John 9-11).

Calhoun, GA

So Much to Be Thankful For

Charles Pogue

Sometimes, you spend too much time dwelling on what is wrong in your life, right? I know exactly what you mean. I sit here typing these words with almost no feeling in my right hand. That makes it difficult to hit the keys. That hand has been that way for months. On top of that, when I lay down at night, that problem spreads to my left leg from the knee down to my foot. It is hard not to think about the things that are not what we wish they were. I am here to tell you, though, that you and I have much more to be thankful for than we do to be worried about.

Oh, we do, do we? Yes, indeed. I have been married to a wife who loves me and whom I love for over forty-one years. I am thankful for her. I have children and grandchildren who have a remarkable ability to make me laugh and feel good. I have a roof over my head, clothes to wear, and food to eat. I have this fellow who drives up daily and drops letters and other forms of communication from all over the country into a little box on a post right out in front of the house. Amazing! I just bet you have most or all of these things, too. But do you know what? We have other things for which we are even more thankful.

We have a God who loves us and who sent His Son to die for us (John 3:16). That God is so powerful that He spoke this world into existence (Gen. 1). He raised from the dead that same Son who died for me (Rom. 6:4). That son, Jesus Christ, lived without committing even one sin while He was on this earth (1 Pet. 2:22). And

because of those truths, I know that if I die before that Son returns, one day that same God will raise me up from the dead (John 6:54; 11:24). If I am faithful to God, because that Son died for me and rose again, and washed my sins away with His blood when I was baptized (Acts 22:16; Rom. 3:25; 1 Cor. 6:11; Eph. 1:7), heaven will be my home (Col. 1:5; 1 John 1:2; 2:25).

God has made wonderful provisions for those who love and obey Him so far as eternity goes, but we also have this promise concerning the cares and troubles of this life, "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (1 Pet. 5:7). You know what? Having almost no feeling in my right hand is not so bad. Why? Because I know that in the resurrection, I will have a new body, an incorruptible one (1 Cor. 15:42-43). That body will not experience any pain in heaven, for God will do away with all pain (Rev. 21:4).

Whether speaking about this world or the world to come, if he is a Christian and lives faithfully to Christ Jesus, there are more blessings to be thankful for than he can ever count. Yeah, I am thankful for that mailman who delivers the mail to the house, so I do not have to drive to the post office daily. But I am far more thankful for the Christ who died for me, that through Him, I can live eternally with Him, and I will not even have to be concerned about getting mail in heaven at all!

Deceased

Understanding the Synecdoche

Milton Smith

You might recall a figure of speech from school days known as the *synecdoche* (*si-nek'-di-kee*). A synecdoche is a clever figure of speech in which a part is used to stand for the whole. For example, one might refer to the “roof over his head” as standing for his entire house. A “set of wheels” might refer to the whole car. A “head of cattle” might refer to the entire number of cows. A synecdoche is a common figure of speech that everyone will use occasionally.

This was also used in the Bible. For example, we are told in Acts 11:18, “When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.” Here, *repentance* stands for the entire process involved in salvation. Paul wrote in Romans 10:10: “with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” Here, *confession* represents the entire process of conversion. Another example of this use is 1 Peter 3:21, where Peter wrote, “baptism doth also now save us.” We know that Peter did not mean baptism *alone* saves us. Peter uses baptism to represent the entire process of salvation.

Considering these things, why is it so difficult for some people to understand that in such passages as John 3:16, Ephesians 2:8-9, etc., the exact figure of speech is couched in the word *belief*

(faith)? When John wrote, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,” was he implying that belief **alone** saves us? I have never met a person who would not immediately concede that repentance and confession are implied in this passage. If this be the case, the same is true concerning New Testament baptism! Repentance, confession, **and** baptism are likewise implied in Ephesians 2:8-9 (“For by grace are you saved through faith”). Matter of fact, the word *faith* (belief) is used to stand for the entire process of salvation more than any other word. Why? Because the whole system of New Testament conversion is based on our faith. Living faith will lead the penitent soul to obedience.

If baptism is not a part of the process of salvation mentioned in John 3:16 because such is not mentioned by name, then the same logic would dictate that *belief* is not a part of the process of conversion mentioned in 1 Peter 3:21, for it, too, is not explicitly mentioned by name! The Gospel plan of salvation is not difficult to understand if one remembers the simple principle of the synecdoche.

Copied

Cain and Abel—A Contrast

R. L. Whiteside

Sometimes, a man's confidence is in himself and his way rather than Jehovah and His way. That was the trouble with Cain. He believed in the existence of Jehovah, but he undertook to worship Him in his way. He thought to make improvements in His worship, or else he thought his way was as good as God's way. His confidence was in himself, not in God.

Abel did what God said because he had faith in God. Any man now will seek to follow God's way if he has faith in God. Faith never seeks to improve God's way nor offer any substitute for God's requirements. There are too many Cains in the religious world.

Deceased

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermon Outlines

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

Bible Class: Christian Doctrine

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/Christian_Doctrine.html

Bible Class: 1 Thessalonians

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/1_Thessalonians.html

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Quick Quips

In church work we need more try-angles.

We do put something into the services, but those services should put something into us.

We have several go-getters; now if we could only find some bring-it-backers.

It is better to go the straightway than to move in the best circles.

Author Unknown

Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Nelda King

Carla Burluson

Bill & Pam Busch

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 8

February 24, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

“Remember, in Thy Lifetime”

J. A. McNutt

God has blessed man with the power to remember the past days: the joys of youth, the pleasures of early life, the precious memories of home, and the companionship of friends. Yes, memory can be a great blessing, and one poem has raised the question:

Where is the heart that doth not keep,
Within its inmost core,
Some fond remembrance hidden deep,
Of days that are no more? (Howarth)

Let it also be remembered that memory may be a cause of sorrow and regret, as well as a blessing in the lives of men. Memories can be happy and pleasant or filled with remorse and regret. The story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16 may be a parable, as most commentators regard it, or the account of two real individuals who died, but the truth remains unchanged. After death, Lazarus enjoyed comfort and rest in Abraham's bosom, while the rich man endured torment and suffering.

Their Situations were Reversed

After death, there was a complete reversal of their situations in life. In hell or Hades, the rich man appealed to Abraham for mercy, saying, “Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame” (16:24). Then came the answer, “Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but

now he is comforted, and thou art tormented” (16:25). Then the rich man was reminded that his destiny was sealed. A great gulf separated the two men so that no passage from one estate to the other was possible. The memory of the rich man served as a curse, filled with remorse and regret. Once, Lazarus lay at his gate hungry, afflicted, and begging for help, but he died unnoticed; now, the rich man begs for mercy and is denied. Someone has said that in the democracy of death, all men are equal, the rich are divested of their wealth, and those like Lazarus lay aside their rags. There was a time when the rich man could have relieved the beggar at his gate, but that day was past, and the fate of the two men was settled.

Seeing that all hope for himself was gone, the rich man pleaded for a miracle to convince his five brethren lest they, too, should be lost. But he was told that they had the words of Moses and the prophets, and if they rejected this testimony, they would not be persuaded by a miracle (16:29-31).

For the First Time, He Felt the Need for God

After the rich man was lost and in torment, he felt a genuine need for God for the first time in his life. Like many today, he was so busy he had never found time for God. He was not an evil person. Perhaps he simply had become so involved in making money that he had not considered spiritual matters or noticed the poor beggar at his gate. He had sought to gain the world at the loss of his soul (Mat. 16:26).

At Last, He Saw the Need for Mercy

For the first time in his life, he saw an urgent need for mercy and cried for help (Luke 16:24). In the business world, he probably had neither experienced much mercy nor shown any mercy to his competitors' ill business deals. It was every man for himself, no compassion shown, and only the strong would survive. Asking or seeking help would have been an admission of weakness. However, now in torment, he pleaded for mercy.

He Saw the Folly of Materialism

For the first time in his life, he learned the lack of true value in material things. All his wealth and goods, which he had accumulated, were worthless. His possessions could not purchase any relief from guilt and pain. God says "Thou Fool" of all those who lay up treasures for themselves and are not rich toward God (12:20). Someone has said that a million dollars will be worth no more than a bale of hay on Judgment Day.

He Became Interested in Saving Souls

For the first time in his life, the rich man became concerned about saving the souls of his five brethren, lest they should share his fate. He

requested a special miracle whereby Lazarus would return from the dead to warn his brethren to change their lives and avoid the agony that he was suffering. He was told that such a miracle would not convince those who refuse to heed the words of Moses and the prophets (16:31). Those who exalt miracles above the Word of God must consider and read carefully (Rom. 10:6-11). Christ does not need to return from heaven or rise again from the dead. We have the Word of God today, which produces faith and saves souls. Jesus has promised salvation to those who believe and are baptized (Mark 16:15-16). Souls that are believing and penitent can be baptized and receive remission of sins and be added by the Lord to His church (Acts 2:36-47).

Do not wait for a miracle! Believe and obey our Lord today!

Work Cited

Howarth, Ellen Clementine. "'Tis But a Little Faded Flower." Bartleby.com. 16 Oct 2024. <<https://www.bartleby.com/lit-hub/a-library-of-american-literature/tis-but-a-little-faded-flower>>.

Deceased

Why Hesitate to Change?

Gayle Oler

Many sincere people suppose that if an individual has espoused some religious faith, he should never change from it regardless of the circumstances. It is correct that if that religious faith is right and accurately taught in the Word of God, one should never leave it.

But suppose one finds that the religious name he is wearing is not the name God applied to His children in the New Testament. Suppose he cannot read about the church he belongs to, and its organization is not revealed in the Word of God. Suppose he finds out that he has believed in and practiced a baptism not taught in the Bible and learns that the Bible's plan of religion is being

practiced on the earth in some other church or by others. Is it not proper to change?

The way of the Lord is perfectly revealed in the Bible, but so many in the world have only a smattering of knowledge of it. When we learn the right way, it is a sin not to follow it; however, devoted to some other way we may have been (Jam. 4:17).

We find a preacher in the New Testament who changed when he found out he was wrong.

Apollos, an Alexandrian by race, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the scriptures. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spake and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, knowing only the

baptism of John: and he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more accurately (Acts 18:24-26—ASV).

Apollos was sincere and honestly believed he was right in his teaching until he was taught “the way of God more accurately.”

Many of the conversions recorded in Acts were of already religious people. Those baptized on the day of Pentecost were referred to as “devout men, from every nation under heaven” (2:5). Because they were “devout men,” they changed when they found out the right way.

The eunuch, whom Philip baptized, had come hundreds of miles to Jerusalem to worship but

changed his religion when he learned he was wrong (Acts 8).

The apostle Paul had always been very religious, a Pharisee, and zealous. Always sincere and worshipful, Paul changed from the religion of his fathers to the religion of the apostles when he found out he was wrong.

Before Peter ever came, Cornelius was a devout man and preached salvation to him. But when he found out he was in error and was still lost, he was baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus (10:48).

And so it is, my friend. If one is honest and wants to go to heaven, he will readily and gladly change from wrong to right as soon as he learns it. Will you?

Deceased

Wonder Why our Nation and Children are Confused?

We celebrate a National Day of Prayer led by our President and Vice-President, but we cannot pray in our public schools.

We can pray in the Senate and the House of Representatives, but we cannot pray at a school football game or a school assembly.

The oath of office taken by the President, with his hand on the Bible, ends with these words: “So help me God,” but we cannot use the same Bible or exact words in a school graduation or even Baccalaureate service.

Our Pledge of Allegiance—“One Nation under God.” Our money—“In God we Trust.” Our songs of allegiance—“God Bless America.” But it is considered harassment if you talk about God at work.

We legally murder unborn babies for financial/convenience reasons. And we wonder why young people murder each other with little feeling of remorse.

We allow billions to be embezzled or drained out of savings and loans. Few are accused, and even fewer are prosecuted while American taxpayers lick up the bill. And we wonder why there is gang violence and youth crime in our streets.

Immorality plagues our society and is paraded as the norm to the top of our nation, and when confronted, it is nobody’s business. And we wonder why there is such a dramatic increase in teen pregnancy and unwed mothers.

We legalize homosexuality, protect this sin with civil rights, and wonder how we will deal with AIDS while we arrest prostitutes.

We construct fine buildings in the church and buy the finest songbooks and pew bibles. We put in cushions for comfort. Some say, “It’s too hot,” and others say, “It’s too cold.” And the community marches onward to Hell. The world is lost—our neighbors are lost.

We have church vans to go to nice places and have a great time. What do we do to take the Gospel to the lost? We keep the Gospel safely tucked away in our Bibles.

As the Lord’s church, we spend more time and money fighting among ourselves than we do the devil. Read Luke 16:19-31 and see how we will fare if we do not get serious about feeding the bread of life to a lost and starving world.

Author Unknown

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermon Outlines

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

Bible Class: Christian Doctrine

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/Christian_Doctrine.html

Bible Class: 1 Thessalonians

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/1_Thessalonians.html

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



When a man has money, it is the easiest possible form of help he can give others, but it is far from the best help. Time costs us more, love costs us more, and thought costs us more. So, we give money and wonder why the receiver is not more grateful. Only the man who gives thought, time, and love to others is worthy of gratitude. In the end, such givers win their fellow beings' admiration, love, and honor. Fear will be our neglect if we fail to give sympathy, love, and time when God places the opportunity at our door.

Author Unknown

Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Nelda King

Carla Burluson

Bill & Pam Busch

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 9

March 3, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

Would You Believe?

Bob Howton

I thought I had heard and experienced almost everything a 75-year-old man could encounter under normal circumstances. Boy, was I wrong!! I came into the Lord's Church from a denominational background, and one of the prickliest problems that confronted me had to do with proper observance of the Lord's Supper. In my Baptist rearing, I had seldom seen, much less participated in the observance of the Lord's Supper. We *took* it every quarter, and although it was not explicitly stated, it was not really meant for *outsiders* to partake of it.

I had no real sense of the proper emblems to use, and I certainly had no clue what the real significance of the activity was. My whole understanding of the Lord's Supper sprang from pictures I had seen in which folks lounged around a big table. Beyond that, I did not have a clue. In the years that followed, I was blessed to marry a precious Christian girl and subsequently to observe and experience the way Christians (strictest sense of the word) "oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God" (1 Tim. 3:15). Guess it never occurred to my peers, or the leadership, or the preacher that, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, But the end thereof *are* the ways of death" (Pro. 14:12). We had the Lord's Supper quarterly. I felt good about it because that is what good Baptists did.

The Holy Scriptures speak specifically to when the Lord's Supper is to be observed, and it does

not leave one conjecturing about the **purpose** of the observance. We are not left to speculate what emblems are to be used. One must only look within the Holy Writ to find the **Biblical** answer to each proposition. We can add to this the **essentiality** of the observance, understanding that ideas and schemes originating with man are useless. Observe:

When? "And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread" (Acts 20:7). The Apostolic example establishes the day/time for observance. It is noted that there is **no** specific hour of the first day directed for observance. Those who contend for "morning only" are far afield in their judgment and cannot so legislate. **Any** period within the first day may be utilized with Scriptural approval. Besides, what 10 o'clock holds for Cottondale, Alabama, vastly differs in Africa, Australia, and Europe. No "one time" may be legislated! It just must be within the 24 hours of the Lord's Day. We may not *wrest* that Biblical designation!

Purpose? "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (1 Cor. 11:26). Our giving thanks for the "bread" and "fruit of the vine" is evidence of gratitude for the sacrifice made in our behalf, and our way of holding Christ's death ever before our eyes.

Emblems? Many Biblical statements conclusively prove that the "**Bread**" and the "**Fruit of**

the vine” are only symbols and are **unleavened bread** and the **fruit of the vine**.

Essentiality? “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have **no** life in you” (John 6:53). Those who do not observe the Lord’s Supper have no spiritual life!

Now, back to the original intent of this article. Last evening, I witnessed a *Preacher* on TV who said, “We’re preparing to partake of the Lord’s Supper, and we invite millions worldwide to go to their refrigerators or cupboards and get ‘Dr.

Pepper,’ tea, whatever you wish to drink, and some kind of crackers or bread, and we’ll all participate in Holy Communion”! It was **Wednesday!**

He said to use **soft drinks, crackers, or bread!** “But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men” (Mat. 15:9). “Presumptuous *are they*, selfwilled” (2 Pet. 2:10).

Wrong day! Wrong emblems! Wrong authority! May God have mercy on such ignorance!

Deceased

The Identity of the Church

H. Leo Boles

We are taught in the New Testament that Jesus would build but one church. He called this one “my church” (Mat. 16:18). We are to inquire what sort of church Christ built. To determine the church that Christ built, we must go back through more than 20 centuries and visit Jerusalem on that eventful Pentecost, which occurred after the ascension of Christ to the Father. We must examine with unbiased minds the preaching of Peter on that day.

Peter’s Sermon in Acts 2

On this Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles, and they began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. There were physical manifestations that accompanied the miraculous descent of the Holy Spirit. When these manifestations were noised abroad, a great multitude came together. Dwelling in Jerusalem at that time were Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. They had come to Jerusalem to keep the Passover and had remained to keep the feast of Pentecost 50 days later. When they came together, they heard the apostles speaking in their own tongues and were confused about what they heard. They did not understand the extraordinary events that were taking place. Some even concluded that the apostles were drunken and made that charge.

But Peter, speaking by the Holy Spirit, denied the charge and explained the phenomenon. He said those events fulfilled Joel’s prophecy. He continued to speak and quoted from David to show that Jesus of Nazareth was the long-looked-for Messiah. He convinced many in the multitude. They had crucified Christ, who had been raised from the dead and ascended back to the Father. In Peter’s words, they came to believe in Christ.

Terms Of Admission

When the multitude had been convinced that the Messiah had been crucified, many said, “Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?” Peter then continued and said:

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. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call (Acts 2:38-39).

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

Here, we have the first preaching done under the commission that Jesus had given the apostles after His resurrection. He had said:

Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is bap-

tized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16:15-16).

The remission of sins was the terms of admission into the church. These people complied with them and were added to His church.

They continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching, which means they were instructed on how to live in the church. So, preaching the Gospel was essential to making church members. The Gospel must be believed, sins must be repented, and people must be baptized into Christ to become members of this church.

The Test Applied

Suppose that Peter was to arrive in this country today. What church would he attach himself to? If he could find a church with the terms of admission as he preached on Pentecost, he would know that it was a church of Christ. If he had not found a church with the exact terms of membership, he would have known that the church was not the one Christ built.

If Peter should join any one of the present-day denominations, he would put himself in a church that Christ did not build. It is impossible for us to think that an inspired apostle would put himself into a church established by uninspired men and governed by uninspired regulations. To join the Methodist Church, he must subscribe to the Methodist Discipline. If he should join one of the Baptist Churches, he would have to subscribe to its peculiar creed. To join the Presbyterian

Church, he must subscribe to its Confession of Faith. None of these admit people on the same terms that Peter preached on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2.

Christ's Church Today

Since we can learn from the New Testament what it took to establish the church of Christ on the day of Pentecost, and since the Gospel that was preached on that day is preached now, and people hear it, believe it, and obey it today just as they did in Acts 2, we have the same church that was established on Pentecost.

If the members of this church continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers as the first members did, we will have a church like the one established on Pentecost. We would have the identical church that was established on Pentecost.

Suppose people know what was preached on Pentecost, what was believed and practiced, and what is preached and practiced today. In that case, they can know or identify the church of Christ and distinguish it from religious denominations. People today need not be mistaken or confused. The same Gospel can then be preached so people can believe the same Gospel as they did then and live as they did then as members of the church. This would then constitute them members of the church of Christ and make a group of such people a church of Christ.

Deceased

About Praying

I believe in praying for the sick, but when we pray, they do not all get well.

I believe in praying for the sinners, and they are not all saved.

I believe in praying for our rulers, and some of them do not suit us.

I believe in praying for our enemies, yet we have them.

I believe in praying for them that persecute us and say all manner of evil against us. Still, they do it.

We are bound to conclude that we are imperfect beings, and we cannot have all things as we would like.

The thing for us to do is to become more and more submissive to God's will, then we can say, "Father, ...not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42).

Author Unknown

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermon Outlines

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

Bible Class: Christian Doctrine

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/Christian_Doctrine.html

Bible Class: 1 Thessalonians

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/1_Thessalonians.html

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Religion is a matter of daily choice. The Christian life at its best is only a series of perpetual re-dedications.

Author Unknown

Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Nelda King

Carla Burseson

Bill & Pam Busch

Please Remember

March 16

Birthdays and Anniversaries Get-together will be held after the afternoon service, in the zone room.

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops:

Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister:

Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 10

March 10, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

Is the Church of Christ a Denomination?

Johnny Ramsey

According to the New Testament, the church is the Spiritual body of Christ, over which our Lord rules as head (Col. 1:18, 24; Eph. 1:20, 23; 1 Cor. 12). The church is not a building, a social club, a denomination, or a political power. The church that Jesus said He would build (Mat. 16:18) and for which He died (Acts 20:28) is a divine institution authorized by God and promulgated by the Gospel of His dear Son (2 Tim. 1:10). The church consists of those who have been added thereunto because of obeying the simple commands of the head of the church—Jesus Christ (Acts 2:36-37).

The church is the kingdom of Christ. Our Redeemer rules over it as “King of kings and Lord of lords” (1 Tim. 6:15). Christians, members of the church, are citizens in the kingdom (Phi. 3:20), and the Gospel of Christ is the Law of the kingdom (Rom. 1:16; 2:16). The church of the Lord is His army (Eph. 6:10-17; Heb. 2:10; 2 Cor. 10:4-5). Thus, the church is to be a militant force in the world—but not through carnal warfare. Ours is a Spiritual fight against “Spiritual wickedness in high places.” Some of my brethren have catered to the desires of their friends and have ceased “contending earnestly for the faith” (Jude 3). Such soldiers will not be rewarded.

What is the church? In beautiful language, Paul tells us that the church is the bride of Christ (Eph. 5:22-32). Therefore, the church should be pure and unblemished. To the church at Philippi, Paul, by inspiration, said, “That ye may be blame-

less and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world” (Phi. 2:15). What is the church? It is the “called out” group! The Greek word *ekklesia*, from which *church* is derived, literally means “The called-out body.”

In Colossians 1:13 and 1 Peter 2:2, we learn that the church is composed of men and women who have been called out of sin, error, and shame into Christ’s kingdom, wherein righteousness, truth, and light dwell. Indeed, these Scriptures show how wonderful the church is in God’s divine plan. Friend, you cannot afford to go through life without being a member of Christ’s church!

No, the church of the Lord established in the first century was and is not a denomination! It has none of the characteristics of a sectarian body. According to the New Testament, the church “is the fulness of him [Christ]” (Eph. 1:23)—not segment or part of Him. *Denomination* means “the number of times the unit is divided.” In the first century, division was condemned and never condoned after the beginning of the church in Jerusalem. Read 1 Corinthians 1:10-13, where followers of Christ were exhorted to be of “the same mind and in the same judgment,” to “**all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you.**” Yes, the church of Jesus Christ was to strive for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3). Yet today, we hear preachers and

church leaders thank God for religious divisions. In every form of communication, we hear the plea, “Go to the church of your choice.” This sincere but mistaken idea makes havoc with the prayer our Savior uttered in John 17:20-21 when He prayed for unity and not division!

No, Christ did not shed His precious blood to purchase a denomination! The apostles did not set up sectarian groups as they preached the Gospel. They simply established the church—Christ’s church. The church of Christ has no earthly headquarters, human head, councils, conventions, or synods. It does not have creed books, catechisms, or manuals.

No, friends, Alexander Campbell did not start the church of Christ in the 1800s. The church I am a member of began some 1,750 years before Mr. Campbell was born! Since the Word of God is the seed of the kingdom (Luke 8:11), I know that wherever and whenever it is planted in good and honest hearts, it will produce Christians

only, members of the church of Christ. It is refreshing to know that we can preach the same Gospel, obey the same commands, be members of the same church, and share the same hope that Christians did in the first century.

For friends, when we obey what they obeyed, we become what they became—New Testament Christians and only New Testament Christians. No, friends, the church of Christ is not a denomination. In Daniel 2:44, the prophet of God foretold that the kingdom or church would be established in the days of the Roman kings. That once it was established, it would stand forever. On Pentecost AD 30, in the days of the Roman kings (Caesars), God’s kingdom was established, and God added 3,000 to the church Jesus said He would build (Acts 2:47; Mat. 16:18) and continue to be added to it by God today. No, Friends, the church of Christ is not a denomination.

Deceased

Mixing Laws

Ken Chumbley

In 2008, the so-called “spiritual head” of the Church of England (Episcopal Church), Rowan Williams, said in an interview that Muslims should have a choice in legal disputes and that the adoption of certain aspects of Sharia (Muslim Law—KJC) “seems unavoidable.” He continued by stating the United Kingdom needs to “face up to the fact” that some of its citizens do not relate to the British legal system.” Now, there is a revelation! For many years, there have been citizens that do not relate to the British legal system. Previously such ended up “behind bars” as a result. Now, because a section of the population does not like the legal system that existed when they chose to enter the country, they should be allowed to have their own legal system. Such is the nonsense that now pervades the “politically correct crowd.” If such were adopted, what would happen if the

dispute was between a Muslim and a non-Muslim? Which law would prevail? It would produce anarchy. Again, when it comes to Sharia law, we have seen what happens in countries where such prevails. Further, does anyone think that should parts of Sharia law be adopted, having won this concession, Muslims would then insist that it be applied and, in its totality, “across the board” to all in the United Kingdom, Muslim and non-Muslim? Williams also stated, “An approach to law which simply said—there’s one law for everybody—I think is a bit of a danger.” A danger, having a law to which all are accountable? Again, a recipe for chaos. We need to be alert as there are some in this country with similar warped thinking that would be happy to introduce such here, and that would make Muslims happy. This nation, as well as Great Britain, already had their established

legal systems before the influx of immigrants from Muslim countries. If they do not like or respect such laws, they have the right to return to their homelands.

However, let us look at the same principle regarding the mixing of laws. In the days of the New Testament, the apostle Paul confronted the Judaizing teachers who wanted to “mix laws” by merging parts of the Mosaic Law (the Ten Commandments Law) into the law of Christ. In writing to the churches of Galatia, Paul exposes the folly of such and those who would seek to do so were teaching another gospel and were to be condemned and had “fallen from grace” (Gal. 1:6-9; 5:4). Even in the 21st century we still have those who would desire to *mix* these laws, contrary to the Word of God. One denomination that seeks to do such is the Seventh Day Adventist Church,

which teaches that the Sabbath Day of the Ten Commandments is binding today on Christians, contrary to the clear teaching of Scripture (Col. 2:12-17). Paul further deals with this principle that the laws cannot be mixed in Romans 7:1-4. However, the Seventh Day Adventist Church is not the only religious group guilty of trying to mix laws for when the teachings of most, if not all, of the denominations, one finds that they, to one degree or another, seek to mix the Law of Moses with the Law of Christ when establishing their peculiar creeds.

Brethren, may we continually study the Scriptures and know the distinction between the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ so we do not become guilty of the sin of seeking to mix the two, contrary to the will of God.

Deceased

He'll Be There

H. L. Gradowith (Tim Smith)

When the night is dark and there's no hope in sight,
When you doubt your faith and what you think is right;
When you've lost your way and you need to feel loved,
Turn your eyes to Him Who watches from above!

CHORUS:
He'll be there for you, your pain He'll understand,
He will dry your tears, warm your heart, hold your hand;
You will find that He has suffered just like you,
And He'll see you safely all your journey through.

When your friends have gone and left you all alone,
And your hopes and dreams like an eagle have flown;
When you think your life is a worthless charade,
When your heart is pained, when you're weak and afraid...

CHORUS:
He'll be there for you, your pain He'll understand,
He will dry your tears, warm your heart, hold your hand;
You will find that He has suffered just like you,
And He'll see you safely all your journey through.

When you wonder why you suffer as you do,
When you're doubting that God is really with you;
When the way is hard and the valleys so deep,
When the grade you climb is so rugged and steep...

CHORUS:
He'll be there for you, your pain He'll understand,
He will dry your tears, warm your heart, hold your hand;
You will find that He has suffered just like you,
And He'll see you safely all your journey through.

Deceased

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermon Outlines

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

Bible Class: Christian Doctrine

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/Christian_Doctrine.html

Bible Class: 1 Thessalonians

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/1_Thessalonians.html

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



“Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample” (Phi. 3:17).

Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Nelda King

Carla Burlison

Bill & Pam Busch

Please Remember

March 16

Birthdays and Anniversaries Get-together will be held after the afternoon service, in the zone room.

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops:

Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister:

Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 11

March 17, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

Neither Catholic, Protestant, Nor Jew

Dub Mowery

When I was inducted into the U.S. Coast Guard in 1956, I was asked in Boot Camp at Cape May, New Jersey, whether I was Catholic, Protestant, or Jewish? They wanted this information to be included on my “dog tag.” My response was that I was neither Catholic, Protestant, nor of the Jewish faith. The one seeking this information insisted that I had to be one or the other of the three.

I explained to him that I was in the church of Christ. It was established nearly 600 years before the Roman Catholic Church fully came into existence, and since the Protestant churches broke from the Catholic Church, I certainly was not a member of one of those denominations. Also, the Mosaic Law which was given only to the Jews was nailed to Christ’s cross when He died upon it, so I certainly was not of the Jewish faith. Guess what. They went ahead and embossed “Protestant” upon my “dog tag” because most people think in denominational terms.

While the Son of God was incarnate upon earth, there was much confusion among many as to who He was. The following passage of Scripture brings this matter out as follows:

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said,

Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Mat. 16:13-18).

From that passage we see that there was misunderstanding in the public as to Jesus’ identity. Simon Peter correctly acknowledged: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!”

Even during the first century, while the apostles were still living, there was misunderstanding pertaining to the Lord’s church. After the apostle Paul was taken to Rome as a prisoner, he had opportunity to invite Jewish leaders to meet with him. They said unto him:

We neither received letters out of Judaea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee. But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against (Acts 28:21-22)

The fact that they referred to the Lord’s church as a sect proves that those Jewish leaders did not understand the nature or purpose of Christ’s church and that which pertained to the new covenant. The Greek word *hairesis*, translated as either sect or heresy, carries the meaning of “dissensions arising from diversity of opinions and aims; that which is broken off of the main body.”

Those Jewish leaders who referred to the church of our Lord as a *sect* looked upon it as a splinter group of the Jewish religion.

We Are Not of the Jewish Religion

There are many basic beliefs that we hold in common with those of the Jewish religion. We believe that the one true and living God is the One worshipped by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We also recognize the Old Testament as being inspired of God. Of the Ten Commandments given unto Moses on Mount Sinai, nine of them, in principle, have been incorporated in the new covenant. The Sabbath day was the only one left out of the new covenant.

On the other hand, there are some major differences between the church of Christ and those who profess the Jewish religion. The Mosaic Law is no longer in effect, it was nailed to the cross when Jesus died upon it (Col. 2:14). The New Testament is also an inspired part of God's revelation. The offering of animal sacrifices is no longer required because the Son of God was offered once and for all (Heb. 9:27-28).

Since the Mosaic Law is no longer in effect, we are under the new covenant. In Colossians 2:14, the apostle Paul pointed out that when Jesus died on the cross, He "[Blotted] out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." This same truth is revealed at Hebrews 10:9-10:

Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.

We Are Not of the Catholic Church

The church of Christ was established on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of our Lord and Savior; whereas the Roman Catholic Church was not fully developed until AD 606 when Boniface became its first universal pope.

We do hold some basic truths in common with the Catholic Church. We both believe that the Old

Testament and the New Testament are the inspired Word of God. Both the Catholic Church and the church of Christ recognize the church as being universal in scope. After all, Jesus Christ said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

In contrast, there are some major differences between the Roman Catholic Church and the church of Christ. Whereas we believe the Bible is the complete and only revelation from God, the Roman Catholic Church upholds its traditions as being equivalent with the Bible. In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, the apostle Paul declared:

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, throughly furnished unto all good works.

And in Matthew 15:9, are the following words of Jesus Christ: "But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men."

We reject the concept that a person must have a priest of the Catholic Church to intercede on his behalf. Jesus Christ is the one mediator between God and man. First Timothy 2:5 says, "For *there* is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." Also, every Christian is a priest in the Lord's spiritual house. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2:5).

Since the church of Christ was established before the Roman Catholic Church came into existence, it did not break off from the Catholic Church and is no part of it.

Nor Are We Protestants

We certainly believe many of the same truths that most Protestant churches believe. They profess belief in the God revealed in the Bible. Most of them recognize Jesus as the Christ. Many of them acknowledge that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. We believe and uphold these same truths.

Faithful churches of Christ recognize the New Testament as the pattern for us today pertaining to the church, salvation, and morality. But Protestant churches do not use the same standard for doctrine and practice. Many who profess that the Bible is the Word of God give allegiance unto catechisms, prayer books, creed books, their own subjective feelings as well as other standards instead of or in addition to the Bible. They have church governments which are foreign to that which the Lord established for His church, and they add innovations to their worship that are not authorized by the New Testament.

But There's a Sense in Which We Are All Three

Although we are not of the Jewish religion, we **are** spiritual Jews and, as a people, spiritual Israel. This truth is plainly taught in the following passages of scripture:

For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God (Rom. 2:28-29).

Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they *are* not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, *are they* all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed (9:6-8).

Even though we are not members of the Roman Catholic Church, we are catholic in the sense that the Lord's church is universal. *Catholic* simply means "universal." The following Scrip-

"But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15).

ture speaks of the New Testament church in a universal sense: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mat. 16:18). "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body" (Eph. 5:23). "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (5:25).

We are not members of any Protestant denomination, but we are protestants in the sense of protesting and speaking out against that which is contrary to the teaching of the New Testament (Jude 3; 2 Tim. 4:1-4).

We Who Obey the Gospel Are Added to the Church by Christ

One who has been scripturally baptized does not have to join any denomination. The Lord adds that precious soul to His church. "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). Metaphors of the church reveal that all obedient believers are baptized into the church. This truth is revealed when the church is depicted as the spiritual body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). It is also true when the church is presented as the spiritual kingdom of our Lord (John 3:5; Col. 1:13).

Obedient believers are **Christians only** (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16). There are no hyphenated Christians. In the first century, there were **not different kinds** of Christians, nor did they recognize different brotherhoods.

Man made churches are not authorized in the New Testament. Most will agree that no one must be a member of a denomination to be saved. However, the church of the New Testament **is the saved**. It is the family of God upon earth (Acts 2:47; 1 Tim. 3:15) and God has no children outside of His family.

Deceased

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermon Outlines

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

Bible Class: Christian Doctrine

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/Christian_Doctrine.html

Bible Class: 1 Thessalonians

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/1_Thessalonians.html

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Placed Membership

Ann Jacobson placed membership with the Bellview congregation on March 16. Her address and phone number will be posted on the bulletin board. Please welcome her.

Sick

Remember in Your Prayers

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Nelda King

Carla Burleson

Bill & Pam Busch

Please Remember

March 30

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

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 12

March 24, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

Seek Ye First

Brad Green

Many things catch the eyes of men and many things for which man seeks. While many in the religious world teach that man has no responsibility concerning his salvation, the Bible teaches that men are to be seekers. Jesus says, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Mat. 7:7). Sadly, many **seek** the wrong authority and therefore **find** the wrong conclusion. The world seeks advice from the likes of Dr. Phil, Oprah, or the latest, best-selling “self-help” book. Many in the religious world seek some well-known preacher or school to be their authority. When questions arise, they seek an answer from the authority of their choice and usually receive an answer to their delight. Others seek the teachings of a pamphlet to find the words to “pray for salvation,” which can be found nowhere in God’s Holy Word. Jesus plainly teaches that man’s priority is to seek God and His plan for righteousness. “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (6:33). Within the pages of the New Testament is God’s plan to make one righteous (Rom. 1:16-17). Therefore, one must search the Scriptures to seek God and His righteousness. Why do so many “seek first” sources of authority other than God? When young people have questions about marriage or parenting, whom should they seek first? The correct answers to their questions are found in God’s Word. In addition, God authorizes and com-

mands older Christians to help the younger (Tit. 2:1-7). Unfortunately, rather than seeking the counsel of the wise (Pro. 24:6), many seek after the counsel of the ungodly (Psa. 1:1). Using just a little common sense, it is easy to see the wisdom in seeking advice from faithful Christians rather than from unfaithful Christians or from those who are not Christians at all. Marriage questions should be directed towards faithful Christians who have godly marriages. Parenting questions should find their way to faithful Christians who have raised faithful children. Why would any Christian seeking to be faithful to God seek answers from those who have not been able to follow God themselves? Seeking God first means seeking only things authorized in God’s Word. Seeking God first also means seeking moral advice only from those who have sought God’s Word as their only source of authority. Non-Christians and unfaithful members of the church may seem to have good answers but are only speaking great swelling *words* of vanity.... While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage (2 Pet. 2:18-19).

How many Christians have been brought back into bondage because they bought the words being sold by the unfaithful? “And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you” (2:3). We need not worry about being dragged into

sin if we only seek God and His righteousness first and seek advice from those who are faithful to Him. “For thus saith the LORD unto the house of Israel, Seek ye me, and ye shall live” (Amos 5:4). This promise is made to the Spiritual Israel, the church of Christ, today.

If ye then be risen with Christ, **seek** those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the

right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, *who is our life*, shall appear, **then shall ye also appear with him in glory**” (Col. 3:1-4).

Lenoir City, TN

Pomp and Majesty in Religion

Cled E. Wallace

Cardinal Hayes, the popular “Prince of the Catholic Church,” is dead [1938]. His body is merely a lump of clay, not unlike that of a dead hobo. Death is the great equalizer. The Grim Reaper is no respecter of persons. Millions pay idolatrous homage to the dead cardinal. Newspapers announce, “Majestic Pomp Marks Services for Prince of Catholic Church.” “In a mighty pageant of sorrow and majesty the Roman Catholic Church gave its last service Friday to the dead Patrick Cardinal Hayes—the pontifical mass of requiem.”

We naturally feel that restraint and subdued emotion, which are a proper human reaction in the presence of the dead. But displays of “majestic pomp” over the body of a dead cardinal may well remind us of the distance the millions have wandered from the simplicity of the Gospel. The pageantry of Catholicism is more pagan than Christian. The spirit of lawlessness that began in Paul’s day has grown up to the full stature of maturity. It was a gradual development, a disregard of, and a withdrawal from a revealed Divine order in organization, doctrine, and worship. The distinctive features of Romanism are centuries younger than the New Testament and exist in defiance of that all-sufficient rule of faith and practice. Protestant parties, in most instances, have not gone into Rome’s excesses, nor have they embraced idolatry to the extent that Rome has. They have, however, in their creeds, unscriptural organizations, names, and doctrines, surrendered or compromised the

only principle that can be an effective weapon against the “pomp and majesty” of Rome.

There was a time when believers in Christ “continued stedfastly in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42). At that time, they were neither Catholic nor Protestant in the sense that those terms are used today. They were Christians, recognizing Christ as Lord and His will as law. This will was revealed by men who spoke and wrote under the miraculous inspiration of the Holy Spirit. No pontifical honors were accorded the inspired mediums of the will of the Lord. When Cornelius, the Gentile centurion, fell at the feet of Simon Peter, the apostle of the Lord immediately protested. “But Peter raised him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man” (10:26). This is a closed rebuke to papal pretensions and may be considered a rebuke also to the little popes and dignitaries of Protestantism who love their titles and preen their feathers of authority.

The whole business of “majestic pomp” is contrary to the spirit of the Gospel. It plays with baubles when fundamental verities are being trampled upon and ignored. The disciples were reaching for such trinkets of pomp when they quarreled over places of prospective power in the kingdom. The rebuke of the Lord was effective.

His kingdom is not of this world. Nor is spiritual majesty akin to the unscriptural pageantry that characterizes Rome and her sectarian copycats. The Lord castigated those that made “broad their

phylacteries” and enlarged “the borders of their garments” and loved “the chief seats in the synagogues, and the salutations in the marketplaces, and to be called of men, Rabbi” (Mat. 23:5-7).

But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your teacher, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father on the earth: for one is your Father, *even* he who is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your master, *even* the Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled; and whosoever shall humble himself shall be exalted (23:8-12).

Romanism ignores all this, and Protestantism also loves its titular baubles of official distinction. And the evidence is not rare enough that some simple Christians are casting goo-goo eyes on titles of vanity.

Paul’s fear has been realized. The departure from the original principles that he feared became history.

For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy: for I espoused you to one husband, that I might present you *as* a pure virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ (2 Cor. 11:2-3).

Certain fundamentals must chart our progress if this original and divine simplicity is to be preserved. Too much emphasis on numbers, the rise of institutionalism in religion, enthusiasm over accumulated money, and centralization of power are the things that destroy the simplicity of the New Testament order.

We look in vain in the New Testament for anything in the way of a religious organization larger than a local church and smaller than the entire body of Christ, including all Christians. This leaves denominationalism without New Testament sanction (Rom. 16:16). Churches of Christ should resist anything in the way of encroachment on their independence. They have a right to select their fields of activity, choose their workers, raise their money, and spend it without outside dicta-

tion. And if they never get in the yearbook, that fact will not cause much damage to the cause of truth.

Deceased

A Song of Hope

H. L. Gradowith (Tim Smith)

He lives in my heart and guides me all along,
He bathes me in Mercy and gives me a Song!
In a world of darkness He’s my Shining Light,
When I’m out of strength, I then turn to His
Might!!!

He is the Answer to the questions men ask,
And though my strength fails, He is up to
the task;

When gloom o’ertakes me He Lighteth my
Way,

And His Light’s brighter than this world’s
brightest day!

“This simply cannot be done,” says learned
man,

But filled with His Might I affirm that I can!
What man cannot see he simply disavows,
But there is more here than our wisdom
allows!

If all men will but know His Wonderful Love
Then all might enjoy His Bright Homeland
Above!

For He’ll live in them and guide them all
along,

He’ll bathe them in Mercy and give them a
Song!

In darkness they stumble, hearts rotted
within,

Their steps ever trodding the paths of lost
men...

Their darkness dispelling He’ll Bathe them
in Light,

He’ll fix their ill hearts, and set their steps
aright!

Deceased

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermon Outlines

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

Bible Class: Christian Doctrine

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/Christian_Doctrine.html

Bible Class: 1 Thessalonians

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/1_Thessalonians.html

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



“Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you”
(Deu. 4:2).

Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Nelda King

Carla Burleson

Bill & Pam Busch

Please Remember

March 30

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

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops:

Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister:

Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 13

March 31, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

God Is Love

Mike Demory

“He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love” (1 John 4:8).

The apostle John had much to say about love in his first epistle. Not the type of emotional love that we human beings tend to accept as our response to or for one another, but an element that exhibits itself on a higher plane. Scripture informs us of God’s attributes (Spirit, Infinite, Perfect, Omnipresent, Omniscient, Omnipotent). These attributes are manifested by His Truth, Holiness, Justice, and Love.

Two Greek words are found in the New Testament that express love: *phileo*, denoting tender affection, and *agapao*, an attitude that expresses itself in selfless concern for the needs of others. We are all familiar with what John said of God’s love in John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.” It certainly was not tender affection of the world that God sent Jesus Christ into the world, for the world hated Jesus (7:7) and chose not to know God (Rom. 1:20-25). It is not tender affection for the sinner that God purposed to send His Son, but because we have been created in His image, we can become perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect (Mat. 5:48).

God is the epitome of what true love is about. When John warned his readers of their treatment toward one another, he chose the highest form of love, *agapao*. “He that loveth [*agapon*] not knoweth not God; for God is love [*agapao*].” In

other words, **if** we as Christians (God’s spiritual family) do not maintain the **attitude** of *agape* love toward one another, then we **cannot** claim to know God! Please stop and consider what the apostle Paul wrote about *agape* love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8:

Love [*agape*] suffers long *and* is kind; love [*agape*] does not envy; love [*agape*] does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears **all** things, believes **all** things, hopes **all** things, endures all things. Love [*agape*] **never** fails.

Many individuals could learn much from these simple principles of daily living. How many friendships could be maintained **if** people just adhere to *agape* love over *phileo* love? Many songs have been written about giving love a chance, but if the focus is tender, affectionate love and not selfless concern for the needs of others, then the world will never put away its prideful attitudes. Couples with marital problems would do better if they grew up and acted like the adults they claim to be by putting away childish selfishness. Husbands and wives are commanded to love (*agape*) one another. There is no doubt that tender, affectionate love will follow, but selfless love in act is the key to making marriage work (Eph. 5:25; 1 Tim. 2:15; Gal. 5:14).

John tells us, “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1 John 4:11).

Jesus also commands that we love one another (John 13:34). So, if the command is for us to love (*agape*) one another, without which it is impossible to please God, then how can someone possibly assume they can remain pleasing to God while telling their brother or sister in Christ “I no longer love you,” or “I have fallen out of love with you?” Because *agape* love is a command—it would be a sin not to do so, and a sin unrepented of that could not be forgiven until the attitude of love was expressed. One can only **abide** by the Father’s love by keeping His commandment to

love one another with a pure heart **fervently** (1 Pet. 1:22).

Brethren, God **is** love because He is the very essence of love. We would not know what love was if it were not for God and His love for us. *Agape* love is an attitude of action. It takes the initiative to suffer wrongs, bear every load, and be content in whatever state one finds themselves. True love **never** fails. May we apply the example of *agape* love to our daily lives and show others how better society will be when we obey our God.

Mexico, MO

Where Is Your Heart?

When the Bible speaks of a person’s heart, it is rarely in the context of the anatomical location of this physical human pump. Mostly, it is spoken of as the center of a person’s thoughts and emotions. In Matthew 6:21 and Luke 12:34, Jesus tells us, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” It could be found in our treasures if we want to find our heart.

Where is your treasure? That is where you will find your heart. *Treasure* means that “a treasure is something that we value highly. It is something of great value. It is a precious object.” Jesus tells us in Matthew 13:44 that the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field; when a man finds it, he hides it, sells all that he has, and buys the field so he might have the treasure.

In Luke 12, Jesus warns against the hypocrisy and covetousness of the Pharisees. *Hypocrisy* deals with pretending to be something or someone we are not. *Covetousness* is “a great desire to possess something, typically something belonging to someone else.” These go hand in hand. We need to be able to discern what is truly valuable. The things of this world should not become our treasures.

In Matthew 19, a young man asked Jesus, “what good thing shall I do, that I may have eter-

nal life?” (19:16). Jesus answered and said unto him, “if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments” (19:17). The young man asked further, “Which?” Jesus said:

Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and *thy* mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself (19:18-19).

The young man said to Him, “All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?” (19:20). Jesus said to him, “If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me” (19:21). But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

We must be careful not to let the material things of this life become our treasure. Satan understands material possessions can cause us to give God less than our whole heart. God demands our whole heart. There can be nothing less. All of us who can see have seen the glory of a rainbow in the sky after a thunderstorm or rain shower. To most animals, a rainbow does not exist. They cannot see in color. The retina of humans has rods and cones. The cones only detect color. Most

animal retinas only have rods. Therefore, most animals can only see in shades of gray. They cannot see a rainbow. May we have the spiritual eyesight to see that the treasures of this world should not be where we place our heart. May we give our whole heart to God and complete obedience to His Word.

May we do as is written in Matthew 6:19-20:

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.

Is your treasure in heaven? Then, your heart is in the right place.

Author Unknown

“I Think”

C. R. Nichol

Not long ago, I heard one of my preacher brethren, in his sermon to a nice audience, say, “I think” so many times during his talk that it registered with me that he had formed the habit of saying, “I think” when his lips were working in advance of his mind.

As a lad, I saw a circular issued by a merchant, headed, “**Time is Money.**” Today’s world lives so fast that I think, “Time is money.” We may pay now for more time than we do for the service.

Time was when a preacher spent two hours delivering his sermon; now, he has his lesson condensed and pared down to such small content that twenty minutes is about the limit. Possibly, he has more to say, but his listeners are hurrying to be off to some place of pleasure.

Indeed, the audience was assembled to worship and to be instructed by the minister, and not to hear what he *thinks* about any matter of Divine revelation, and indeed, the audience is not interested in the minister’s “I think” about political or financial issues. The charge to the young preacher in the Bible is, “Preach the Word”! He is to preach the Gospel.

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they

shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables (2 Tim. 4:2-4).

“Reprove, rebuke.” How? By preaching the “Word,” not by reciting “I think.” Why should anyone ask what you *think* about some Bible subject? Are we all aware that what you or I think about the subject will not settle the matter, for each of us may have a wrong view? Why not ask, What does the Bible say about that subject? Would that not be much more effective?

It piqued my pride when I was younger when asked some Bible question or about the same Bible statement to say, “I do not know.” But I have learned to say, “I do not know.” Long ago, I formed the resolution to prepare myself so if someone asked me a question that I did not know how to answer to be very certain that the next time such a question was submitted, I would know the answer if it were possible to be known.

If Jehovah has revealed the answer, Gospel preachers should **know** the answer when it comes to Divine matters. Do not say, “I think.” Today, too many people take what the preacher says as the final answer to any question about Jehovah or any matter of revelation.

“Thus shall ye say every one to his neighbour, and every one to his brother, What hath the LORD answered? and, What hath the LORD spoken?” (Jer. 23:35).

Deceased

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermon Outlines

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

Bible Class: Christian Doctrine

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/Christian_Doctrine.html

Bible Class: 1 Thessalonians

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/1_Thessalonians.html

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



If there is righteousness in the heart,
There will be beauty in the character.
If there is beauty in the character,
There will be harmony in the home.
If there is harmony in the home,
There will be order in the nation.
If there is order in the nation,
There will be peace in the world.

Author Unknown

Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Nelda King

Carla Burleson

Bill & Pam Busch

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 14

April 7, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

Acts 2:38 Briefly Examined

Guy N. Woods

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).

Here, for the first time, under the Christian dispensation, did men inquire about their duty; here, too, is the first time the question is answered as it applies to the reign of Christ. Whatever may have been the correct answer applicable under former dispensations, it is indisputably certain that Peter gave the only answer applicable to his day and ours.

Circumstances combine to make this passage truly significant. Peter, the speaker, along with the other apostles, had been invested with “the keys of the kingdom” (Mat. 16:19). The prophets had foretold that “the word of the Lord” should “go forth from Jerusalem” (Isa. 2:2-3). They, too, had designated that this would occur in “the last days.” All prophetic utterances touching the kingdom’s establishment pointed to this day, and here culminated the events that resulted in the first promulgation of the Gospel of Christ. If there were no other reasons, this is sufficient to invest this passage with profound significance.

The Pentecostians were asking what to do to obtain remission of sins. This, at least, was Peter’s impression of the matter, a conclusion we may arrive at by combining the question asked with

the reward promised—viz., “Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?...for the remission of sins?” Peter’s answer was designed to supply this information. Thus, if we regard Peter’s reply simply as the answer to this query, we learn that they were commanded to do two things “for the remission of sins”: (1) Repent; (2) be baptized. (It should be noted that those who propounded the query were **already believers**).

If Peter had stopped with this and said no more, his answer would have been complete, and the world would know that it is the duty of sinners “pricked in their heart” to **repent and be baptized** “for the remission of sins.” However, the inspired speaker saw fit to accompany the commands with an explanation. He qualified the command to be baptized with the words “in the name of Jesus Christ” to show that it is by Christ’s authority that men are to be baptized. “In the name of Jesus Christ” simply means “the authority of Christ” since one can act in Christ’s name only when authorized. Thus, Peter’s answer involved the following: (1) Repent; (2) be baptized on the authority of Jesus Christ Himself.

Christ, therefore, through Peter, authorizes **believers** to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. This conclusion may be reached in another way: Strike out that portion of the passage that has been the occasion of so much controversy—“for the remission of sins.” With this done, Peter’s answer to the question, “Men and brethren,

what shall we do?” is simply this: “Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.” Thus, the conclusion is the same: whether we regard Peter’s answer as a duty expressed without regard to the consequences that followed or whether it should be taken (as Peter did) as the answer to the question of what one must do to obtain remission of sins.

From these considerations, it is certain that, as far as our duty or salvation is concerned, Peter’s words in this passage establish the essentiality of both repentance and baptism to the end proposed—the remission of sins. It is scarcely necessary to point out that repentance alone is not for remission of sins, nor is baptism when unattended by faith and repentance.

Peter did not say, “Repent for the remission of sins,” nor “Be baptized for the remission of sins.” Repentance and baptism in this passage are, accordingly, joined and, therefore, equally related to their object: remission of sins. All scholars concede this fact.

Said Dr. Alexander (Presbyterian):

The whole phrase “to (or toward) remission of sins” describes this as the end to which the multitude had reference, and which, therefore, must be contemplated in the answer. The beneficent end to which all this led was for the remission of sins.

To the same point, Dr. Hackett (Baptist) says: “In order to the forgiveness of sins” we connect naturally with both preceding verbs. This clause states the motive or object which should induce them to repent and be baptized. It enforces the entire exhortation, not one part of it to the exclusion of the other.

Denominational debaters, however, contend that baptism does not stand in the same relation to the remission of sins as does repentance. While conceding that repentance, in this passage, has as its object “the remission of sins,” they insist that baptism is “because of” remission. To this conclusion, there are at least two insuperable objections.

(1) Whatever the design of baptism is in this passage, repentance bears the same end or aim. If baptism is “because of” remission, then so is repentance. To command me to repent “because of” remission is absurd since it is universally granted that repentance is a condition precedent to remission. But let it be admitted that repentance is for (in order to) the remission of sins, and no amount of illogical juggling of words will hide the fact that baptism is for the same purpose and in exactly the same sense.

(2) The denominational theory contradicts an obvious fact in the case. The Pentecostians asked **what to do to be saved**, not something to do because they were already saved. The conclusion is irresistible. In response to their query, Peter made repentance and baptism conditions precedent to the remission of sins.

So skillfully did Peter interweave the answer to the query that it is beyond the cavils of men to arrange the passage so or pervert it to make it mean other than that originally intended.

To illustrate, draw a pencil line through the controverted statement, “for the remission of sins.” We then have this statement: “Repent and

God Knows Best

Our Father tests us often
With suffering and with sorrow,
He tests us, not to punish us,
But to help us meet tomorrow...
For growing trees are strengthened
When they withstand the storm,
And the sharp cut of the chisel
Gives the marble grace and form...
God never hurts us needlessly,
And He never wastes our pain,
For every loss He sends to us
Is followed by rich gain...

Author Unknown

be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ.” Why did Peter utter these words? Obviously, in answer to the question, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Do for what? Indeed, to escape the consequences of their act 53 days before. How did Peter answer them? “**Repent and be baptized every one of you.**” Thus, whether Peter’s answer be contemplated as a solution for the grave difficulty the Pentecostians found themselves with or simply as an answer to the

question, “What must we do to obtain remission of sins?” The answer is the same: “Repent and be baptized.”

They were not told to repent for one purpose and be baptized for another. Repentance and baptism in this passage stand precisely in the same relationship. They are different acts, but their object is the same in this sentence—the remission of sins.

Deceased

I have been made to wonder how people view religious problems. There are so few who even try to find the right way. We are warned that “There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, But the end thereof are the ways of death” (Pro. 16:25). Even after this warning, people will not try to find the right way. If all pretended Christians should be tried in the fire, would they prove to be gold or silver? This is a serious question. The way that is right and cannot be wrong is the way that leads to life in another world. “Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Mat. 7:14). There is only one way that leads to life in a better land. Are we on that way? Why should people try to deceive themselves into thinking that just any way will lead to a better land? How can people be mistaken in the way if they will look into the Word of God? There is one way; there is one faith; there is one Lord; there is one God; there is one faith; there is one baptism. “Through thy precepts I get understanding: Therefore I hate every false way” (Psa. 119:104). If I am in Christ, I am in the right way.

E. M. Borden, Deceased

Ten Commandments of Human Relations

1. Speak to people. There is nothing as nice as a cheerful word of greeting.
2. Smile at people. It takes 72 muscles to frown, only 14 to smile.
3. Call people by name. The sweetest music to anyone’s ears is the sound of his own name.
4. Be friendly and helpful. If you would have friends, be friendly.
5. Be cordial. Speak and act as if everything you do were a genuine pleasure.
6. Be genuinely interested in people. You can like everybody if you try.
7. Be generous with praise—cautious with criticism. The tongue can be an unruly evil.
8. Be considerate with the feelings of others. It will be appreciated.
9. Be thoughtful of the opinions of others. There are three sides to a controversy—yours, the other fellows, and the right one.
10. Be alert to give service. What counts most in life is what we do for others.

Author Unknown

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermon Outlines

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

Bible Class: Christian Doctrine

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/Christian_Doctrine.html

Bible Class: 1 Thessalonians

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/1_Thessalonians.html

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Nelda King

Carla Burleson

Bill & Pam Busch

Please Remember

April 20

Birthdays and Anniversaries Get-together will be held in the zone room after the afternoon service.

April 30

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

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 15

April 14, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

For What Am I Responsible?

Marvin L. Weir

One of the most significant problems afflicting mankind is the refusal to accept responsibility for one's actions. Most people are determined to blame someone else for their unacceptable conduct. Some blame their bad behavior on their ancestors, others blame a society that existed 150 years ago, and many say the **devil makes** them act as they now act.

The Word of God says, "So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:12). The Bible doesn't teach that we shall be able to blame our failures on others successfully. God holds each of us accountable for our **choices** and **actions**. This is why each person should possess the attitude of the Bereans who "received the word with all readiness of the mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11).

People are responsible for their attitude toward and knowledge of the Word of God. Many believe the Bible is God's Word, but they never study the Holy Scriptures. Ignoring the Bible's teachings is to act as if it does not exist. Some give "lip service" to the Bible but have no real understanding of the Scriptures. It requires diligent study to know right from wrong and truth from error (cf. 2 Tim. 2:15).

Some are convinced that if they remain ignorant of God's Word, they will not be accountable for their ignorance. But the Bible doesn't so teach. Each person is responsible for finding the truth

on any given matter, accepting it as it is, and making such truth a guide for their actions.

One may know that instrumental music was used in the Old Testament (cf. Psa. 150) and thus **feel** that it is an acceptable means of worshipping God today. But the Old Testament is not the covenant that we are under today. That covenant—and all it contained—was nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14) to make way for the "better covenant" (Heb. 7:22; 8:6). The first covenant was taken away "that he may establish the second" (10:9).

Under the New Covenant, God has authorized singing, **not** playing. Search your New Testament, and you will find examples and commands regarding the music that God desires in worship today (Mat. 26:30; Acts 16:25; 1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:12; Jam. 5:13; Rev. 5:9; 14:3; 15:3). There is Bible authority for singing, but no authority for playing an instrument.

One is responsible for understanding that there is only **one** church that Jesus built (Mat. 16:18), the church of Christ (Rom. 16:16). The church and the body of which Christ is the head are the same (Eph. 1:22-23). The apostle Paul made it clear to the Ephesians that there is only **one** body (4:4). "One" **never** means more than "one" until folks begin to discuss religion. It's only then that "one" means "two," "three," "four," or "one hundred four." The one Head (Christ) then becomes the Saviour of multiple bodies that He never promised to build and did not purchase with His blood (Acts

20:28). There is no Bible authority for man-made churches (Mat. 15:13; 1 Cor. 10:10-13).

One is responsible for obeying the Gospel. There is only one Gospel (Gal. 1:6-9), and it alone has the power to save a soul from sin (Rom. 1:16). Those who do not obey the Gospel will be eternally lost (2 The. 1:8). Baptism is a part of the plan of salvation, and one must be baptized to be saved (Mark 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21). Baptism is **for** the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16) and one cannot be saved while still in their sins.

Yes, man is responsible for many things. But the thing that matters the most is your attitude toward the Word of God. Will you accept it and obey it as the Truth it is (John 17:17; 8:32), or will you ignore it and cling to the opinions, creeds, and traditions of men? Remember, **you** are responsible before God for your choices and actions.

Blossom, TX

A Lack of Confidence

R. L. Whiteside

The besetting sin of the human family is a lack of confidence in God, manifested in every kind of departure from the Word of God. If our confidence in God were what it should be, we would never want to turn aside from His way.

Eve lacked confidence in God, and so she followed the devil. Adam lacked confidence in God, and so he followed his wife. Why did Abel do what God said and Cain not do what God said? Abel had confidence in God to follow His commands; Cain did not.

No man, today, would depart from the plain Word of God if he had full confidence in God.

Deceased

Godly Preachers and Ungodly Elders

Andrew M. Connally

I am angry! Once again, I have learned of a godly, hardworking, faithful preacher fired by ungodly elders. He is being fired for no good reason. He has faithfully lived and preached the Word. He has stepped on the toes of those divorced and remarried, and they despise him. So, pressure is brought to bear on the elders to send him packing. Trumped-up falsehoods are used to belittle the preacher and hurt his good reputation. He and his good wife are put through the wringer to satisfy those who want him out of the way. Such elders who bow to such pressure sin! They are without conviction and are unworthy examples to the flock. When the elders are tools in the hands of ungodly brethren, they must be forced to resign their eldership and allow stronger men who love the truth to lead the Lord's church.

Many such firings, Lord it over the flock which love and support the man of God. Such actions

shame everyone who defends elders' authority and respects good elders. Many are quick to defend elders, but oh, so slow to rebuke men who abuse the office and flaunt the Word of God and Lord it over the flock. Let us be fair. Elders are not infallible; when they persist in sinful actions, they need to be called to account. They must be replaced and publicly reprovved when their sins are known (1 Tim. 5:21).

"I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality"(1 Tim. 5:21).

We live in a day of liberalism and a time of permissiveness, and whole congregations are being swept away. Godly preachers are few and growing

less every year due to such treatment as outlined above. It's no wonder.

We need to all let our feelings be known and stand up for the truth and godly men. We need to mark such elders, preachers, and congregations that are ungodly and refuse to fellowship with them or preach for them. We need to tell them so. Do not let them crucify good men, sweep it under the rug, or forget it. Such men who are determined

to Rule or Ruin are unworthy to wear the name of an elder in God's family.

I know God hates such a spirit. It beheaded John the immerser, it crucified Christ, and it is killing godly preachers today. God despises it, and so should we.

P.S. God never intended nor taught us to submit to such ungodly men.

Deceased

Hodge-Podge Religion

Cled E. Wallace

According to the *Adult Leader*, an intelligent Episcopalian and a Baptist were discussing denominationalism. The report of their conclusion is interesting. "We finally agreed that we are where we belong; our particular denomination suits us better than any other." The article logically omits any reference to the New Testament. In this case, the standard seems to be what "suits us better." The modern hodge-podge in religion cannot be justified or defended by the New Testament, so it is fitting that this inspired source of wisdom is ignored. It suits some "better" to be unbelievers. Christian Scientists, Mormons, Theosophists, pagans, various schools, and sundry sorts of sectarians after an "orthodox" order. Is it all right to be anything that "suits" you for no greater reason than that?

These modern churchmen concluded their confab that "a perfectly unified church is unthinkable" and that division "will result in our being better Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Baptists." There are no "Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Baptists" in the New Testament "better" or otherwise. If this is doubted, bring up the text that mentions them. Why should there be any now? Is modern denominationalism an improvement on the church of the New Testament? Hardly!

If "a perfectly unified church is unthinkable," why did Christ pray for it, and why did Paul preach it?

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment (1 Cor. 1:10).

These men who pass judgment on what Jesus prayed for and Paul taught as "unthinkable," think that we ought to take what they believe is thinkable instead of what the New Testament teaches. They think that the "several religious types" represented by the several larger divisions of Christendom ought to be maintained. These "larger divisions," as well as numerous smaller ones, are younger than the New Testament and represent perversions of New Testament teaching.

A return to plain New Testament teaching and a complete restoration of the body of Christ as found in the New Testament would destroy every one of them. To maintain them is to fight against God. There can be no compromise here. They think that it is terrible for anybody to try to "standardize us into a single sect." Well, suppose we leave the "sect" business out of it, become Christians according to the teaching of the New Testament, and let God place the members in the body just as it pleases Him.

Deceased

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermon Outlines

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

Bible Class: Christian Doctrine

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/Christian_Doctrine.html

Bible Class: 1 Thessalonians

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/1_Thessalonians.html

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Nelda King

Carla Burleson

Bill & Pam Busch

Please Remember

April 20

Birthdays and Anniversaries Get-together will be held in the zone room after the afternoon service.

April 30

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

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 16

April 21, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

The Wrongdoer

H. Leo Boles

We often meet with the wrongdoer in this world of confusion, blunders, and mistakes, cursed by ignorance, prejudice, and jealousy. Of course, we never consider putting ourselves in this class; it is always the other fellow. God has abundantly taught us how to deal with the wrongdoer, the attitude we should sustain toward him, and the efforts we should put forth to save him. The Christian's mission is to bless and do good, not to curse and retaliate.

The wrongdoer may sin consciously or unconsciously. His sin may be intentional or unintentional. If the wrongdoer is a member of the church, he should be dealt with as such. He should be brought to a realization of his condition, shown clearly his sin, and how to correct it. Every Christian should be anxious to know what wrongs he may have done and equally anxious to correct them. He should hate wrongdoing and fear the fatal consequences of it. After his wrong has been pointed out, he should repent and pray for forgiveness. Paul expressed the Christian spirit before Festus when he said, "If then I am a wrong-doer, and have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die" (Acts 25:11). He expresses here a willingness to see his wrong and to suffer in making reparation for it. The condition of the heart or attitude toward sin helps the sinner see his wrong more readily. A loathsomeness of sin helps one to turn speedily from it. True repentance on the part of the wrongdoer puts one in the right

attitude toward God and his fellow men. There should be no hiding of sin or covering up; no excusing or veneering of the wrong deed should be done; Jehovah demands a frank, prompt, and full confession of the wrong and speedily follows true repentance.

What attitude must the innocent party sustain toward the wrongdoer? If we can learn the attitude God sustains to the wrongdoer, we shall have found an example and instruction for the innocent party. At no time, under no circumstances, must one encourage wrongdoing. Just at this point, friends of the wrongdoer have seriously blundered. Would-be friends are prone to excuse, exonerate, and even acquit the wrongdoer without penitence on his part. No true friend will so act as to confirm the wrongdoer in his sin. The one who does so is not a genuine friend. The one who justifies or palliates the wrongdoer in his sin becomes a party to the sin. He often becomes more criminal than the sinner that he defends. The sinner may have done the wrong in the heat of passion or under impulse, but his defender proceeds calmly and deliberately in his defense of the sin; hence, he is a greater sinner and wrongs the one he is attempting to defend. He is more than a *particeps criminis*. He violates the spirit and letter of the Scripture:

Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in

a spirit of gentleness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted (Gal. 6:1).

Again, Paul says:

And if any man obeyeth not our word by this epistle, note that man, that ye have no company with him, to the end that he may be ashamed.

And yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother (2 The. 3:14-15).

These Scriptures show that his brother will restore and admonish the wrongdoer. Instead of encouraging him in the wrong and publicly or privately defending his wrong, the right way is to “make straight paths for your feet, that that which is lame be not turned out of the way, but rather be healed” (Heb. 12:13). Again, we have further instruction regarding the attitude toward the wrongdoer:

My brethren, if any among you err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins (Jam. 5:19-20).

Another blunder is frequently made in our attitude toward the wrongdoer. The innocent party assumes the attitude of an enemy. This attitude is often as great a mistake as the one the friend assumes. While the friend forgives and palliates the wrong, the one who assumes the attitude of an enemy so often takes vengeance, retaliates, and would exact heavy penalties by demanding revenge. If we have the spirit of Christ, we love our brother and will help him out of his wrongs. Sometimes, we find brethren who will not speak to each other; each claims that the other is the

wrongdoer and has become an enemy of the other. How foreign to the spirit of Christ! The attitude of an enemy usually excites greater enmity and encourages the wrongdoer to persist in his wrong. Such an attitude, or any that encourages the wrongdoer in his sin, is wrong, whether it be that of a friend or an enemy.

It is hard for us to learn to hate sin and love the sinner, to abhor evil and redeem the evildoer, loathe wrongdoing and save the wrongdoer, abominate the trespass and restore the transgressor. A Christian character’s touchstone is the attitude one sustains toward the wrongdoer. By becoming an enemy to the wrongdoer, we put ourselves out of reach of helping and saving him, sever the cord of brotherly love, and close our eyes to the opportunity of doing good. We also deny ourselves of being spiritual or confess that we are in rebellion to God’s will. Remember, Paul said: “Ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness” (Gal. 6:1). All wrongdoers should confess the wrong, but the enemy puts himself in such an attitude that it is exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to confess his wrong. Such a condition helps to confirm and continue the wrongdoer in his sin; the enemy, like the friend, becomes a *particeps criminis*. Indeed, our friends do not always act wisely when we are wrong, and it is also true that our enemies act exceedingly sinfully concerning our wrongdoings.

Deceased

What Is the Church of Christ?

The church of Christ is not a denomination founded by man nor a part of any religious organization founded by man. It originated in Heaven, in the mind of God, and was set up on earth in Jerusalem on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Lord (Eph. 3:8-11; Acts 2). The foundation of the church of Christ is Jesus Christ Himself (1 Cor. 3:11). The belief or

creed of the church of Christ is based upon the great truth that Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Mat. 16:16). Just before Jesus returned to Heaven, He commanded His apostles to “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am

with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen” (28:19-20). Under the direction of the Holy Ghost, apostles, and evangelists of the first century wrote the teachings of Jesus. We have these teachings in the New Testament. We have no other law, guide, or standard of authority.

The **designations** used by the church of Christ are only those found in the New Testament for the church and its members. In Acts 11:26, we read that the “disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.” Members of the church honor Christ by wearing this divinely given name. In Romans 16:16, we read, “The churches of Christ salute you.” Christ said, “I will build my church” (Mat. 16:18). The name “church of Christ” simply means that the church belongs to Christ, for He is its purchaser and builder.

The **worship** of the church of Christ is plainly given in the New Testament. Jesus said, “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). The day Christians worship is Sunday, the first day of the week, the “Lord’s day” (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2; Rev. 1:10). The acts of worship, which God specifies, are singing, preaching, praying, giving, and the Lord’s Supper (Col. 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:1-2; Acts 20:7; 2 Tim. 4:2; 1 Cor. 16:1-2).

The **music** of the church of Christ is singing and is the only kind of music that God authorizes in His Word for the worship of His church (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19). Singing is commanded of all Christians, not just a favored few.

The **finances** of the church of Christ are free-will offerings of the members as God has prospered them. They are given upon the first day of the week when the Christians meet to worship (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:7).

The **organization** of the church of Christ follows the simple pattern given in the New Testament. Jesus Christ is the only Head of the church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18).

The **headquarters** of the church of Christ is in Heaven, where the Head, Jesus Christ, is (Acts 1:9-

11; 2:30-33). Christians in each community meet to worship and serve God (Acts 20:6-7; 1 Cor. 1:1-2). Each one of these congregations is a “church of Christ,” and together are “churches of Christ” (Rom. 16:16). Each local church of Christ is self-governing under Jesus Christ, the Head.

The **membership** of the church of Christ is made up of all those who hear the Gospel of Christ, believe in Jesus Christ, God’s Son, repent of all their past sins, confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and are baptized (buried) in water for the remission of sins (Rom. 10:17; John 8:24; Acts 17:30-31; Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:4). Members who remain faithful unto death will receive the crown of life (Rev. 2:10; Gal. 6:7-9).

The Bible speaks of but **one church**, the church of Christ (Eph. 4:4; Col. 1:18). Christ has promised to save His church on the Last Day (Eph. 5:23). No salvation is promised to those out of Christ, but instead they “shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power” (2 The. 1:7-9). Why not become a member of the church of Christ today so that you may have eternal life?

Author Unknown

How to Enjoy Your Work

Adapt yourself to your work. Perhaps you need to change your method, not your work.

Plan your work; work your plan. Lack of system produces that “I’m swamped” feeling.

Don’t attempt everything at once. Spread out your work. Follow Paul’s example: “This one thing I do.”

Get a correct mental attitude. Think your work pleasant and easy, and it will tend to be that way.

Become proficient. Study ways to improve. It’s always easier to do a thing right.

Author Unknown

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermon Outlines

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

Bible Class: Christian Doctrine

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/Christian_Doctrine.html

Bible Class: 1 Thessalonians

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/1_Thessalonians.html

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Nelda King

Carla Burleson

Bill & Pam Busch

Please Remember

April 30

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

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 17

April 28, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

A Den of Thieves

Mike Demory

And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought; Saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves (Luke 19:45-46).

How often have we read this account without thinking about its true meaning? I know I am guilty. Recently, it was brought to my attention by a dear brother who asked, “What were they guilty of stealing?” Jesus accused them of being *thieves*, so they must have stolen something. I have always heard it said that they were selling the merchandise for a profit, which could be the case, but could it be that there is a deeper meaning here? Jesus quoted from the prophet Isaiah:

Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices *shall be* accepted upon mine altar; For mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people (56:7).

There was nothing wrong with the buying and selling of doves, lambs, goats, etc., because God had established, through the law, that such should be done for those traveling to Jerusalem (Deu. 14:21-26). However, some vital lessons can be learned from the above-cited passage. Isaiah wrote that God’s house was to be a house of prayer, which, it appears, is the real point Jesus was trying to make as He cast the sellers out. The key to Jesus’ lesson was all about attitude, motive, and emphasis concerning the things of God.

How quickly men forget the examples of the past (Rom. 15:4). The Jews of Jeremiah’s day were

guilty of the same thing—robbing God of His glory by the mistreatment of their fellowman (Jer. 7:1-11). The same attitude was repeating itself, abusing the law to make a profit. God’s house was built a holy temple (Psa. 5:7), meant to glorify Jehovah (26:8; 29:9). It was to be a house of prayer and supplication before the God of all mankind (1 Kin. 8:29). The Psalmist said of the temple that “holiness becomes thy house” (Psa. 93:5). Righteousness was to dwell therein (112:3). However, the Jews had become uncircumcised in heart (Jer. 9:26), as were their forefathers. They allowed tradition to override God’s will, and going through the motions had become the norm. Although they came to offer their Passover sacrifices as the Law expected, their emphasis robbed God of His glory.

The Lord’s church is God’s temple (1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:19), yet, even today, we fail to learn from the examples of the past. God’s temple continues to have its den of thieves who would rob God of His glory. As His living stones (Eph. 2:11-12), we have no authority to prostitute ourselves unto the gods of false teaching, materialism, or tolerance. Yet, congregation after congregation has bowed down to the gods of progressivism, egalitarianism, ecumenism, Pentecostalism, and so on. Becoming a den of thieves can also be apparent where brethren are unwilling to discipline, seek not God’s authority in their practices and teaching, and when attitudes are such that we only go through the motions.

Will a man rob God (Mal. 3:8)? The Jews did, repeatedly, and Christians are doing the same today. Shall we make God's house one of prayer, holiness, and righteousness, or will we make it a

den of thieves? May our hearts never be divided (Hos. 10:2), but may we always bring glory to the God who created and saved us.

Mexico, MO

Give Me the Bible

In a world where religious confusion is rampant, it is refreshing to read and study the Bible. In an obvious effort to elevate himself, man has complicated religion that what most people seek to pass off as devotion and service to God has little similarity to what is written in the Bible. It is appalling to hear today's theologians as they seek to justify such things as homosexuality, sexual promiscuity, same-sex marriages, and a host of other fleshly gratifications. It is disgusting to hear those who claim to have spent a lifetime studying the Bible go through the motions of giving Scriptural approval to such innovations as women *pastors* and female *worship leaders* in the church. How much more discouraging to hear those who have in the past called for "book, chapter, and verse" for all that we do, now adding to the work of the church innovations where no "book, chapter, and verse" is given. We say, give us the Bible instead of:

Human Creeds

Human creeds are just that—human. They did not originate in the mind of God and are thereby merely inventions of men. Peter says, "If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11). Any doctrine or teaching that cannot be shown to have the approval of God is not to be embraced by men. Man is finite. He cannot lift himself out of that fact. He cannot raise himself above himself. He cannot save himself. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23), and man is powerless to devise some means to relieve those sins. Human creeds are divisive, and they do not even agree with one another. They breed prejudice, discord, and disunity. These human devices have never once

solved even the most basic of man's needs. We say, give us the Bible.

Human Wisdom

Wisdom is correctly defined as applied knowledge. It is the ability to take what one has learned and apply it to a given set of circumstances to bring about the best result for all concerned. Human creeds are the result of human wisdom. Paul says that what he taught came from God, not some human devices:

But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even the hidden wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew (1 Cor. 2:1-10).

He concludes:

Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

It is arrogant and self-assertive for man to think that by his own man-made inventions, he can bring salvation to his kind. We say, give us the Bible.

Human Emotion

Far too many of today's religious practices are based on a person's emotions—how he feels about a matter. The popular entertainment-type worship services in today's so-called *churches* are little more than a way to tickle the hearers' emotions and generate high emotional responses. Such worship is more for man than for God. Emotion is important, but not as a guide. Emotion does not produce religion, but religion will produce emotions. In Acts 8, the Ethiopian certainly did "go on his way rejoicing," but it was not the rejoicing that produced his salvation; it was the salvation

that produced his rejoicing. Emotion must subordinate to faith. We say, give us the Bible.

Human Tradition

Many people are what they are because that is what their parents were. There is no true faith in that kind of reason for religion. Personal faith is just that—personal, and it comes by “hearing the word of God” (Rom. 10:17), not by hearing what your grandfather taught you. Far too often, the tradition in religion is maintained because it is comfortable and convenient. The religion of the father or mother is most likely the easiest to embrace because it has been around in the family for a long time. Yet, human tradition cannot be trusted; it allows too much and demands too little. True religion is personal—it is not inherited but is a calculated response by a person to what he has learned from carefully examining the Word of God. We say, give us the Bible.

Human Opinion

“Every man has the right to his own opinion” is a common expression, but it should not apply to man’s salvation. Opinion is a proposition held as true that falls short of being provable. Opinions are not only dangerous when applied to salvation; they are not allowable. Listen to religion in general: “It doesn’t make any difference what you believe, just so long as you’re honest and sincere.” Now listen to Jesus:

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).

That statement by Jesus destroys forever the idea that opinions relating to salvation are acceptable. One who holds a mere opinion about his salvation can never be sure. We say, give us the Bible.

Author Unknown

Jesus Christ Built Only His Church

E. M. Borden

Jesus said, “Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Mat. 16:18). Notice, He said “my church”—not Luther’s, Wesley’s, Calvin’s, or any other man’s. Notice also, that the word *church* is in the singular. It is one—not many. Are we right when referring to it as “the church of Christ?” It was not the Jewish congregation but the church of Christ.

Jesus not only said, “my church,” but He said, “The gates of hell [hades] shall not prevail against it.” That same church exists now, and all Christians are members of that church. To be a Christian is to be a member of the church of Christ. On the day of Pentecost, the Lord added the saved to the church (Acts 2:41, 47). The Lord does not add people to the Methodist or Baptist churches or any other man-made denomination. He adds them to His church.

The popular idea of a person becoming a child of God and then joining the church is absurd. A person can indeed become a Christian, then afterward join some human institution to his detriment. However, when one becomes a Christian, he becomes a member of the church of Christ by a spiritual birth (John 3:3-5). Paul said that church is “the house of God”—God’s family (1 Tim. 3:15). How can a man join a family after he has been born into it? Think about these things.

Deceased

“Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? 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 3:4-5).

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermon Outlines

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

Bible Class: Christian Doctrine

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/Christian_Doctrine.html

Bible Class: 2 Thessalonians

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/1_Thessalonians.html

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Nelda King

Carla Burleson

Bill & Pam Busch

Please Remember

April 30

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

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 18

May 5, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

Tests of One's Faith

Genesis 22:1; James 1:13

Kent Bailey

In studying the Word of God, one will carefully note various requirements placed upon humanity that will test our faith. James makes this concept clear as he indicates by divine inspiration that an acceptable faith produces works (Jam. 2:14-26). An additional reference to the Scriptures concerning this same matter is stated in Hebrews chapter 11.

Compared to the texts found in Genesis 22:1 and James 1:13, it should be evident to all individuals that *tempt* is used in two different ways within the Word of God. The account stated in Genesis uses the term indicating **trial**, whereas James 1:13 inspiration uses such language to indicate **an inducement to do evil**. The text plainly states that God cannot be tempted with evil and, therefore, that He does not tempt any individual or induce one to accomplish that which is evil in their personal lives. While God will never engage in any activity that would lead anyone into sinful conduct, He does permit our faith to be tested, tried, and/or proven. Such was indicated regarding Abraham in Genesis 22:1. Such implies several important aspects.

One's personal faith is essential in attaining fellowship with God. When we discuss the element of faith, we speak concerning trust, reliance, and/or confidence (Heb. 11:1-6). In noting the passage, Biblical faith is established in the lives of individuals based on adequate evidence. True

faith is not a "blind leap into the dark" based upon subjective existential thinking. Such comes as the result of true knowledge, whether such knowledge is based upon empirical or contemplative evidence. Faith and obedience must be developed in one's life if one will ever attain fellowship with God.

This type of faith includes the Deity of Christ (John 1:1-14) and the Gospel of Christ (Mark 16:15-16). The apostle Paul demonstrated a connecting link between evidence, understanding, knowledge, and obedience (Acts 28:24-28). These essential principles are necessary not only for becoming a Christian but also for Christians to remain faithful.

When correctly understanding the importance of such principles, one will readily see that such elements are equally related to Christians and non-Christians. God does not have a standard that applies to those seeking to be saved from past alien sins in becoming Christians and then has no set standard in continuing in the faith by living faithfully as a Christian. The doctrine of "faith only" is just as wrong for the Christian as it is for the non-Christian.

Obedience to God is the true test of one's faith. It is a remarkable fact that in all Biblical dispensations, God has had certain tests of faith, various means by which determined individuals' loyalty to Him and His Word. Such is evidenced in

Hebrews 11 concerning the record of those who were faithful. We take note of such in the lives of:

- Noah—11:7.
- Abraham—11:7-10; 11:17-19.
- Isaac—11:20-21.
- Joseph—11:22.
- Moses—11:23-29.

Some divine requirements that are adequate tests are moral in nature. These have ethical and practical aspects. Such even have an application that regulates civilized behavior in all societies. Without a correct application of divine principles that are ethical and/ or moral in nature, civilized society cannot exist.

These divine requirements are right upon the basis of their existence. They are given for our good and are essential. These laws predated Mosaic law and were bound upon humanity during the Patriarchal law when no written revelation had been given. These principles are eternal in nature and apply to all accountable individuals today as components of the New Testament law of Christ. If such were not the case, it would be impossible to possess anything due to thieves stealing from others. Lack of safety would be worse than what it already is due to the sin of murder. Romans 13:1-7 places a divine obligation for civil government to protect society from these evil-doers, even to the point of taking human life as a Scriptural

means of punishment. The Old Testament Mosaic law was given to demonstrate the sinfulness of sin (7:7-13).

The ultimate test of one's faith is positive Divine law. Positive divine law exists as Divine requirements only upon the basis that God requires such, not because there is moral or ethical value found in such. There is no logical connection between taking the blood of an animal and placing an amount over a doorpost to save the firstborn in families from death (Exo. 12:13). There is no logical connection between Naaman's dipping seven times in the river Jordan to be cleansed from his leprosy (2 Kin. 5:10-14).

In the New Testament age, there is no logical connection between the requirement of the Eternal Word, the second member of the Godhead becoming incarnate, coming to this world, and tasting death for all humanity in the shedding of His blood (Heb. 2:9).

There is no logical connection between water baptism unto the remission of past alien sins (Acts 2:38). For the Christian, there is no logical connection to the acts of New Testament worship (2:42; Col. 3:16) or even the worship assembly. The denominational world stumbles for two reasons: (1) they reject the concept of obedience, and (2) the necessary tests of one's faith.

Copied

The Meanest Mother in the World

I had the meanest mother in the world. While other kids ate candy for breakfast, I had to have cereal, eggs, and toast. When others had cokes and candy for lunch, I had to eat a sandwich. As you can guess, my supper was different from the other kids'.

But at least I was not alone in my suffering. My sister and two brothers had the same mean mother I did.

My mother insisted upon knowing where we were all the time. You would think we were on

a chain gang. She had to know who our friends were and what we were doing. She insisted if we said we would be gone an hour, we would be gone an hour or less, not one hour and one minute. I am almost ashamed to admit it, but she actually struck us. Not once, but each time, we did as we pleased. Can you imagine someone actually hitting a child just because he disobeyed? Now you can begin to see how mean she really was.

The worst is yet to come. We had to be in bed by nine each night and up early the next morning. We could not sleep until noon like our friends. So, while they slept, my mother actually had the nerve to break the child labor law. She made us work. We had to wash dishes, make the beds, learn to cook, and all sorts of cruel things. I believe she laid awake at night thinking up mean things to do to us.

She always insisted upon our telling the whole truth and nothing but the truth, even if it killed us—and it nearly did.

When we were teenagers, she was much worse and wiser, and our lives became even more unbearable. None of this tooting the horn of a car for us to come running. She embarrassed us to no end by making our dates and friends come to the door to get us. I forgot to mention: While my friends were dating at the mature age of 12 or 13, my old-fashioned mother refused to let me date until age 15 or 16. Fifteen, if you date only

to go to a school function, and that was maybe twice a year.

My mother was a complete failure as a mother. None of us had ever been arrested or beaten his mate. Each of my brothers served his time in the service of this country. And whom do we blame for the terrible way we turned out? You are right, our mean mother. Look at all the terrible things we missed. We never got to march in a protest parade, participate in a riot, burn our draft card, and do a million and one thing our friends did. She forced us to grow up into God-fearing, educated, honest adults.

Using this as a background, I am trying to raise my three children. I stand a little taller and am filled with pride when my children call me mean.

Because you see, I thank God He gave me **the meanest mother in the world.**

Author Unknown

God has constantly tested man's willingness to do His will. To be a real test, the thing commanded must be such that the person can see no connection between the thing commanded and the result to be obtained. Examples: The brazen serpent (Num. 21:4-9), Naaman's dipping in the Jordan (2 Kin. 5:1-19). Baptism is such a test.

R. L. Whiteside, Deceased

In the Art of Marriage, the Little Things Are Big Things

It's never being too old to hold hands.

It's remembering to say "I love you" at least once each day.

It's never going to sleep angry.

It's having a mutual sense of values and common objectives. It is standing together, facing the world.

It is forming a circle of love that gathers in the whole family. It is speaking words of appreciation and demonstrating gratitude in thoughtful ways.

It has the capacity to forgive and forget.

It is giving each other an atmosphere in which each can grow.

It is a common search for the good and the beautiful.

It is not only marrying the right partner but also being the right partner.

Author Unknown

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermon Outlines

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

Bible Class: Christian Doctrine

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/Christian_Doctrine.html

Bible Class: 1 Thessalonians

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/1_Thessalonians.html

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Nelda King

Carla Burleson

Bill & Pam Busch

Please Remember

May 18

Birthdays and Anniversaries Get-together will be held in the zone room after the afternoon service.

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 19

May 12, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

The Worship of the Church

Bobby Duncan

That Christianity is a way of life is a fact agreed upon by all. Another fact upon which all should agree is that Christianity is a way of worship. In John 9:31, the blind man Jesus healed said: "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshiper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth."

What is the standard by which we determine whether worship is acceptable? Do we measure the acceptability of worship by its pomp or grandeur? Do we measure it by its power to excite or please the worshiper? Do we determine its acceptability by polling the populace to see what the majority believes? Is the sincerity of the worshiper the criterion by which we measure the acceptability of worship? The answer to all these questions, even the last one, is the same. While one of the requirements for acceptable worship is that the worshiper be sincere, the sincerity of the worshiper is not the standard by which worship is measured to determine if it is acceptable. Then, what is?

The Word of God is now and always has been the standard of acceptable worship. From the early morning of time down to the present, God has accepted the worship of those who worshiped according to His instructions, and He has rejected the worship of those who deviated from those instructions. Not to be overlooked is that there has never been a time in man's existence when man was allowed to choose how he would

worship God. God has always given instructions concerning how man should worship.

In Genesis 4, the Bible tells of the worship of Cain and Abel, sons of Adam and Eve. Both Cain and Abel worshiped the one true and living God. Both brought sacrifices. God accepted the worship of one but rejected the worship of the other. Why? Because one worshiped as God instructed, and the other did not. Two passages in the New Testament make this point crystal clear: Hebrews 11:4 and Romans 10:17. The first of these tells us that it was "by faith" that Abel offered a sacrifice acceptable to God; the second tells us that faith comes by hearing the Word of God. Abel worshiped according to the Word of God, and God was pleased. Cain worshiped, but not according to the Word of God, and God was not pleased.

Another incident that illustrates the absolute necessity of allowing the Word of God to govern our worship is recorded in Leviticus 10:1-2:

And Nadab and Abihu... offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not.

And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.

So far as the record is concerned, these sons of Aaron deviated from God's instructions concerning worship in only one point, which is a minor one, as most would view it. But using fire which the Lord had not authorized instead of the fire which the Lord had authorized cost them their lives.

These Old Testament incidents were recorded “for our learning” (Rom. 15:4) and serve as “our examples” (1 Cor. 10:6). Jesus makes it clear that we who are in the New Testament church must also measure our worship by the Word of God. “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:24). To worship “in spirit” is to worship sincerely and from the heart. To worship “in truth” is to worship according to the instructions given in the Word of God, for God’s “word is truth” (17:17).

Worshiping God acceptably in this Gospel age involves: (1) singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16); (2) praying (1 The. 5:17; Acts 12:5); (3) preaching or studying the Word of God (Acts 20:7; 2:42); (4) eating the Lord’s supper (Acts 20:7); (5) giving as we have been prospered (1 Cor. 16:2). Acts 20:7 and 1 Corinthians 16:2 show clearly that the day upon which all these acts

of worship are to be engaged in is “the first day of the week.” We infer from many passages in the New Testament that singing, praying, preaching, or even the giving of one’s means for the work of the Lord may be properly done on other days of the week also not instead of, but in addition to the first day of the week. However, the only day of the week upon which we may properly observe the Lord’s supper is the first day of the week. There is no authority for its observance upon any other day. But for our worship on the first day of every week to be acceptable, we must observe the Lord’s supper. It should be emphasized that those who play instruments, burn incense, light candles, count beads, etc., in their worship, are doing so without divine authority.

So God’s church might please Him in the matter of worship, we must worship in the precise manner authorized by God’s Word.

Deceased

Stop and Smell the Roses

Dub Mowery

Up through the 1950s, most Americans enjoyed life at a slower pace than many are inclined to do today. Looking back to the past, it was probably during the 1960s, when the hippie era entered society, that our nation began to pick up the pace. Today, without question, we are living in a fast-moving world. It is so fast that many people do not bother to be neighborly with those living near them. A family can move into a neighborhood, and hardly anyone living there welcomes them.

Because of our fast-moving world, many, either employed or in business, look forward to their retirement. Some even take an early retirement so they can slow down and enjoy life more. Before their retirement, most folks count the days until their next vacation to

enjoy a week or two at a slower pace and just do what they want to do. Young people who grew up in small or middle-sized towns leave for the bright lights of large cities after graduating high school. Years later, many of them will move back to their hometown to enjoy their retirement years.

Sometime in the past, the cliché “Stop and smell the roses” became a common expression. Some mistakenly think that the expression started after Ringo Starr released an album by that name in the 1980s. I know that is not so because I have heard it all my life. It is believed to have debuted approximately one hundred years ago here in the United States.

Deceased

Living for Jesus

Johnny Ramsey

The beauty spot of the book of Galatians is Galatians 2:20, where Paul makes it clear that the crucified Savior is the heart and core of his sojourn on the earth.

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and that *life* which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, *the faith* which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me (Gal. 2:20).

The apostle shows that “Christ living in me” was the theme song of that wonderful Christian’s life. So should our emphasis be!

Into the heart of Jesus,
Deeper and deeper I go,
Longing to know the reason
Why He should love me so.

In the third chapter of Colossians, we read of the Christ-centered life that demands the best of us:

- Those raised in baptism with Christ seek things above (3:1)
- They set their affections on heavenly things (3:2)
- They cease living in worldly pursuits (3:9-10)
- They do all to the glory of God (3:12)
- They bend to the authority of Christ (3:17)
- They do not seek popularity on earth (3:23)

In view of the “certified gospel” of Galatians 1 and the “crucified life” of Galatians 2, it is easy to see that the third stanza of Galatians speaks of the coveted relationship! From Genesis 22:18 onward, all Jews desired to be Abraham’s seed. However, by the first century, Judaism had perverted this beautiful promise. They claimed to be Abraham’s seed through whom the Gentiles had to pass to be redeemed. Judaizers boldly bound the Law of Moses, begun at Sinai, upon the Gentiles. The discussion of Acts 15 dealt with this biased viewpoint and made it clear

that all men stood on level ground at the foot of the cross.

The Gospel message is clear: God makes no distinction between Jew and Gentile.

God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him.... For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek: for the same *Lord* is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call upon him (Acts 10:34-35; Rom. 10:12).

Truly, anyone, in any nation, that obeys the Lord and works righteousness is acceptable to heaven! In the brilliant finish of Galatians 3, we learn these graphic points:

- Through the system of faith (the Gospel), we become children of God (3:26)
- When baptized into Christ, we are “clothed upon with Jesus” (3:27)
- There is no respect of persons in the Lord (3:28)
- If we belong to Christ, we are Abraham’s seed (3:28)
- This makes us heirs of God (3:29)

Christ, not the Jewish nation, is Abraham’s seed. This clear statement in Galatians 3:16 forever ruined the prejudicial view of Judaism and made access to Christianity personal and individual. It was no longer inherited by the physical birth but by the new birth of John 3:5. One of the best Bible arguments on this distinction between the old and new covenants is Hebrews 8:6-13. Paul’s inspired writing in Galatians 3 was devastating material that crushed Judaism.

Jesus paid it all;
All to Him I owe,
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow.

Deceased

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermon Outlines

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

Bible Class: Christian Doctrine

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/Christian_Doctrine.html

Bible Class: 1 Thessalonians

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/1_Thessalonians.html

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Nelda King

Carla Burleson

Bill & Pam Busch

Please Remember

May 18

Birthdays and Anniversaries Get-together will be held in the zone room after the afternoon service.

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 20

May 19, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

Why Baptism?

Charles Pogue

Nothing is made clearer by the New Testament Scriptures than baptism is essential for salvation. As is true with any other commandment God gives, baptism alone does not save. As is also true with any other commandment God gives, one is not saved without baptism.

Understanding why God commanded baptism and grasping why baptism is a burial would help many who hear the Gospel accept its absolute essentialness in obedience to the Gospel. Thus, the subject of the following discussion is why God has given us this command.

Why did God command baptism? Part of the answer lies in the fact that all men have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). Sin is the filth of the soul, as dirt is filth to the human body. How is filth washed away from the physical body? The answer is water. If sin spoils the soul, and it is by the blood of Christ that one is cleansed, it seems hard that anyone would fail to understand that water is symbolic of the cleansing from sin by the blood of Christ and the point at which the blood is applied. Thus, God commanded baptism in water to apply Christ's blood to wash away one's sins.

Why is baptism a burial? The apostle Paul in Romans 6 records the complete answer to this. A close study of the entire chapter will convince anyone of the necessity of baptism. Verses 3-6 explain:

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

At the time of one's knowledge that he has sinned, he understands that he is spiritually dead. When the physical body is dead, what is done with it? It is buried. Since the man guilty of sin is spiritually dead, what is done with that old man? He is buried. He is buried in the grave of baptism wherein he is washed from his sins by the blood of Christ by his obedience to God's command to be baptized. He is then raised from the water, even as Christ was raised from the dead on the third day. He now walks as a new man in a new life a servant of righteousness instead of a servant of sin as the old man did. It is not hard to understand why water and burial. For many, what it is is an unwillingness to accept baptism. They often do so because they have isolated one verse from the rest of Scripture, that one being John 3:16.

John the Baptizer, the forerunner of Christ, came preaching the baptism of repentance for

the remission of sins (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3). If the Jews of his day had difficulty understanding why baptism was essential in John's work, we are not told. When Jesus instructed the apostles to go into all the world and preach the Gospel, He declared the essentiality of baptism for salvation (Mark 16:16). The apostles had no difficulty grasping why baptism was part of the command. When the apostles answered the question of "what must we do" on the day of Pentecost, baptism for the remission of sins was commanded. The people that day never had a problem understanding it. In every single instance of individuals in Acts who complied with the Gospel, **all** were baptized. None of

them said I do not need to be baptized. They understood it, and they believed the message of God, not the message of man.

Why should anyone today fail to understand and accept the simple words of Peter in 1 Peter 3:21? "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." The answer is that there is **no reasonable reason not** to understand what baptism is and its role in the plan devised by heaven to save man who dwells upon the earth.

Deceased

We Are Saved Like Noah

Gayle Oler

The example of Noah and the ark is set forth in the New Testament as a true likeness of salvation today (1 Pet. 3:20-21). In that example is enough to settle the question of what one must do to be saved, if only a reasonable and candid thought be given to it.

The Following Facts About Noah Are Evident

1. God saved Noah: "For if God spared not...the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness" (2 Pet. 2:4-5).

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

3. Noah was saved in the ark: "wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved" (1 Pet. 3:20).

4. Noah was saved by water: "when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water" (3:20-21).

5. Noah saved himself under God's grace and providence: "being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house" (Heb. 11:7). Noah went about the work "when once the longsuffering of God waited" (1 Pet. 3:20). God's grace, man's work—that is the complete story.

The Following Facts About Us Are Evident

1. God saves us: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Tit. 2:11).

2. Our faith saves us: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9).

3. We are likewise saved by baptism. "The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 3:21).

4. So, like Noah, individuals today, under the providence of God and by His grace which is in Jesus Christ, "Save yourselves from this

untoward generation” (Acts 2:40) by obeying all the commands of God. It is the same story as of old—God’s grace coupled with man’s work. “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (Jam. 2:24).

When Noah came forth from the ark, one thing had separated him from the world of condemned men—water. That was the dividing point. When a Christian comes from the water,

he looks upon a new world, and by the blood of Christ reached in baptism he is divided from the old life. Through faith in Christ and by the mercy of God, a man is baptized for the remission of sins. (Acts 2:38). He is then saved, for “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16).

Deceased

What Does It Cost to Become a Christian?

Bob Howton

It will cost you all your evil habits! Smoking, drinking, lying, speeding in your automobile, gossiping, backbiting, failing to pay your bills, slandering your fellowman, talebearing, missing scheduled services at church, failing to love your family, and anything else that does not comport with Godliness.

Realizing that “Evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Cor. 15:33), becoming a Christian will require you to screen your associates and refuse to participate in any activity that might entice you to do wrong. After all, as the old saying goes, “You cannot lie with the dogs without getting up with fleas.”

Realizing that “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35), becoming a Christian will require you to “beware of covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col. 3:5). “The earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Pet. 3:10). Therefore, you must “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal” (Mat. 6:19).

Realizing that half-hearted allegiance to God is repugnant to Him, becoming a Christian will require you to “be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).

Realizing that ignorance of God’s Word will not excuse you at the judgment, becoming a

Christian will require you to “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). “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30).

Does this sound like a doom-and-gloom exercise? Indeed, it is not! “For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:23). What could be of more value than the words? “For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers” (1 Pet. 3:12). And, “but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth” (John 9:31).

A Christian’s life is filled with Peace, Joy, Hope, Forgiveness of sins, Strength in times of need, Answer to Scriptural prayer, and the **Abiding** presence of Him Who suffered in our place at Calvary. “And, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world” (Mat. 28:20).

The Christian never walks alone! He is never without a true burden-bearing friend. “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (1 Pet. 5:7).

What does it **cost** to become a Christian? It does not **cost**. It **pays**, both here and hereafter!

It is a **win-win** situation!

Deceased

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermon Outlines

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

Bible Class: Christian Doctrine

[https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/
Christian_Doctrine.html](https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/Christian_Doctrine.html)

Bible Class: 1 Thessalonians

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/1_Thessalonians.html

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

[https://www.youtube.com/c/
BellviewChurchOfChrist](https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist)

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Life

Forenoon and afternoon and night,—

And day is gone,—

So short a span of time there is

’Twixt dawn and evensong.

Youth,—Middle life,—Old age,—

And life is past,—

So, live each day that God shall say,

“Well done!” at last.

Author Unknown

Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Nelda King

Carla Burleson

Bill & Pam Busch

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 21

May 26, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

What Does Unfaithful Mean?

Mike Demory

Solomon wrote, “Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is *like* a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint” (Pro. 25:19). It is truly disheartening that *unfaithful* must be explained to Christians who should know and understand God’s Word, but that is where our age of tolerance has led us. In a recent Facebook conversation, a question was posed about a certain brother in Christ. I responded that he was “unfaithful,” which brought immediate questions from others, “What does unfaithful mean?” Vine’s shows us that the word comes from the Greek *apistos*, which means “faithless or unbelieving.” Jesus used this word in the parable of the wise steward, where He said:

But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for *him*, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the **unbelievers** (Luke 12:45-46).

This word is found again in Revelation 21:8, which describes those who will see their eternal destiny in the lake of fire. Since it is the case that faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17), and it is the case God obligates us to walk by faith (2 Cor. 5:7), then it is the case that if there is no Word from God on a subject, there is no faith, and we find ourselves faithless or unfaithful should we choose to proceed without God’s authority (Rom. 14:23). Utilizing metaphor to

describe unfaithfulness, God called the Israelites whores, fornicators, and harlots for turning away from His law to following the ways of the world (Eze. 16:15ff). James said **if** we choose to be friends of the world, then we become not only enemies of God, but adulterers [figuratively, of course] (Jam. 4:4). Peter warned of false teachers who, “Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls” (2 Pet. 2:14).

To be faithful means that we follow what the Word of God authorizes, nothing more and nothing less. Adding the instrument to the worship of God makes one unfaithful or faithless since there is no Bible authority to do so. There is no Bible authority for women preachers, elders, deacons, song leaders, prayer leaders, or committee members, and, therefore, makes one unfaithful who not only supports it but tolerates it as well. The doctrine of fellowship has become a byword within the Lord’s church as more congregations turn a blind eye to preachers playing the harlot. The brother first mentioned in the Facebook conversation posts a blog that contains some good thoughts. However, his eyes are full of adultery due to others of like-mindedness that he fellowships, destroying any good that he does.

In our age of tolerance, members of the Lord’s church are too accepting of the world’s ways, as if God allows social changes to become the new standard. When has it ever been the case that God

has conceded to the thoughts and desires of men? Never! Keep in mind that it was through unbelief (disobedience) that the Israelites wandered the wilderness for 40 years, with an entire generation losing their lives (Heb. 3:12ff). *Unfaithfulness* refers to those congregations of the Lord's church who no longer seek God's will but prefer to follow the crowd of denominations. Elders oversee more than one congregation, praise teams, drama, and turning down the lights while singing in the background during the Lord's Supper. Holding such false doctrines as elders having no authority, annihilation, non-Christians not held to Matthew 19:6, First Christian Church are brethren, children's church is acceptable, open fellowship, Theological Evolution, hand clapping, Holy Spirit Baptism required for salvation, the Holy Spirit speaks directly to us today, Mental Reservation, re-evaluation of elders, and others.

Anyone believing the above or fellowshipping those who do and refusing to expose them is unfaithful or faithless! If not, why not? Brethren, the time is overdue for us to call once again "a spade a spade." Stop allowing the world to dictate that it is wrong to reprove, rebuke, and exhort (2 Tim. 4:2). Jesus said:

Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you **falsely**, for **my** sake. **Rejoice**, and be exceeding glad (Mat. 5:11-12).

God has commanded that we all be of the same mind (1 Cor. 1:10; Phi. 2:2, et al.). If we are not, then it is impossible for us to walk together (Amos 3:3). Anyone who walks outside of the Law of Christ is one of two things: (1) Lost or (2) Unfaithful. It depends upon which side of the water they stand. What does *unfaithful* mean? In short, not showing thyself a pattern of good works (Tit. 2:7).

Mexico, MO

"If religious books are not widely circulated among the masses in this country and the people do not become religious, I do not know what is to become of us as a nation. And the thought is one to cause solemn reflection on the part of every patriot and Christian. If the truth be not diffused, error will be; if God and his word are not known and received the devil and his works will gain the ascendancy; if the Evangelical Volume does not reach every hamlet, the pages of corrupt and licentious literature will."

Daniel Webster

Buy Them Back

Bob Howton

The prophet Jeremiah often wept over the sins of the children of Israel. His tears were not of weakness but of great and heartfelt concern. A parallel is depicted in Jeremiah 32 to Jehovah's buying back wayward Israel and Jeremiah's buying back a field of one of his near kinsmen. The outcome of such "buying back" was that God made provision for his own, even in the face of great adversity and unconcern.

In this instance, Israel was lost to God because of their indifference to His Word. Like the Prodigal son, they were in a far country, at the bottom of their well of despair. God bought them back. His instructions to Jeremiah were to buy back the field of his kinsman. This, in parallel, meant regaining something valuable but lost. There would be no reason to buy back something of no value, so the idea is Israel (or the field) was of great

value to God. Let us look at a parallel in our lives in the present day.

Far too many times in this permissive “live and let live” society, we stand idly by and watch as the church suffers great loss of valuable souls who simply drift away from duty and the safety of God’s care. It generally starts with missing a single service but soon escalates to missing more and more. The pattern set is usually one of progressive unconcern and disinterest. Sad to say, the same unconcern is often reflected in the lives of those who claim to be faithful. They note the “falling away” but do not encourage nor restore the erring. Note the following Scripture and see if the faithful have any complicity. “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly” (1 The. 5:14).

The great apostle Paul instructed Timothy to “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-

suffering and doctrine” (2 Tim. 4:2). And again, he instructed the Galatians with these words, “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted” (Gal. 6:1).

How do we react in the face of such instruction? Generally speaking, we think those words are meant for the elders, church leaders, preachers, or Bible class teachers. It is easy to see the inevitable conclusion of such thinking! If we do nothing but watch as the wayward slips away, we thereby proclaim ourselves “un-spiritual.”

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).

Let us “Buy Them Back” with patient entreaty, loving-kindness, and great concern.

Deceased

We Live in an Age

W. H. Houghton

Which thinks that being lost in the woods is a new freedom

Which, having made a mess of civilization, petulantly cries: “Why doesn’t God do something?”

Which, because it subtracts faith, multiplies fear.

In which men demand education for their children but decline discipline for themselves.

When desire is deity, and realization is futility.

Which seeks to settle every problem by denying its existence—the reality of sin, for instance.

Which puts the highest premium on knowledge, but when he gets it, he does not know what to do.

Which seems to think it has robbed death of its sting by transforming the cemetery into a “memorial park.”

Which boasts of its unbelief instead of being ashamed.

Which thinks life daring as only being delirious.

Which believes in religious fakers and follows political quacks but thinks itself too intelligent to accept the Word of God.

In which youth boasts, it is hard-boiled when it is merely half-baked.

Which prepares for everything, even for a “rainy day,” but fails to prepare for eternity.

Deceased

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermon Outlines

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

Bible Class: Christian Doctrine

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/Christian_Doctrine.html

Bible Class: 1 Thessalonians

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/1_Thessalonians.html

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ
4850 Saufley Field Road
Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor
bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Beyond Life's Gateway

There's an open gate
At the end of the road
Through which each must go alone,
And there in a light we cannot see
Our Father claims His own;
Beyond the gate, your loved one
Finds happiness and rest
And there is comfort
In the thought
That a loving God knows best.

Author Unknown

Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe	Nancy Travis
Orville & Linda Worley	Nelda King
Carla Burseson	Bill & Pam Busch

Weekly Services

Sunday

Bible Classes for all ages — 9:00 a.m.
Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.
Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley
Michael Hatcher
Bill Busch
Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 22

June 2, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

Are the New Testament Books Historically Credible?

Wayne Jackson

The twenty-seven documents of the New Testament, as they came from the pens of the original inspired writers, are referred to as autographs. None of these compositions survive today.

Does that mean our copies of the New Testament Scriptures are somehow suspect?

Hardly. If one operated on the premise that no document is genuine unless the original is possessed, the bulk of ancient literature would have to be thrown away. There is but a smattering of historical, literary evidence for the Greek and Roman classics compared to the document support for the New Testament. And yet, no one dreams of disputing the authorship of the noble compositions of Homer, Aristotle, or Tacitus. What, then, ought to be conceded relative to the credibility of the New Testament records? Consider several examples.

Homer

Homer, the blind poet of Greece, lived some 900 years before the birth of Christ. He penned the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. However, not a single complete copy of these works exists that is earlier than the thirteenth century AD, and there are no fragmented copies older than the sixth century AD. At the very least, our modern versions are fifteen centuries removed from the originals.

Plato

Plato was one of the most famous of the Greek philosophers. He lived in the early fifth century before Christ. He produced several important

works, e.g., the *Republic*, *Apology*, *Laws*, etc. Only seven copies of his works have survived, none earlier than around AD 900. There is thus a gap of some 1,300 years between the original composition and the extant copies of today.

Aristotle

Aristotle lived in the fourth century before our Lord. He wrote prolifically on science, politics, ethics, etc. Of the five copies of his works that have survived, the oldest dates from about 1100—some 1,400 years removed from the original.

Julius Caesar

Julius Caesar (Cir. 102-44 BC) penned his *Gallic War* between 58-50 BC. Only about nine or ten reasonably good manuscripts remain, dating to some 900 years this side of the originals.

These four examples are illustrative enough to emphasize the point we wish to emphasize. Contrast the statistics cited above with the fact that we now possess, in the various libraries and museums of the world, more than **5,300 copies** (substantially complete or fragmented) of the New Testament documents! That is a breathtaking figure compared to the numbers for the classics. But let me be more precise. There are more than 240 papyri Greek fragments containing portions of the New Testament, some of which are within decades of the close of the New Testament canon.

- The Chester Beatty papyri contains much of the Gospel records, Acts, the Pauline

epistles, and the book of Revelation. They date from the third-century AD.

- Papyrus 52, in the John Rylands Library of Manchester, England, contains a portion of John 18. It dates to the first half of the second century AD.
- Several papyri in the Bodmer Library in Geneva, Switzerland, contain different segments of the New Testament, including the Gospel of Luke, the Gospel of John, the Book of Acts, Jude, and the epistles of Peter, James, John, and Jude.

Add to the more than 5,300 Greek manuscripts thousands of ancient translations of the Greek New Testament into other languages. For

instance, there are over 8,000 copies of the Latin Vulgate, the most translated work of antiquity. This is an amazing fact since ancient works were rarely rendered from one language to another.

Finally, those quotations from the New Testament are found in the writings of the “church fathers,” i.e., those works produced in the first several centuries of the Christian era. It has been noted that virtually all of the New Testament, except for about a dozen verses, could be reproduced from these sources alone. How astounding is the evidence for the preservation of the New Testament records? We can have every confidence in the reliability of the Book we hold so dear.

Deceased

The Need for Bible Character

The world needs men and women of character, youth, and age who are not afraid to live their faith in the face of a faithless society. Even worldly people generally have some idea of and an appreciation for personal character. Christians are not the only people who regard such character traits as honor, integrity, and fairness. But, like so many other things, man’s definition of character falls far short of the Divine ideal. Christian character rises above the world’s accepted norms. For example, while the world admires the benefits of love, it rarely advocates the love of one’s enemies (Mat. 5:43). Only when we allow the Bible, the Word of God, to define and explain character will we be able **to build the kind of character** that pleases God.

What is Character? The English word *character* comes from Latin, “mark, distinctive quality,” and Greek, “to scratch, engrave” (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*; *Online Etymology Dictionary*). So, one’s character consists of the distinctive marks or traits that are etched or engraved on a person’s heart. Character includes the morals and ethics that define a person. The Bible says, “For as he thinks in his heart, so *is* he” (Pro. 23:7).

Bible Character Defines the Person

A person’s words and actions express his character. It has been said that character is not what a person does but who a person is. More precisely, a person’s character is who they are (or choose to be) when no one is watching! D. L. Moody aptly observed that “character is what a man is in the dark.”

We are reminded of the teenager Joseph who, although being violently removed from every familiar surroundings of his young life (family and friends), consistently kept his faith in God and would not sin—even when it cost him his job, reputation, and freedom (Gen. 37 and 39). Joseph was a young man of character. He knew that God was always watching and seeing how he lived. He desired to please God, not man (2 Cor. 5:9).

“My son, forget not my law; But let thine heart keep my commandments...Bind them about thy neck; Write them upon the table of thine heart” (Pro. 3:1, 3).

In Proverbs 3:1-12, a wise father guided and instructed his son about the importance and

blessings of godly character. Notice how many times he talked about the heart in this passage. This constant emphasis on the heart reminds us that our attempt to build Bible character will be pointless unless we mold our heart into what God wants it to be. The heart is the place we must start if we wish to succeed in building Bible character.

Jesus is Our Model for Bible Character

Jesus is our ultimate model for building Bible character. “The disciple is not above his teacher: but every one when he is perfected shall be as his teacher” (Luke 6:40). The goal of every disciple is to learn and live the will of his Master. Every Christian should desire his character to be like Christ. The Gospel forms Christ in us, and we have a sure “hope of glory” (Gal. 4:19; Col. 1:27).

Building Bible Character Begins with Conversion to Christ

Speaking of Christ being “in” a person and of that person being “in Christ” describes the relationship established when a sinner is saved from

his sins. “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27). When a lost believer repents and is baptized into Christ, he is saved from his sins and enters a saved relationship with Christ. “Wherefore if any man is in Christ, *he is* a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new” (2 Cor. 5:17). Being in this new relationship with Christ, the Christian is a disciple of Christ (a learner and follower of Jesus). Now that he is “in Christ,” he is no longer to live in sin and for sin, but “in Christ” and for Christ (Rom. 6:1-11).

Building Bible Character Begins with Becoming a Christian

Disciples train themselves to be like their Master. Since it is Christians who are disciples of Jesus, one must first be a Christian to develop a character that is like the Master (Acts 11:26; Luke 6:40). If you want to build Bible character, begin by becoming a Christian, a disciple of Christ.

Author Unknown

When You Are Hurting

Tim Smith

Is life not strange? I mean, all is fine one minute, and the next, your whole world seems to be falling at your feet. Perhaps it is just an occupational hazard, but I see a lot of hurting people. Often, as right now, they stay on my mind long after most folks are asleep—and long after I would usually be sleeping. A part of me hurts when my friends hurt, so it should be.

Sometimes, in the midst of pain, people forget about what is truly important. Perhaps the hurt is so deep that they are unable, at least practically speaking, to look beyond the moment’s circumstances to the “big picture.” Feelings of betrayal, abandonment, fear, anxiety, concern, and the like tend to be bigger than the advice we often offer those experiencing them. Many times through the years, I have told sufferers to hold to their

principles. Be a man or woman of character. Set a good example for others. Show them how the Lord helps His own.

All that advice is true. Hard as it may be to recognize the truth of it during periods of crisis, it is true. Uninspired hands have written no truer words. No matter how bad things get here, they are nothing to compare with the torments of hell.

Keep your eyes fixed on the mark for the prize. Ask for the prayers of the faithful. Be about the Lord’s work. Be active. Study the Bible regularly. Know that He knows how you feel and is there for you. May God bless you as you study and obey His Word.

Deceased

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermon Outlines

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

Bible Class: Christian Doctrine

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/Christian_Doctrine.html

Bible Class: 1 Thessalonians

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/1_Thessalonians.html

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Nelda King

Carla Burseson

Bill & Pam Busch

Pete Maldonado

Tim Busch

Please Remember

June 29

Fifth Sunday Dinner after the morning service in the zone room. Singing and a devotional service at 1:00 pm.

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 23

June 9, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

Invest Wisely

Brad Green

There has been much uncertainty and unrest regarding the economy of the United States. Most Americans have “tightened the belt” and “pinched pennies” for years. Low interest rates mean low returns on regular savings accounts. Though the stock market has done well lately, housing foreclosures and possible tax increases cast a looming shadow upon Wall Street. Most of the wealthy in this country would agree that consistency, even through tough times, made them rich(er). Many of this nation’s wealthiest people owe their success to a few simple principles: (1) Do not spend more than you make, (2) Do not fall for “get rich quick” schemes, (3) Work hard, and (4) Invest wisely (i.e., Do not *play* the stock market; invest for the long term).

In this life, with our physical valuables, we understand the need to “invest wisely,” but how do we *invest* concerning the most valuable asset we possess—our soul? God commands us to be good stewards here on Earth (Luke 12:42-43), but should we not be more concerned about our eternal welfare than the present? The Bible has much to say about preparing or investing for eternity.

Seek the Proper Standard

Only one guide can lead to Heaven—the Bible (Rom. 1:16-17). It is to the Bible, the New Testament in particular, that we must know how to be saved and what we must do to have a home in Heaven. No other book, creed, or manual can pre-

pare us for eternity. Why seek any other standard than the Bible, knowing that it, and it alone, can lead us to salvation?

Be Faithful to the Plan

Upon learning of God’s New Testament plan to save (10:17), one must stay true to that plan to inherit eternal life. Seeing that God only has one plan by which man can be saved, our investment strategy is a straightforward one to make. Investing for an eternity with God requires an obedient faith, i.e., a faith that works (Jam. 2:17, 24). One must turn away from that which separates from God (Isa. 59:1-2; Luke 13:3), confess the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (Acts 8:37), and be immersed in water to have his past sins forgiven (2:38; 22:16). This is the only plan given by God by which a man can be saved. Upon obedience to these initial steps, one must continue to submit to God’s Word and remain faithful to the plan even unto death (Rev. 2:10).

Stay the Course

When times are good, people are tempted to *buy*. When times are bad, the temptation is to *sell* (cf. Jud. 2:18-19). The key to success in investing for eternity is to stay on the pathway of righteousness. Nearing the end of his life, the inspired Paul states, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness” (2 Tim. 4:7-8). The apostle Peter exhorts:

giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity ...give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall (2 Pet. 1:5-7, 10).

Many seek an alternate path, which is *easier* to walk. It is an opportunity that seems “too good to

pass up,” and many take advantage of it, but it leads to destruction (Mat. 7:13).

Let us *invest wisely* as we plan for eternity. By choosing the proper standard, being faithful to God’s plan, and staying the course, when this life is over, we can be assured to hear, “Well done, good and faithful servant...enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (25:23).

Lenoir City, TN

Baptized Into One Body

J. Noel Merideth

For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13).

The King James and Revised Standard Versions translate the Greek phrase *en heni pneumati* as “by one Spirit.” The context deals with the unity of the Lord’s church. Paul points to the unity of the church in the passage under study by the method by which people became members of the church. The Spirit, working through the apostles, preachers, and teachers, had begotten people of different races and nationalities and caused them to be baptized into the one church through the Gospel. All were baptized in water, the baptism of the Great Commission, into (*eis*) one body, the church. All classes, therefore, reach a spiritual equality before God in this body, which is the church (Gal. 3:26-28). The unity is further confirmed and sealed by the fact that those baptized into Christ are “all made to drink of one Spirit.” The original word from which we have *drink* is *potidzo*, meaning to give or furnish something to drink. It came to mean water, to irrigate, and it is the word Paul used when he said, “I have planted, Apollos watered” (1 Cor. 3:6-8). In its metaphorical sense, as used in the passage here, the word means, according to Thayer, “imbue, saturate” one’s mind with the

Spirit. In John 7:37-39 we learn that to imbibe the teachings of the Spirit is to drink of that Spirit.

Because the Greek preposition *en* may be translated “by” or “in,” there has been some controversy over the meaning of the phrase “For by one Spirit are we all baptized.” J. W. McGarvey argues at length that the best meaning of the passage is that “by” the agency of the Spirit’s teaching through the Word of God, we are led to be baptized in water into the Lord’s church (*Lard’s Quarterly* Vol. I, p. 428ff). McGarvey says of the forms in which the agency of the Holy Spirit is expressed by *pneuma* (Spirit) in conjunction with a preposition, namely, *dea* with the genitive, *hupo* with the genitive, and *en* with the dative, all of which are rendered **by** or **through** the Spirit. The last occurs most frequently. McGarvey points to 1 Corinthians 12:3, “no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost” (*en pneumati*, by the Spirit). The purpose of the writer is to express an agency of the Spirit. Through the evidence of the Spirit, men were led to believe that Jesus was Lord. Again, in 1 Corinthians 12:9, “To another faith by the same Spirit” (*en to auto pneumati*, by the same Spirit). The parties on whom these miraculous gifts were conferred received these gifts by the Spirit.

Another passage that parallels the one in question is 1 Corinthians 6:11, “but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” These people were washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord “by the Spirit” (*en to pneumati*). It was through the agency of the Spirit that these people were saved.

T. W. Brents points out that if *baptized* in 1 Corinthians 12:13 refers to Holy Spirit baptism, then Paul contradicts himself, for in Ephesians 4:5, he says there is but one baptism. Paul was preaching and practicing water baptism when he wrote 1 Corinthians and Ephesians. Still, Holy Spirit baptism was a matter of history when he said there is but one baptism (*Gospel Plan of Salvation*, p. 580). Furthermore, the baptism of 1 Corinthians 12:13 applied to **all** in the church. The text says, “were we all baptized,” not some, but **all** had been baptized into one body. However, even today, those who claim Holy Spirit baptism for themselves do not claim that everyone in the church is baptized in the Holy Spirit. It is alleged that baptism in the Holy Spirit is a “second blessing” and that not everyone in the church has it.

This verse would thus prove too much for those who think it refers to Holy Spirit baptism, for it would require **all** members of the church to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, and they are not prepared to take that position.

In 1 Corinthians 12:13, it will be noted that the last passage says that following baptism, they all drank of that one Spirit. Now, if they had been baptized in the Holy Spirit in the first part of the passage, enveloped or overwhelmed in the Spirit, why would there be the need for their drinking of the Spirit additionally? There would be no need if they were overwhelmed by the Spirit; how could they drink anymore? They, of course, could not take any more.

The baptism of 1 Corinthians 12:13 puts one **into** the body, the church. Even the denominations admit that water baptism is into a religious body. Holy Spirit baptism does not put one into the body. Water baptism puts one into the body (Rom. 6:3). The baptism of 1 Corinthians 12:13 is water baptism, which translates a person into the church, Christ, and His body.

Deceased

Separation Is Coming in Judgment

W. R. Craig

The kingdom—the church—is compared to a great fishnet.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth (Mat. 13:47-50).

When the net was drawn upon the beach, they sat down and divided the catch into good and bad,

and the bad were cast away. “So shall it be in the end of the world.” How? The angels shall come and sever the wicked from the righteous. The wicked shall be cast into the fire. The comparison is in the “separation” of the wicked from the righteous. It is not of the “catching” of every kind, as we are so often told, but in the separation of the good from the bad who are “already in the kingdom” at the end of the world. A child of God may act as to be cast out of the net—the kingdom. The lesson in this parable is the careful separation of the good from the bad among members of the church in judgment.

Deceased

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermon Outlines

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

Bible Class: Christian Doctrine

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/Christian_Doctrine.html

Bible Class: 1 Thessalonians

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/1_Thessalonians.html

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Nelda King

Carla Burleson

Bill & Pam Busch

Pete Maldonado

Tim Busch

Please Remember

June 29

Fifth Sunday Dinner after the morning service in the zone room. Singing and a devotional service at 1:00 pm.

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 24

June 16, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

Third Parties in Salvation?

Guy N. Woods

Advocates of the doctrine of justification by faith only have been exceedingly resourceful in advancing every conceivable objection possible to water baptism as a condition precedent to the salvation of an alien sinner. Prominent among these objections is the claim that if baptism is essential to one's salvation, a third party is thus injected between the sinner and God and that this makes salvation dependent on the will and consent of another person. Instances are brought forward where individuals, faced with death and without opportunity to be baptized, are alleged to have been saved simply by "trusting in Christ" and without additional acts of obedience.

Despite the facility with which denominational preachers can visualize such instances, it is not without significance **that there is none of this nature in the New Testament!** The Book of Acts is a case history of conversions. Sundry instances of conversions are advanced and occur under various circumstances. Yet, there is no case where any man was promised salvation or rejoiced from having received it except in connection with the presence and work of a Gospel preacher.

Numerous reasons exist why this is true. The very nature of God's plan to save necessitates the use of human agency. It is a well-known maxim of law that one intends the natural and logical consequences of his acts. Jesus qualified, commissioned, and sent forth His apostles to preach the Gospel and to baptize the taught. In providing

that the work should be done in this fashion, He expressly ordained that human instrumentality should be utilized in His plan for the salvation of men. Let such instrumentality be eliminated, and the work of salvation ceases. The relationship between God and man and their relative functions in the discharge of the work is clearly taught in the first of Paul's letters to the church in Corinth. Attention is there directed to the fact that Gospel preachers are "labourers together with God" and that one plants and another waters (1 Cor. 3:9). True, it is "God who makes the seed grow," but the seed must first be planted, and this is the work of Gospel preachers. Thus, in seeking to eliminate baptism from the plan of salvation, the method also resorted to eliminating preachers and preaching! "Without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*" (Heb. 11:6); faith "*cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17), and the apostle asks, "**How shall they hear without a preacher?**" (10:14). Those who seek to exclude baptism from the plan of salvation concede the essentiality of faith and admit that it is God's will that the Gospel is preached. But if the sinner must have the Gospel preached to him before he can be saved (and it is), does this not inject a third party between the sinner and God? And if it is essential to have a preacher present to preach the Gospel to the sinner so that he may be saved (since God commanded it), how can one reasonably object to having the preacher

present **to baptize** the one taught, since God also commanded this, and in the same passage? (Mat. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16).

The Scriptures clearly establish that it is God's will that human agency be utilized in the work of saving the world. The truth is it **pleases** God to have it done in this way! "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:21). Two things pertinent to our present inquiry, follow from this passage: (1) Christianity is a **revealed religion**—God ordained that **through preaching** His will should be made

known, and (2) it **pleased** Him to have it done in this way. Hence, it **pleased God to use human instrumentality in man's salvation**. If it were possible (which it is not) for one to be saved without the assistance of a third party, it would not please God for him to be saved that way!

Jesus said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). All the adroitness and human ingenuity that can be brought to bear on this passage can never make it true that "he that believeth **and is not baptized** shall be saved"!

Deceased

Why Are Some Christians **Not** Devoted?

Have you ever wondered why some Christians do not seem genuinely devoted to Christianity? We now believe it is because they do not understand what being a genuine disciple of Christ means. One can never hope to be the kind of Christian God intends for one to be if one has not learned discipleship. Webster defines a *disciple* as: "A pupil or follower of any teacher or school; A follower of Jesus." Every Christian must learn that one must forsake every person and everything and put Christ **first** in their life. To *forsake* is to "give up; renounce; leave; abandon; desert." Those unwilling to do so will not enter heaven and will never become the servant that Jesus expects one to be! When a Christian can truly grasp the importance of following Christ and doing **all** His commandments, one will become an effective servant in God's kingdom. When one does not learn this lesson first and foremost, then one will find that they are spinning their wheels and being unstable because "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Mat. 6:24). Every Christian must first strive to do Christ's will. Jesus said that only those who do

His will enter heaven, and those who don't will be cast away into an eternal hell (7:21-23).

We Must Take a Stand for Jesus Above All Else

In Matthew 10:32-39, we can learn a valuable lesson on what Jesus truly means by being His true disciple. We must be willing to confess Jesus each day of our lives before men. No matter where we are or what we are doing, others should see us living a life as Christians "proclaiming godliness." When we take a stand **for** Christ, He will take a stand for us: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (10:32-33).

We Must Be Willing to Deny Self and Serve Jesus

Denying oneself and serving Jesus may be the hardest lessons for a Christian to learn. Until one can put one's interests, passions, and desires second to serving Christ, one is not ready to be a disciple of Jesus. Jesus said, "If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it" (16:24-25). Many will be

cast away into hell on the day of judgment because they would not deny their lusts and desires and put Jesus first!

Excuses Won't Cut It—We Must Not Look Back

In Luke 9:57-61, Jesus urged several to follow Him. But in each case, they made excuses for why they had to do something else first. Jesus sums this up by saying, “No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62). Then, later in Luke 14:16-33, He told the story of the man who made a great supper and invited many. But those invited made excuses because they could not attend. Jesus invites us to join Him in teaching others and living the Christian life, but many make excuses for not putting Jesus first in their life.

A Disciple of Christ Truly Loves Jesus and One Another (John 13:34-35; 14:15, 21, 23)

A true disciple will continue in His word. Jesus said, “If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed” (John 8:31; Acts 14:22). A true disciple will be faithful until death (Rev 2:10). Only a dedicated disciple is worthy to wear the name Christian (Acts 11:26). Every Christian must be determined to be devoted to Jesus. If you do, you can have peace through His Word, which says, “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us

from all sin” (1 John 1:7). Let us be determined to walk in the light of Christ, serving Him faithfully until the day of our death! May God bless each of us as we strive to put Jesus **first** each day we live!

Author Unknown

A Contrast

What a contrast exists between that which seems right in our eyes and that which is right in God's eyes!

“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, But the end thereof *are* the ways of death” (Pro. 14:12).

God forbids that we shall do “every man whatsoever *is* right in his own eyes” (Deu. 12:8). We must “do *that* only *which*” is “right in” God's eyes (1 Kin. 14:8). And let us not forget that “Every way of a man *is* right in his own eyes: But the LORD pondereth the hearts” (Pro. 21:2).

Left to ourselves and to our logic (!), we can justify our way and our theories, at least, to our satisfaction, but before God we stand or fall.

Author Unknown

Think About It

During the early days of World War II, when the Nazis invaded France, French citizens took down all signposts. As the Nazi armies advanced, they didn't know which direction to turn or in which direction lay their objective.

In this morally ambiguous day in which we live, it seems that life's signposts have all been taken down. We did not take them down to confuse the enemy; the enemy took them down to confuse us. Satan has been very successful in negating the effect of the Bible on the world.

But what of his efforts to negate the Bible's effect on the lives of Christians? If we are not reading it, he has won.

The Bible is a sign, a guidepost, a lamp unto our feet to direct our paths. Are you letting it guide your paths? Are you reading and studying it? Or has Satan removed the signposts from your life? Psalm 119:105.

Author Unknown

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermon Outlines

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

Bible Class: Christian Doctrine

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/Christian_Doctrine.html

Bible Class: 1 Thessalonians

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/1_Thessalonians.html

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Nelda King

Carla Burleson

Bill & Pam Busch

Pete Maldonado

Tim Busch

Please Remember

June 29

Fifth Sunday Dinner after the morning service in the zone room. Singing and a devotional service at 1:00 pm.

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 25

June 23, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

Is God Easy?

Johnny Ramsey

Some seem to think that dealing with God is easy because He is a pushover who extends “cheap grace” to all mankind while demanding nothing in return. However, Romans 1:18-32 disproves this fallacy immediately. We dare not make God in our image because Psalm 50:21 clearly enunciates the premise that our Creator is on a higher plane than puny men. When there is no reverence for the Almighty in our hearts, certain ruin awaits us (Rom. 3:18). What a tragedy it is when the creation mocks its Maker (Gen. 1:26) and foolishly proclaims, “There is no God!” In Ezekiel’s day, some suggested that Jehovah could not see them while they engaged in spiritual infamy. Still, God knocked a hole in the city wall so the prophet could precisely see the misconduct of a flippant society. Proverbs 15:3 cogently reminds us, “The eyes of the LORD *are* in every place, Beholding the evil and the good.” Those today, who suggest that morality is so relative that it does not really matter how we conduct ourselves, forget that heaven has decreed that we live “soberly, righteously and godly in this present world” (Tit. 2:12). A famous spiritual song alerts us:

We praise Thee for the radiance,
That from the hallowed page,
A lantern to our footsteps,
Shines on from age to age.

Situation ethics may corrupt a generation of rebels. Still, such will never be the standard for

those who keep the Lord’s eternal truths as “the apple of thine eye” (Pro. 7:2). God is not easy. Still, the way of the transgressors is hard (13:15). Some who would pervert the will of the Father regarding marriage and divorce leave the impression that the Lord is so merciful that just about anything goes in the marital realm. But that violates clear Bible teaching. He, who gave marriage as the first divine institution way back in the second chapter of the Bible, carefully guards the mandates of that relationship. Malachi 2:16 bluntly affirms that God hates divorce. Therefore, anyone lightly treating the subject will realize that Jehovah is not easy but rather exacting about what heaven has joined together (Psa. 127:1).

Our Creator is not easy regarding the challenge placed before every Christian. We are commanded to do the following:

Grow Spiritually (2 Pet. 3:18)
Contend for Truth (Jude 3)
Be an Example (Phi. 2:15)
Expose Error (Eph. 5:11)
Be like Christ (Gal. 4:19)
Share the Gospel (Mark 16:15)
Love our Enemies (Rom. 12:17-21)
Pray Fervently (Jam. 5:16)
Study Ardently (2 Tim. 2:15)
Live Joyously (1 The. 5:16-18)

The most challenging life, by far, is that of a genuine Christian. Yet, the happiest person on earth ought to be the most genuine soldier of Christ.

Someone has well stated these words: “The sad countenance is by no means the badge of pity.” Verily, happy are those people whose God is Jehovah (Psa. 144:15). Those who say Christians can have no fun are warped about what constitutes good times.

When Jesus made sacrifice and surrender a badge of discipleship, He did all of us a favor (Luke 9:23) because anything worthwhile demands the best we can perform. Pity, not the Christian, but shed tears for the libertine who pursues easy street for convenience and winds up in eternity with all the undisciplined folk who never accomplished anything! Brethren who avoid pulpits that challenge them while they

seek the congregations who entertain will have an eternity to review their sad mistakes. Those who think of God as a bellhop who can be summoned upon our whims to shower our mundane existence with trinkets from “Big-Rock Candy Mountain” will have a rude awakening on Judgment Day.

Those who only call out to God when they have a temporary need, when loved ones die, or when a storm scares them will find their lives empty and their futures bleak.

Yes, God is love (1 John 4:8), but that is not all His dimensions or facets. It takes effort to go to heaven (Mat. 7:13-14), but it is easy to go to hell!

Deceased

Random Acts of Kindness

Ken Chumbley

The following is part of an editorial in the Spring 2008 issue of *Evergreen* magazine that is published in England:

It was the third time that the old lady had visited the charity shop in the centre of Swansea, and as on both previous occasions she made straight for the display of second-hand clothing in the corner. There, hanging amongst the rather drab dresses and coats, like an elegant princess who had fallen on hard times, was the object of her fascination: a stylish, brightly coloured hat. Taking great care, she lifted it down and, standing in front of a mirror, gently placed it on her head. Seeing her reflection, the whole of her face lit up. What a transformation! It was so beautiful! A lady couldn't help but get admiring glances wearing a hat like that! The only other customer in the shop was a girl who was browsing through a box of dusty, long-playing records. She smiled to herself as she saw the lady gazing in the mirror.

After a few moments the lady removed the hat. She sighed as she did so and the sparkle disappeared from her eyes. Reluctantly, she replaced it back on the hanger. It wasn't very expensive, just £2 [approximately \$4.00—KJC], but for

someone on a pension struggling to pay the bills it was a luxury she couldn't afford.

As the bell of the shop rang behind her, it was as if she had woken from a dream. She wouldn't go back there again. It had been pleasant to imagine owning such a lovely item but the few pounds in her purse were needed to pay for the necessities of life such as food.

She trudged wearily away, but had only gone a few yards when she heard the sound of someone running behind her. Suddenly the record-buying girl from the shop was standing in front of her—and *she was holding the hat!* She quickly told the old lady how she had watched her trying it on and had realized just how much the hat meant to her. She had therefore bought it for her. The elderly lady was nearly in tears: thrilled at receiving such a gift and overwhelmed by the kindness shown to her by a stranger.

As Christians, we are admonished to show kindness to others: “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering” (Col. 3:12); “And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity” (2 Pet.

1:7). Again, Paul writes: “Charity suffereth long, *and* is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up” (1 Cor. 13:4); “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Eph. 4:32). Even non-Christians are spoken of in Scripture as showing kindness as did the *barbarous* people on the island of Melita after the shipwreck of Paul and those with him on the way to Rome (Acts 28:1-2). Indeed, we are commanded: “As we have therefore opportunity,

let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:10). That is both to Christians and to non-Christians. Our Lord said: “And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold *water* only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward” (Mat. 10:42). May we always be ready to show random acts of kindness to others whether they are our brethren or those outside of Christ.

Deceased

“Appreciation can make a day, even change a life. Your willingness to put it into words is all that is necessary” (Margaret Cousins). Say “Thank you” often. Express appreciation when you can. If someone is doing a good job tell them so. If someone helps you or makes you feel good or does any good deed tell them. It costs you nothing. You might just make their day: I know my Christian friends have often made mine! God bless.

Tim M. Smith, Deceased

Minister—Evangelists

Cled E. Wallace

Occasionally, I read about some brother “resigning” his position as “minister” of a local church to enter “the evangelistic field.” As I view it, the language is unfortunate, or the work as a *minister* is unscriptural.

A man may be supported and directed by one church to do the work of an evangelist in a specified field for any length of time, which may be advisable in certain circumstances. He may change fields often and travel much. He may stay in one field for a long time, travel little, and do the work of an evangelist all the time. Traveling is not evangelizing. He may evangelize while traveling, as Philip did, or he may do it after he arrives and should do it if he stays.

If the preacher of a local church is not evangelizing, what is he doing? If he is not in the “evangelistic field,” where is he? I have been an evangelist for lo, these many years. I have traveled and preached in many meetings over a wide territory. I have confined my labors to one locality for months or years at a time in what is frequently referred to as “local work.” I have preached the same Gospel all the time, done evangelistic work all the time, and been in the evangelistic field all the time.

A Gospel preacher is in “the evangelistic field” anywhere he is if he preaches the Gospel. If he is not in it, he had better get in it and stay in it. “Do the work of an evangelist, fulfill thy ministry” (2 Tim. 4:5).

Deceased

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermon Outlines

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

Bible Class: Christian Doctrine

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/Christian_Doctrine.html

Bible Class: 1 Thessalonians

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/1_Thessalonians.html

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Pete Maldonado

Carla Burluson

Bill & Pam Busch

Tim Busch

Sympathy

Our deepest sympathy is extended to the family of Nelda King, who passed away on June 22. Please keep her family in your prayers.

Restored

Linda Parks was restored to Christ on June 22. She also requested prayers on her behalf. Please keep Linda in your prayers and offer her encouragement.

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops:

Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister:

Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 26

June 30, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

The Simplicity of the Gospel

H. Leo Boles

No book written by man has so many simple words as the New Testament. There is an air of simplicity about the biographies of Jesus, which, like the breezes from the Galilean hills, blows upon our sophisticated minds. The Gospel has not been recorded in philosophical phraseology, scientific terms, complicated sentences, or the dialects of angels. Still, it has been expressed in the simplest terms so children can understand.

Man has muddied the stream of divine thought with theological and ecclesiastical terms and phrases until it is much more difficult to understand the doctrines of men than the simple teachings of the New Testament. The Gospel of Jesus contains the truths of God's will, so plain and clear that the untrained minds of innocent children can catch and follow them.

Teachers often confuse students with their explanations. If they had just let the New Testament speak, simplicity of thought would have been gained. While on earth, Jesus replaced the traditions of men concerning the law with His simple teachings. The instructions given to Christians on how to live a Christian life can be understood. No one has a just complaint to make against the requirements of the New Testament toward a simple life.

**The Gospel Was Understood
When It Was First Heard**

The proof of the simplicity of the Gospel is seen in the record of the conversions. When the

multitude came together on the day of Pentecost and heard the miraculous manifestations of the apostles speaking in tongues, they were astonished and accused the apostles of being drunken. Peter stood up with the eleven and gave a simple explanation of what had occurred.

He calmly pointed to the prophecy of Joel and recited that prophecy to the people. He then called attention to what they had observed. Simply, he pointed out the facts and showed that what they were observing was a fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel. With that out of the way, he then proceeded to unfold to them the claims of Jesus of Nazareth, and the quotation from David showed that he should have expected just what had transpired. Since the prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus, He must be what He claimed to be—the Son of God, the promised Messiah. Step by step, argument and conclusion closely following each other, Peter convinced many that Jesus was the Saviour of the world.

These astonished and confused Jews soon became believers in the Christ. About 3,000 heard Peter preach this profound yet simple sermon, and they were convinced. This was the first time that a Gospel sermon had been preached in its fullness. Peter spoke as the Spirit gave him utterance; hence, he spoke in such simple terms that the people could hear and understand the first Gospel sermon they had ever heard. Indeed, Peter must have spoken simply, for so many common

people understood and accepted what he presented.

Those who did not accept the Gospel on Pentecost refused it, not because they did not understand it, but because they refused to believe it. Their unconverted state resulted not from a misunderstanding or their inability to understand but a failure to believe what they did understand. Prejudice and other things may have had a bearing on them. Still, the chief thing was that they refused to believe what they heard.

The Ethiopian eunuch had been to Jerusalem to worship (Acts 8). He was returning and riding in his chariot. He had presumably worshipped according to the law of Moses at Jerusalem. He had never heard of the Christ; if he had heard of him, it was an unfavorable report. Philip joined the chariot and, as he rode along, preached to him Jesus (8:35).

This was the first Gospel sermon the eunuch had ever heard and probably the first time he had heard of the Christ. But Philip preached the simple Gospel in terms so that the eunuch understood him. He believed the Gospel, was baptized, and went on his way, rejoicing in the newfound salvation. Many others, like the eunuch, heard and understood the terms of salvation and obeyed the Gospel at the same hour of the night. The people in the long list of conversions recorded in the Acts of the Apostles obeyed the Gospel the first time they heard it. There was no delay, but prompt obedience to all the commands of the Gospel marked their belief in the simple Gospel.

Its Simplicity Brings Heavier Condemnation

Since the Gospel is simple enough for all to understand the terms of salvation and the requirements of Christian living, all who do not accept the terms of salvation and live as the simple Gospel of Christ requires them to live are condemned. The condemnation of the ignorant and illiterate would not be just if the Gospel were not presented in such a simple way that they could understand it.

Every Spirit-guided speaker and writer in New Testament times expected the hearer to understand and pass condemnation on him if he did not believe. In giving the commission, Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," but he also added, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16). The disbeliever is condemned just because he can understand the simple requirements of the Gospel.

The Gospel was given to be understood. It was preached in simple language, and the Holy Spirit recorded it in simple terms. Hence, our condemnation is just if we do not believe it.

The Christian life is simple, and all its requirements are simple. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light" (Mat. 11:28-30).

Deceased

Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death

Dennis Strickland

"Give me liberty or give me death" is attributed to Patrick Henry in a speech he gave as he addressed the Virginia Convention in 1775. At this time of year, we think on these things, which helped form our nation and helped our forefathers join together to fight against the

tyranny directed toward this land by Great Britain.

Our founding fathers also employed this sentiment as they forged a document declaring our independence and used the phrase: Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.

Unfortunately, many only think about liberty or the freedoms we enjoy around the first part of July, Memorial Day, or some other day set aside for such thoughts and celebrations.

Sadly, many fail to realize that a different liberty is attainable and is a premise well-known by students of the Bible. The Word of God of the New Testament is called the “Perfect Law of Liberty” by James as directed by the Spirit in James 1:25. In Galatians 5:1 we see that having escaped the bondage of sin in obedience to the Gospel, we are to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. He has made us free from sin through His blood, which we contacted in the watery grave of baptism.

It is also essential to understand that to be blessed by God, we must continue in that “perfect law of liberty.” As James 1:23-25 tells us, it is understood that we cannot just hear the Word and forget it, but must also be a doer of the work.

For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner

of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

The blessing James wrote is realized not only in this life but also after this life. In John 12:48, we see what Jesus said would judge us.

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.

In James 2:12, we see that the words of James affirm what Jesus said. “So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.”

If we do not apply the Law of Liberty and live by it, we will be like those described in Revelation 21:8 and take part in the second death.

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Mooresville, NC

Christ's Prayer for Unity was Answered

Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

The Lord's prayer of John 17:20-23 anticipated the inauguration of the new dispensation and the beginning of the church by the preaching of the apostles on Pentecost:

Neither pray I for these [apostles] 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 I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me...that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.

The prayer of the Lord for unity had reference first to the oneness of the apostles in the unity of

their apostolic teaching and second to the unity of all who believed the Word preached by them. This prayer anticipated the establishment of the church by the preaching of the apostles, and it was answered when the believers were made one in the church (17:20)—through their Word.

The usual prayer that is heard today calls upon God to answer the prayer of His Son for the unity of all believers—as though God had ignored this prayer from then until now. The prayer of Jesus for the unity of the believers through the Word of the apostles was answered when the church was established.

Deceased

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermon Outlines

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

Bible Class: Christian Doctrine

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/Christian_Doctrine.html

Bible Class: 1 Thessalonians

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/1_Thessalonians.html

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Why Go to Church?

Some go to church just for the walk,
Some go there to stare, to laugh and talk;
Some go there to meet a friend;
Some go there their idle time to spend;
Some, to seek or find a lover;
Some, a courtship to discover;
Some, forgiveness to implore;
Some, their sins to varnish over;
Some, to sit and doze and nod;
The wise go there to worship God.

Author Unknown

Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe	Nancy Travis
Orville & Linda Worley	Pete Maldonado
Carla Burluson	Bill & Pam Busch
Tim Busch	

Weekly Services

Sunday

Bible Classes for all ages — 9:00 a.m.
Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.
Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley
Michael Hatcher
Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 27

July 7, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

God's Absolute Standard of Morality

Gary W. Summers

If morality were left to mankind to invent, establish, and sustain, it would vary from century to century and from locale to locale, as evidenced by the world we see around us. The slave trade, now regarded as reprehensible, was not abolished in England until 1807 and in the entire British Empire until 1833. It took until the end of the Civil War in 1865 in the United States. According to the Global Estimates of Modern Slavery, nearly 50 million people still live in slavery in various parts of the world. It is still as wrong today as it was 200 years ago. Now that?

How can anyone decide what is moral and what is not? Left on our own, without the Scriptures, we simply try to arrive at the best rationale we can, but it often lacks valid logic. Even with God's holy Word, we cannot seem to agree, but the reason is that many people in society reject the teachings of the New Testament. Even though moral positions are well thought out (and for our benefit), man chooses to be irrational.

Does refusing to murder others make sense? Yes, and so does not stealing from neighbors. Certainly, we do not want fellow citizens unjustly taking our lives or filching our possessions. Laws are passed as safeguards. Most civilized countries recognize the evils of slavery—especially when young women are attacked and removed from their homes to be used as sex slaves. No one wants such a destiny for their daughter—and should not

agree to it for anyone else's offspring. Yet, the practice exists.

God's moral standards do not reflect changeable precepts; they are absolute. It has often been pointed out that God did not give Israel "The Ten Suggestions" at Sinai. Of course, Christians are no longer under the Old Covenant (Heb. 8:6-7; Col. 2:14), but the morals found in the New Testament are just as absolute as those set forth under the Old. Careful consideration will be given to the issues we face today.

Various Crimes (Sins)

Stealing is the one sin that most will probably agree is wrong. Paul plainly wrote, "Let him who stole steal no more" (Eph. 4:28). Society rejects stealing, but ask the police how much time they spend recovering a victim's possessions once an incident has been reported. The New Testament teaches strongly against the underlying reason for theft—covetousness (Luke 12:15-21; 1 Tim. 6:6-10, 17-19). Riches are deceitful and can choke the Word (Mat. 13:22).

Gambling is a popular form of stealing. "But nobody is forced to participate," some offer in defense of it, which is true. "And it's no different than investing or playing the stock market!" Really? Two problems result from this thinking. Jesus endorsed putting the one talent in the bank to draw interest, which was the least the man should have done. So, taking a risk to make more money would have been acceptable.

And how did the five-talent and the two-talent men double their money if they did not put it at risk? Here is the difference: the investor puts his money to work and prays that he and all others will be successful in the venture. The gambler hopes everyone else loses so he might win. Which attitude sounds more Biblical? Gambling is a zero-sum game, but investment is not. Unfortunately, our society does not recognize God's absolute standard of morality and encourages all to be willingly robbed.

Murder is against the law, but only about half are solved. Of those arrested, a large percentage "plea it down," and some are found "not guilty" because some judge suppressed the evidence. And how many of the guilty are put to death each year—as many as one per state? After the Flood, God specifically decreed capital punishment (Gen. 9:5-6). In the New Testament, this duty falls specifically on the civil government (Rom. 13:4), which is failing us badly. It is absolutely moral to put to death murderers. Too many prosecutors refuse to do their jobs.

Abortion is murder. But many of those same individuals who refuse to punish the guilty somehow take great delight in taking the lives of innocent souls who have done nothing wrong. God still recognizes the baby (Greek *brephos*) in the womb (Luke 1:41, 44) by the same term (*brephos*) as a child out of the womb who has been born (2:12, 16). No one has refuted this argument in 50 years, but such does not stop the advocates of death. How can men and women be so heartless as to kill a living being that medically, scientifically, and Biblically is a human being?

Other Moral Issues

Yes, there have been laws in the history of the United States that forbade **fornication, adultery, prostitution, and homosexuality**. However, it was argued that we cannot enforce our morality on others—or some such tripe (although it has been done). We observe that since these have been decriminalized, the percentages

of those participating in such immoralities have exploded. God had a reason for outlawing these sins; they are detrimental to the home and society.

The same can be said for **drinking** or doing **drugs**. Many have harmed their bodies, drinking themselves to death or smoking so much their lungs give out decades before they would have. The innocent suffers as well; just ask anyone who has lost a loved one to a drunk driver. Many have been affected by second-hand smoke. The latest scourge is fentanyl, which is 50 to 100 times more powerful than morphine. Too much (which involves only a small amount) kills. According to the internet, 71,000 people died of fentanyl or fentanyl-related problems in 2021. Illegals crossing our southern border have been responsible for many of these deaths.

Absolute

A rejection of God involves a repudiation of His morals and principles, and that is where our society is. Just like those who rejected God in the days of Noah, we are heading in that direction again (Gen. 6:5). Do we expect a different outcome this time? Okay, so the weather forecast will change from *wet* to *hot*. Destruction will still occur!

Our current condition results from people failing to trust in God. Why do we think He does not know what He is doing? Why do we think we can challenge His moral system? On what basis do we believe we will avoid His wrath? Jesus said, "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" (John 12:48). That Word will not disappear or fade away: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Mat. 24:35).

Practical advice is given in Ecclesiastes 8:4, "Where the word of a king is, *there is power*; And who may say to him, 'What are you doing?'" Some translations have *authority* for *power*; others have

supreme. The point is the same: “No intelligent person is going to challenge him who has all power.” However, Jesus has all authority (Mat. 28:18), and He is challenged daily, as is the Father. Is that wise? God’s power is supreme, and those who willfully violate it will be judged worthy of eternal darkness. His will is for us to submit to His will—and be saved (2 Pet. 3:9).

Winter Park, FL

No time for God?
What fools we are
To clutter up our lives
With common things,
And leave without heart’s gate
The Lord of life and life itself—
Our God.

Author Unknown

Keeping Our Focus on Him

Charles Pogue

Matthew 14:22-33 is a very familiar passage of Scripture. Jesus had instructed His disciples to go out into a ship and go ahead of Him to the other side. A storm came up, and the waves tossed the ship. In the fourth watch of the night, Jesus came walking toward them on the water. The disciples saw Him and thought He was a spirit, but the Lord cried out to them, “It is I,” and for them not to be afraid. Peter called out that if it was Him, bid him to walk to Him on the water. The Lord told him to come, and Peter began to walk toward Jesus. Verse 30, though, tells us he saw the boisterous wind and began to sink. Peter called out, “Lord save me.” Jesus reached out His hand and caught Peter, and they went together to the ship, at which time the storm ceased.

There are far too many points to make and lessons to learn from this passage to cover them all in one short article. What we want to point out now is that we all face storms in this life, and we need Christ and His helping hand to overcome them.

Some of the most severe storms come upon us when death overtakes a loved one, a serious illness comes upon us or a loved one, or the worst one of all, a loved one departs from the will of God to go back into the world. We cannot face any of those storms alone; instead, we need to look to the Lord for help through them. If

we try to deal with grief, disappointment, or some other trial alone, we may not be able to survive it. Paul wrote these comforting words to the Philippian church. “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Phi. 4:19). In the great chapter of Hebrews 11, to which we often refer as faith’s hall of fame, verse 36 says that “others had trial of *cruel* mockings.” In other words, cruel mockings and, as the writer goes on to say, scourging and imprisonment were something they experienced. Why? Because trials, though, maybe not scourging and imprisonment, are common to all of us. The point is that it was faith in God that saw them through those troublesome calamities. It is faith that will see us through ours if we are to overcome, and we can, regardless of how sore the trial might be. Peter, as has often been said, began to sink when he took his eyes off Christ and focused them on the wind and the waves. If we take our focus off Christ, it will happen to us, too. When we experience trials that are common to man or those that are not, let us keep our focus on the Lord because if we do not, it is a sure thing that we shall be overcome. If we keep our eyes on Him, regardless of what the trial is, whether a physical one or one of mental anguish, He will reach out and bear us to safety just as He did Peter.

Deceased

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermon Outlines

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

Bible Class: Christian Doctrine

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/Christian_Doctrine.html

Bible Class: 1 Thessalonians

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/1_Thessalonians.html

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Pete Maldonado

Carla Burleson

Bill & Pam Busch

Tim Busch

Please Remember

July 20

Birthdays and Anniversaries Get-together will be held in the zone room after the afternoon service.

July 30

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

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops:

Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister:

Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 28

July 14, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

The Significance of—“Shall”

Mike Demory

Americans, for the most part, pride themselves in our Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Sometimes, we forget about the Declaration of Independence, which served as the springboard that produced the greatest nation the world has ever witnessed. What many fail to realize is that our rights are not a product of the Constitution itself, even though they have been added to it. Our rights are God-given.

Granted to every human being on earth. We, in the United States, just happen to live in a country that recognizes that fact (though we have allowed them to fade into oblivion gradually). Over the past two decades, there has been a concerted effort by humanists to erode one of our most prized rights, one that the founders understood would protect all other God-given rights, and that is the Second Amendment. Article II of the Bill of Rights states, “A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.”

Our founders were not ignorant men. They choose their words precisely and intelligently. The significance of *shall*, is not just another English word in our vocabulary. It is, in fact, a word found in contracts, statutes, and God’s Word. It is a word of compulsion with a peremptory meaning. *Shall* is significant because it excludes the idea of discretion while imposing a duty that can be enforced. This word denotes “obligation, manda-

tory duty when the rights of the public or persons are affected.” Shall **not** be infringed (encroached upon, trespassed again, violated). This same imperative is used in Articles I, III-IX, and yet, evil men will always disregard the law they claim to defend. The Second Amendment does not allow any government or official to recognize it at their discretion, through added hoops, to realize said God-given right. Background checks, permits, fingerprinting, and other requirements make the Second Amendment a governmental privilege rather than the God-given right that it is, as *shall* is not to be ignored.

God uses this imperative many times to emphasize the seriousness of not violating His Word. The Ten Commandments are great examples of “Thou **shall** not” (Exo. 20:3-7; 13-17; Deu. 4:2; 5:3, 7-8, 11; 17-21). When God instructed Adam and Eve that they “shall” not eat of the tree in the midst of the garden (Gen. 3:3), that imperative imposed a duty on the pair that allowed no discretion on their part, even though the serpent convinced Eve that it was discretionary. We are told of Moses, in the construction of the Tabernacle:

who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, *that* thou make all things

according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount (Heb. 8:5).

Yes, Moses was admonished by God to follow the pattern as it was recorded, “according to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so **shall** ye make it” (Exo. 25:9). God used the imperative word “shall” to impose a duty upon Moses and the Israelites to construct the Tabernacle and all its furniture and utensils exactly as God commanded them to be built. No discretion was allowed on Moses’ part to change the color scheme or size of any portion of the Tabernacle. The author of Hebrews confirms that Moses took God seriously and did exactly as He commanded them. After Jehovah delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage, and they were about to enter the Promised Land under Joshua’s guidance, God instructed Joshua, “for to this people you **shall** divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them” (Jos. 1:6). This was by no means a suggestion, nor to be fulfilled at Joshua’s discretion. Joshua was obligated to follow every precept to the exact specifications set forth by God.

Before the Israelites entered the Promised Land, God warned them that they were to keep His commandments, but should they not do so, He told them:

But it **shall** come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do **all** his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses **shall** come upon thee, and overtake thee (Deu. 28:15),

which we all know that is precisely what came to pass. God is just as serious today about keeping His commandments. Paul points out, “Know ye not that the unrighteous **shall** not inherit the kingdom of God?” (1 Cor. 6:9); “For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee **shall** bow to me, and every tongue **shall** confess to God” (Rom. 14:11). If that does not bring home the seriousness of putting the kingdom of God first in our lives, then nothing will. But again, Paul reminds us:

God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they **shall** be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye **shall** be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty (2 Cor. 6:16-18).

Yes, one little word like “shall” can be significant enough to demonstrate the importance of following God’s will daily so we can and shall be His sons and daughters.

Mexico, MO

Closing Statement

Bob Howton

I am told that one of the cardinal rules for a good public speech is threefold: (1) Stand up, (2) Speak up, (3) Sit down and shut up. It is not hard to understand the import of this idea. (a) One who has something to say should be “up-front” with it. (b) One who has something to say should speak with enough volume as to be heard. (c) One who has something to say should realize when he has said it and be wise enough to sit down and stop talking. Sir Winston Churchill once said, “I

knew a man who died at 45, but they buried him at 73.”

In this vein, one could have finished all worthy thought in his speech within 20 minutes but dragged it out for 40 more. What is the point? I have been blessed with the opportunity to use this page for 51 weeks this year, and perhaps some have thought that I really finished somewhere about number 35. Anyway, I am thankful for the opportunity!

In Robert G. Lee's *Sourcebook of 500 Illustrations for Speakers*, there is a poem by Conny Schaflander which raises our consciousness of some very basic human emotions. This lady proceeds with unpretentious words, as she calls to attention man's courage, his endurance in great loss, and his stark reality of facing human suffering and personal tragedy. Observe:

I Asked The Sphinx

"What is love?"

It is warmth in a cold world,
It is light in a dark world,
It is joy in a sad world,
It is over so soon.

"Why is it over so soon?"

Because we don't love ourselves,
Because we don't respect each other,
Because we're misers in what we give,
Because man is only human.

"What makes man human?"

His great intellectuality,
His great creativity,
His great adaptability,
His great need for love.

"Why does man need love?"

Because it's a cold world,
Because it's a dark world,
Because it's a sad world,
Because it's over so soon. "

I would add:

Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, Neither let the mighty *man* glory in his might, Let not the rich *man* glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, That he understandeth and knoweth me, That I *am* the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: For in these *things* I delight, saith the LORD (Jer. 9:23-24).

Thanks *be* unto God for his unspeakable gift (2 Cor. 9:15).

Deceased

The Fruit-Bearing Christian

"Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account" (Phi. 4:17)

The apostle Paul was commending the Christians at Philippi as the only church that had sent an offering to help defray his expenses on his missionary trips. He calls such gifts *fruit* that would abound to their "account" (Greek *logos*, probably better rendered as "testimony"). Thus, God considers gifts of money to Scriptural ministries like life-giving fruits on a healthy vine.

There are other types of fruits which a Christian life can produce. Paul regarded those he had helped lead to Christ as fruits. He wrote to the Christians in Rome: "I purposed to come unto you,...that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles" (Rom. 1:13). Genuine traits of godly character are also called fruits. "For the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness and righteousness and truth" (Eph. 5:9). Galatians 5:22-23 is the classic passage outlining the nine-

fold fruit produced by the Holy Spirit in the life of a willing Christian: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance." Significantly, all these attributes constitute one fruit, not nine fruits.

Christ especially brought out the tremendous importance of fruit-bearing in the Christian life in His famous discourse on the vine and the branches in John 15:1-16. In these verses, *fruit* occurs eight times. First, there is the warning: "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away" (15:2). If there is no fruit (or if the fruit is "corrupt fruit") in life, there is no assurance of any life at all. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit" (15:8). To bring forth "much fruit," we must abide (that is, "continue steadfastly") in Christ (15:5).

Author Unknown

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermon Outlines

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

Bible Class: Christian Doctrine

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/Christian_Doctrine.html

Bible Class: 1 Thessalonians

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/1_Thessalonians.html

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Pete Maldonado

Carla Burluson

Bill & Pam Busch

Tim Busch

Phyllis Brantley

Please Remember

July 20

Birthdays and Anniversaries Get-together will be held in the zone room after the afternoon service.

July 30

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

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops:

Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister:

Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 29

July 21, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

The Sobering Peril of Spiritual Dreamers

John Chowning

These are spots in your feasts of charity when they feast with *you*, feeding themselves without fear: clouds *they are* without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever (Jude 12-13).

Compressed into five vivid word pictures, Jude graphically describes the sobering perils that false teachers and change agents pose to themselves and others.

They destroy Christian fellowship and brotherly love. They are spots (or hidden rocks—ASV) in your love feasts. In the first century, Christians ate together (Acts 2:46; 20:11). Regardless of whether these meals were potlucks, where everyone brought a dish, or were dinners furnished by wealthier Christians for their destitute brothers and sisters; they were called *love feasts*. They were intended to be a time of pleasant social interaction which would strengthen the bonds of fellowship and brotherhood. Like a hair in a sumptuous dish, change agents are spiritual pollutants—“spots”—which can and will destroy the brotherly kindness and love that prompt these occasions. Like a dangerous reef just below the waterline in a river, these spiritual dreamers pose a covert and certain peril to the love and unity of God’s people. Even though these occasions of eating together are intended to encourage unselfishness and greater, more fervent brotherly

love, spiritual dreamers use them for self-serving purposes. They were so successful in their efforts that church historians state these meals were discontinued by the fourth century because the change agents had selfishly turned them into ungodly debaucheries. Spiritual dreamers pollute and shipwreck Christian fellowship and brotherly love.

They destroy faith by creating false hope. They are clouds without water. A parched land, thirsty from heat and arid conditions, longs for a gentle, refreshing rain. Anticipation builds as rain clouds move from the horizon to overhead. These hopes, however, are dashed when the clouds move away without leaving a drop of moisture. Change agents speak great swelling words, which are smooth and impressive. Because people are led to put their faith in them instead of God, their words—when believed—ultimately cultivate a spiritual cancer of disappointment and disillusionment. Instead of offering an anchor to the soul, which is steadfast and sure, they promise much and deliver nothing of substance or benefit. Spiritual dreamers subvert Biblical hope and then blow out of town.

They sabotage good works and spiritual maturity. They are late autumn trees without fruit. Fall is harvesting time in an apple orchard. Imagine the barrenness an orchard would have in the autumn if every tree were dead from the roots up. Instead of fruit, all you could see would

be branchy skeletons, which need to be turned into firewood. Because of the toxin of their false teaching, change agents kill off the roots of spiritual growth. They destroy the fruits of obedience and good works, which are essential to the Christian faith. Good soil has been poisoned. Spiritual dreamers decimate spiritual growth.

They thrive on “making waves.” They are raging waves of the sea. One of the soothing appeals of an ocean’s beach is the sound of ever-moving water. Regardless of whether the tide is ebbing in or out, a steady roll of waves breaks upon the shore. Each wave leaves behind its deposit of seaweed, shells, and other marine debris. Like the ocean, change agents always strive to have something astir. They crave the attention that unrest brings. Their ravaging egos need constant sympathy and recognition. But all this only results in spiritual flotsam. Nothing holy or spiritually beneficial comes from these spiri-

tual prima donnas. Spiritual dreamers foment unnecessary division.

They are doomed rebels. They are wandering stars headed for a spiritual black hole. A wandering star is an anomaly. Typically, the lights in the firmament of heaven—the sun, moon, and stars—are most predictable in fulfilling their assigned task of marking days, seasons, and years. A wandering (or shooting) star may briefly light up the night sky and impress the few stargazers who are watching. Still, its moment of fame is quickly over, and its eternal oblivion is irreversible. Change agents—like Cain, Balaam, and Korah (Jude 11)—get to do their own thing for a while, but their notoriety is temporary, and their infamy is eternal. Once they depart from this life, they are forever lost in a spiritual void with no possibility of return. Spiritual dreamers are ungodly rebels without a noble cause.

Cookeville, TN

Past Feeling

Charles Pogue

In Ephesians 4, Paul warned the brethren not to become like other Gentiles. In the description he gave of the others, he wrote in verse 19, “Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.” When we read the phrase “past feeling,” the English word “*desensitized*” is one of the first that comes to mind. That is precisely what the Greek word *apalgeo*, used here, means.

When sin is common, some people become so accustomed to it that they no longer think twice about it when it presents itself. Someone uses profanity, he does not hear it; someone takes God’s name in vain, he thinks nothing of it. A television commercial depicting an actress wearing nothing but her underclothes, or holding a beer in her hand, has no impact upon them at all. Some brethren are that way regarding error in the Lord’s church. They see unauthorized practices in wor-

ship, but they are like the priest and the Levite when they came upon the man who fell among thieves—they cross to the other side of the road, indifferent to the injury to Christ and His body. They have become past feeling; they are desensitized.

To be aloof to sin carries with it an almost impossible consequence to avoid. When the Gentiles Paul described became past feeling, they gave themselves over to work all uncleanness. Being desensitized to sin is only a step away from engaging in it. If one does not at all care if someone else is practicing sin, what is there to stop that person from committing that sin himself? The answer is, “Nothing.” Since they have become desensitized to the guilt others bear for the sin, why would they bear any guilt if they commit that sin themselves? They would not. The situation is exactly as Paul described to Timothy that it would be:

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron (1 Tim. 4:1-2).

Let us heed another warning regarding desensitization. Be aware if one close to you becomes desensitized to sin. Sometimes, we may see a

person who is not engaging in sin himself, but if we pay close attention, it becomes apparent that they have become indifferent to sin. That person may be in jeopardy of giving in to sin. The first indication that is happening is that the person becomes desensitized toward God. Be on guard for it in yourself and others—the awful condition of one’s being past feeling!

Deceased

“Stay Focused”

Jesus encouraged us to “be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev. 2:10). The “crown of life” signifies eternal life in Heaven, eternal salvation. Eternal life is a gift offered to us by God through grace. Our responsibility in receiving this gift is to “be faithful until death.” We are not just to become faithful; we are to live in faithfulness until the day we die.

If necessary, we must be willing to die for our faith. While this is undoubtedly easier said than done, it should not necessarily be all that difficult to do. God has promised that **He** will not let us be tempted by any temptation that is too powerful for us to overcome, with His help (1 Cor. 10:13). In the middle of the verse making this promise is the statement, “God *is* faithful.” So, we do not have to wonder if the promise of the verse is as powerful as it reads. It is! God made this promise, and God is faithful in keeping His promises.

Why does it seem that so many people have difficulty staying faithful? One simple key is they do not stay focused. Paul portrayed the walk of faithfulness as being like a runner running a race. He said, “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended.” If we are still alive, we have not claimed the prize of eternal life to the fullest degree. Only after this life is over can we be with God in Heaven. We may have moments in our lives that are wonderfully encouraging, but we are not there yet. So, Paul says, “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” (Phi. 3:12-14).

Just as a runner runs a race, we must keep our minds and our eyes on the finish line (Heb. 12:1-3). We need to let go of the failings of the past and look forward to the goal of eternal life! To do this successfully, we must stay focused on spiritual things (Col. 3:2). Jesus put it this way, “No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62).

A great many people begin the walk of faith, but they lose their focus. They get distracted by all kinds of things, including self-doubt. We must stay focused! When Peter looked around at the storm and took his eyes off His Lord, he sank into the water on which he had been walking (Mat. 14:28-31). If we let ourselves get distracted by the difficulties of life or by the temptations of the devil, we can end up sinking into the depths of sin and end up condemned for eternity. Only if we stay focused, keep our eyes on the Lord, and maintain our commitment will we stay on course and reach our goal of eternal life. If we stay focused, God has already promised that we will cross the finish line and receive the prize (Rev. 2:10). The only question is whether we will stay focused.

Author Unknown

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermon Outlines

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

Bible Class: Christian Doctrine

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/Christian_Doctrine.html

Bible Class: 1 Thessalonians

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/1_Thessalonians.html

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Kindly words

Will cost but little

Traveling up the hill of life

And they make

The weak and weary

Stronger, braver for the strife.

Author Unknown

Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Pete Maldonado

Carla Burleson

Bill & Pam Busch

Tim Busch

Phyllis Brantley

Please Remember

July 30

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

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops:

Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister:

Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 30

July 28, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

“Bible Thumpers”

Brad Green

It seems that in today’s society, it is wrong to use any terms or phrases that could, even in the remotest of possibilities, be construed as hurtful or degrading—unless, however, it is used to describe Christians. One such phrase is *Bible Thumper*. Although these words can mean various things to different people, they are usually used as a pejorative to denote one who appeals to the Bible for authority because they are perceived as ignorant, uneducated, and unable to debate their cause logically. Ironically, the use of *Bible Thumper* as a pejorative is an attempt, through character assassination, to avoid a logical and reasonable debate. This is not a newly employed tactic against God’s people. After preaching the Word of God boldly, Peter and John were *perceived* to be “unlearned and ignorant men” (Acts 4:13). The irony—upon seeing the facts, this audience “could say nothing...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*” (4:14, 16). The only recorded response of Festus, a Roman governor, to Gospel preaching was, “Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad” (26:24). Rather than dealing with the evidence, which was presented (26:25-27), Festus chose to attack the apostle Paul’s mental faculty and ridicule Paul’s devotion to God’s Word. The ad hominem, or personal attack, is intended to silence the *thumps* or, at the least, diminish their capabilities:

For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit (Heb. 4:12).

Sadly, many in the religious world, including some Christians, are calling for a lot less *thumping* as well. One would expect the world to ridicule a “thus saith the Lord.” Still, it is incomprehensible to witness such disdain towards Biblical authority from people who claim to be “Bible believers.” To some, teaching that Truth is knowable and attainable (John 8:31-32) is arrogant, and teaching that right and wrong can be objectively determined (Psa. 19:8; 2 Pet. 2:15) is conceited. In this regard, the *thumps* being heard are the covers of the Bible being slammed shut. No matter how hard the pages of the Bible are closed, the Truth remains (John 17:17; 12:48).

What this world needs, and what God desires, is a lot more *Bible Thumping* (i.e., appeals to God and His Word for final authority). By this, we do **not** mean arrogant shows “for to be seen of men” (Mat. 23:5) as our Lord condemns such (see also 6:5). What we do affirm is “whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do all* in the name of the Lord Jesus [i.e., by His authority]” (Col. 3:17). God proclaims, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hos. 4:6) and the only remedy is hearing and studying God’s Word (Rom. 10:17; 2 Tim. 2:15). When Jesus was tempted of the devil, He responded with quotes (book, chapter, and verse,

if you will) from the Scriptures (Mat. 4:1-10). When men commanded Peter and the other apostles to stop preaching (or *thumping*) the Doctrine of Christ, they “answered and said, “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). After *thumping* the Gospel in an attempt to turn the people away from Satan and toward God, Stephen received a *thumping* of his own:

they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him [Stephen] with one

accord, And cast *him* out of the city, and stoned *him* (7:57-58).

Jesus promises, “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: . . . be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev. 2:10). Let us not be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16) and “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3—ASV).

Lenoir City, TN

“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). Twice in this passage Jesus refers to “the truth.” In this context, He refers to spiritual truth that will set man free from the consequences of his sins. He does not speak of “truths” or “a truth” in both instances. *Truth* is singular with the definite article. There is no “my truth” versus “your truth”; there is only “the truth.”

Further, truth is something that must be known if we are to be free. Peter says, “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 through the truth, we need look no further. Learn **the** truth.

Author Unknown

Reaping What We Sow

Near the end of Paul’s letter to the Galatians, in a section on practical applications, Paul warned, Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life (Gal. 6:7-8).

The people Paul wrote to were part of an agrarian society. They would undoubtedly understand the principles of these verses from agriculture. If a farmer plants peas, for example, he will get a crop of peas, not corn. Likewise, a person who sows okra should not expect to get tomatoes. One does not have to be a farmer to understand this concept—even a child quickly comprehends it. God, Himself stated this universal principle of sowing and reaping in the very beginning (Gen. 1:11-12,

29). Paul’s application of this rule has some vital lessons for us today.

The Bible uses *sow* figuratively in various ways. For example, it refers to spreading God’s Word as in the Parable of the Sower (Luke 8:3-9). Negatively, it speaks of one who “sows discord” (Pro. 6:14, 19). In our text, **it represents deeds done in our lives.**

Further, the text speaks of a person “**sowing to his flesh.**” Although *flesh* is used to refer to the literal body (Mat. 26:41) or relatives (Rom. 9:1-3), here it is speaking of the sinful desires of the flesh. Galatians 5:19-21 speaks of the works of the flesh (e.g., murder, envy, idolatry, adultery). Romans 8:5a states, “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh.”

On the other hand, the verses speak of those who “**sow to the Spirit.**” These “walk in the Spirit” (Gal. 5:16, 25), are “led by the Spirit,” and “live according to the Spirit” (Rom. 8:5b; Gal. 5:25). Such people follow the teaching of the Holy Spirit found in God’s Word.

Today, everyone sows to **either** the flesh or the Spirit—if we live, we sow. A person may say, “I’ll choose the flesh because I can drink, commit fornication, curse, and hate.” However, before people make a choice, they should consider their decision’s consequences.

Our text tells us that those who **sow to the Spirit** will reap “everlasting life.” Heaven, a place of joy, rest, and peace, will be their eternal reward (Mat. 25:46; Rom. 2:6a). In contrast, those who **sow to the flesh** shall reap “corruption.” The writer is not speaking of the body decaying, as that happens regardless. Instead, he indicates that these will be lost eternally. Their eternal destination will be the opposite of the everlasting life for those who sow to the Spirit. According to the previous chapter (Gal. 5:21), those **pursuing** the flesh “will not inherit the kingdom of God.” Romans 8:6 states, “For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace.”

Returning to the first part of Galatians 6:7, Paul tells us **not to be deceived** and that “God is not mocked.” What does he mean by this statement? People around the world mock God every day. As you read this, someone living close to you probably mocks God. How would people mock God in this context? They successfully mock God if the opposite of what these verses say happens. God is mocked if a person sows to the flesh and receives “everlasting life.” But that **is not** going to happen. Thus, **if** people sow to the flesh, no matter what they may think or say, they **will** reap corruption. **We cannot mock God; we will reap what we sow!**

Author Unknown

You are writing a gospel.
A chapter each day;
By deeds that you do;
By words that you say;
Men read what you write,
Whether faulty or true.
Say, what is the gospel
According to you.

Author Unknown

Historians almost quake at the religious condition of the country at the beginning of the eleventh century. Because of the conditions, the progress of the church was checked, yet some Christians continued to worship in the right way. The hand of persecution was working. Some claimed to be Christians in the eleventh century but were far from the right way. In the second century, the Christians who continued for a pure membership were called “Paterines.” In later years, these same people were called “Waldenses.” They did not call themselves “Paterines” or “Waldenses,” as they claimed to be Christians. They received the name “Waldenses” from Peter Waldo, a leading light. They were baptized for the remission of sins. The “Paterines” contended that an ordinary man could not be the head of the church of Christ. They accepted Christ as the head of the church of Christ. They also contended for a pure membership. Those who were called “Waldenses” were the same people called “Paterines” in the second century. These people had no connection with the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Church began in Rome, but the church of Christ began in Jerusalem.

E. M. Borden, Deceased

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermon Outlines

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

Bible Class: Christian Doctrine

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/Christian_Doctrine.html

Bible Class: 1 Thessalonians

https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes/1_Thessalonians.html

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe	Nancy Travis
Orville & Linda Worley	Pete Maldonado
Carla Burleson	Bill & Pam Busch
Tim Busch	Phyllis Brantley
Ann Jacobson	

Please Remember

July 30

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

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley
Michael Hatcher
Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 31

August 4, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

When Jesus Said, "No"

Guy N. Woods

There is genuine satisfaction in being agreeable and accepting requests made by those we would like to please, which is a delightful experience. It is, however, not always possible to acquiesce to the suggestions that come to us, and occasions arise when duty demands that we say "No." Such times require great moral stamina, unflinching integrity of purpose, and a highly developed sense of right. When assailed by temptation presented in an alluring and attractive fashion, or when the solicitation comes from those we dislike displeasing, our ability to say, "No," significantly weakens, and our power to resist oftentimes fails. Jesus was "in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15), and His experience points the way to triumph over the subtle, persistent, and deadly temptations that exist today.

Narratives of our Lord's encounter with the archenemy of mankind are recorded in Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, and Luke 4:1-13. References also occur in Hebrews 2:18, 4:15, and Luke 22:28. It is not without significance that Jesus "was **led up** of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." Emphasis is on *led up* in this passage. It was the Spirit, and not Satan, who took the initiative. Our Lord did not shrink from this encounter with the devil; boldly, resourcefully, and unhesitatingly, He engaged in the greatest struggle of the ages. Many of us today assume such a timid, fearful air, and we manifest so much uncertainty that Satan feels assured of victory

from the beginning. Marvelous generalship is displayed in the way Jesus approached the contest. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (Jam. 4:7).

Jesus was **tempted** by the devil. There is a significant difference between **temptation** and **trial**, a distinction ignored in the King James Version but distinguished in the American Standard Version. (Compare, for example, the two versions of Matthew 4:7.) *Temptation* is seduction to evil, a solicitation to do wrong. It is distinguished from trial in that trial tests us and seeks to discover our moral qualities or character, while temptation persuades us to evil and seeks to delude us so it may ruin us. The one aims at our good; it makes us conscious of our true moral self, whereas the other leads us into evil and destroys us. It is God who **tries**, tests, and proves (Gen. 22:1). Still, Satan **tempts** (Mat. 4:1). Abraham was **tried** when his faith was proved, and Job when one calamity after another demonstrated that he served Jehovah for no other reason than the duty of the service and the glory of the one served. Still, Eve was **tempted** when seduced to sin by the promise of becoming like God, and David, when blinded and enticed by lustful desire, plunged headlong into the crimes that were so summarily punished and so unreservedly acknowledged and lamented.

The attack against our Lord was launched on three fronts, and the fronts and tactics used included all the weapons in Satan's arsenal. There

was an appeal (1) **to the flesh**, “command that these stones become bread”; (2) **to the lust of the eyes**, “Again, the devil...showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and he said unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me”; (3) **to the vainglory of life**, “Then the devil taketh him into the holy city; and he set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down”—in effect, demonstrate to the people in this spectacular fashion your divinity! This was the pattern of the first temptation:

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for **food** [the flesh enticed], and it was a **delight to the eyes** [the lust of the eyes], and that the tree was to be **desired to make one wise** [an appeal to the vainglory of life], she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat (Gen. 3:6).

The apostle of love classified the allurements of the world in this same manner:

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

The temptation of Christ was designed in such fashion as to appeal to Him in the most irresistible way and at a time when it was most difficult for Him to resist. Hunger, an overwhelming hunger from a forty-day fast, greatly weakened Him. At this point, He was urged to turn stones into bread. Sovereignty over all the kingdoms of the world had been tendered to Him **at the beginning** of His public ministry—His to have without the long, wearisome journey to the cross. Satan assails us constantly at our weakest point and at times when we are most likely to be unable to resist. Moreover, what tempts one mind may only offend another. To this writer, liquor, for example, aside from any moral issues involved, is obnoxious and repugnant; to those who have acquired an appetite for it, it affords a well-nigh irresistible appeal. Some men are too coarse to perceive the finer forms of

evil, others so refined as to be shocked by the grosser sins. This fact should not be lost sight of. We are prone to condemn those who succumb to the temptations that we do not feel and to wink at or excuse the foibles and weaknesses we possess. Paul warned of this danger:

Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; looking to thyself, **lest thou also be tempted** (Gal. 6:1).

We are disposed to assert freely what **we would do** were we confronted with the problems of our brother. We pass judgment upon him without regard to the circumstances peculiar to him. An old Indian prayer says, “Never let me judge my brother until I have worn his moccasins at least for two moons!” If we were wise enough to adopt the sentiment thus expressed, our judgments would, at least, possess the merit of being charitable.

Our Lord successfully met and repulsed Satan’s attacks by the sword of the Spirit. With rapier-like thrusts, His “It is written!” drove His attacker from the field.

Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, **because his seed** [the Word of God—Luke 8:11] **abideth in him** [influences his life]: and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God (1 John 3:9).

David expressed the protection against sin that the Word supplies by saying, “Thy word have I laid up in my heart, **That I might not sin against thee**” (Psa. 119:11). In this, as in many other instances, is demonstrated the superiority of the Word of God over the books of men. No other volume has within it the power we need to resist evil. It is supreme and alone in its field. Its words have never been exhausted. We go back to it again and again to find some new truth, some profound revelation that has hitherto escaped us, to drink anew from its inexhaustible fountain of strength and inspiration. Some, it is true, must teach geology, ancient history, languages, chemistry, literature, philosophy, natural sciences, engineering, sociology, art, and music. But none of these, or all together, can supply vic-

tory over sin, peace for the troubled heart, and hope of eternal life.

The Word of God is thus our only hope. It alone can point the way to triumph over sin and Satan. A man who lives close to the Word, believes it, abides in it, is invulnerable. The only security, the

only safety, the only means of escape from the evil one, is to keep the Word of God constantly before us. **Christ used no power in His conflict with Satan that Christ's disciples do not have!** May we ever strive to use it as effectively?

Deceased

Have we allowed the eyes of our family to adjust to the darkness of our society without even being aware of it? Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, said:

The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! (Mat. 6:22-23).

Our Lord is helping us understand that if we allow darkness into our hearts/minds, our lives will be full of evil.

Do not let your eyes adjust to the dark! What an important warning to Christian families today!

Author Unknown

Salvation By "Faith-Only" Denies God's Word

R. L. Whiteside

On Pentecost, those who accepted Peter's preaching were commanded to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus, the Christ, unto remission of their sins, and about 3,000 rendered prompt obedience. And so, in other cases. In reports of the conversion cases under the preaching of these inspired men, there is no hint that sinners were saved the moment they believed. "And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord" (Acts 11:21). If they were saved the moment they believed, they were saved before they turned unto the Lord, but healing, or salvation, follows the turning to the Lord (Isa. 55:7; Mat. 13:15; Acts 28:27).

No arguments of the faith-only advocates can do away with the plain statements of our Lord and His inspired preachers on the necessity of obedience. The fact is that in their arguments, they array Scripture against Scripture. Our Lord makes this plain statement: "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 who is in heaven" (Mat. 7:21). To say, "Lord, Lord," shows some degree of faith; but it is a dead faith, for there is no obedience to God's will. Such faith profits nothing—puts no one into the kingdom of heaven.

The writer of Hebrews says of Jesus, the Christ: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:8-9—KJV). No one can misunderstand that plain statement nor twist its meaning into something it does not say. Some are so set on evading its force that they seek to array some other passage against it, and that is not fair dealing with the Word of God. If a man does not obey the Lord Jesus Christ, He is not the author of salvation to such a man.

Deceased

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermons

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

Bible Classes

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes.html>

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Carla Burlson

Bill & Pam Busch

Tim Busch

Phyllis Brantley

Please Remember

August 31

Fifth Sunday Dinner after the morning service. Singing and a devotional service at 1:00 pm.

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 32

August 11, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

Brotherhood

Lee Moses

Brotherhood carries different connotations for different people. Some associate brotherhood with the entirety of mankind; others apply it only to an immediate family. That many attach great importance to brotherhood is evidenced by the numerous organizations, fraternities, and societies purporting to be brotherhoods. The late John Lennon, once a member of the Beatles, recorded a popular song that put forth his views of brotherhood. The brotherhood he “imagined” required (1) No heaven or hell—So all people would live for today instead of preparing for eternity; (2) No countries or religion—So there would be nothing for which to kill or die, and (3) No possessions—So, there would be no greed or hunger. If these conditions should be met, he insisted, there would exist “a brotherhood of man...sharing all the world.”

The problem is this concept is based on imagination and not reality. Heaven and hell exist; pretending they do not will not diminish their reality. If mankind were to blot their existence from memory completely, the “brotherhood of man” would all be lost (2 The. 1:8-9). God has instituted political government as essential to maintaining a degree of order (Rom. 13:1-4). Man is generally very selfish and will act upon his selfish desires if he perceives that there are no negative consequences to face, whether from God or the government. Regarding the desire for “no religion,” it would certainly be to

the advantage of all if **false** religions were to disappear from the face of the earth (Mat. 7:15). However, “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himself unspotted from the world” (Jam. 1:27). Christianity is not a cause of killing or physical warfare, although spiritual warfare is indeed waged against the foes as mentioned earlier of God and humanity. As to “no possessions,” again, this cannot be possible when selfish men can pursue their desires with no restraints.

There is no hope in a mere “brotherhood of man” in which each man or woman is their highest authority. Cain apparently disregarded the facts that heaven and hell exist, that there was true religion, and that he and his brother were to coexist peacefully—and it led to murder, even of his brother (Gen. 4). The violence in the Middle East between Muslims and Jews is between brothers, sons of Abraham. That all mankind has a common ancestor is not basis enough for a true brotherhood. However, there is hope, a basis for true brotherhood. There existed no deeper loathing than that of the Jews toward the Gentiles. Yet,

he [Jesus Christ] is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to

make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace (Eph. 2:14-15).

The hope of mankind is a brotherhood of man in Christ. John Lennon's song closes, expressing his desire that "the world will live as one." All who are **in Christ** are described as being **one new man**. To see what true brotherhood is, read about the early church of Christ:

And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were

together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart (Acts 2:42-46).

When people "live for today" and when people want to live without God, there is selfishness running rampant—chaos and murder. But in Christ, there is true brotherhood and a brotherhood which will continue **forever**.

Union City, TN

"As a Man Thinketh"

Every day we are becoming more like our thoughts. If they are mean and selfish, we cannot prevent ourselves from becoming so. If they are unclean and evil, our character and conduct will inevitably be shaped by them. It is true that "as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." As Charles Kingsley wrote:

If you wish to be miserable, think about yourself, about what you want, what you like, what respect people ought to pay you, what people think of you; and then to you nothing will be pure. You will spoil everything you touch; you will make sin and misery for yourself out of everything God sends you; you will be as wretched as you choose.

And, on the other hand, loving thoughts will produce loving acts, and a generous, kindly way of regarding others in our own minds will bring us to a generous, kindly treatment of them in daily life.

Work Cited

Kingsley, Charles. AZQuotes.com, Wind and Fly LTD, 2024. <<https://www.azquotes.com/quote/607348>>.

Author Unknown

Servants of Satan

Johnny Ramsey

The apostle writes, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3). Although serving the Lord should be a joy, we read of some who "could not endure that which was enjoined" (Heb. 12:20). Serving the devil has no ultimate end but "the lake of fire" (Rev. 21:8). Allegiance to Jesus as Lord has promise of life eternal

(1 Pet. 1:13). It has been well observed: "It is better to live for Christ than to wish later that you had." Satan has had many loyal servants through the ages. Some dedicated themselves to decades of hellish activities, while others mightily contributed to his nefarious ways, schemes, and devious tactics in a momentary but strategic manner. Some of those in bondage to this diabolical

demon were overwhelmed by his subtle power, while others were willing pawns in Satan's onslaught against purity and sincerity.

Sanballat heartily opposed Nehemiah in the vital work of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem after captivity in Babylon (Neh. 2:19; 4:1-9). Balaam succeeded in compromising Israel into idolatry and immorality that led them away from God (Num. 22; Rev. 2:14). Cain violated the trust of God and showed utter disdain for his brother (Gen. 4). Clearly, these unholy three marched in cadence to Satan's drumbeat. They so found themselves fighting against Jehovah (Acts 5:39). Herod enjoyed the applause of the people while he plotted against the apostles (Acts 12). One of his relatives earlier surrendered to the whims of a motley crowd and killed a great preacher named John (Mat. 14:9). Flattery and insincerity have been the tools of the devil for centuries. Someone wisely wrote: "Beware of those who fall at your feet. They may be reaching for the corner of the rug."

Jeroboam, "who made Israel to sin" (1 Kin. 12), ardently worked for that old serpent as he divided the people of God. King David, by selfishness and in the pursuit of sensual pleasures, caused the enemies of God to blaspheme (2 Sam. 12). Elymas, the sorcerer (Acts 13:8), contributed to the plans of hell by withstanding the oracles of God. He has lots of kinfolk around today! We are on earth to glorify God by our submission to His divine mandates and never to encourage evil. In a powerful hymn, we sing:

Content to let the world go by
To know no gain nor loss,
My sinful self my only shame,
My glory all the cross.

Jonah was an active friend of the devil, although he was supposed to be serving the Almighty. Tragic is the truth that many today have defected into the tempter's camp. In selfish arrogance, Abraham's seed, the sons of Jacob, sold their brother Joseph as though he were cattle or a toy. Thankfully, however, Jehovah caused their

evil to turn out for the good of Joseph and his brothers (Gen. 50:20).

Jezebel is the epitome of evil. Very few little girls have been given that name. That wicked ruler served the devil in many ways and, as a result, always hated the prophets of God. When people do not love the truth, they plot against those who teach it. Jehoiakim could not tolerate rebuke and exhortation and tried to mutilate the Scriptures (Jer. 36); he, too, has many relatives today. But, out of the burning embers of his diabolical scheming arose the wrath of the Creator against a puny man! Earthly rulers rise and fall, empires come and go, but **truth never dies!** Amos ran into a foe of heaven in the high priest mentioned in Amos 7. If Satan ever had a servant, it was that spineless character who invited the fearless prophet to leave Israel and go somewhere else to preach. Sounds familiar, does it not? According to Ezekiel 34 and Acts 20:28-32, elders over the house of God can become the devil's most significant contributors. It is sad to contemplate that those who should assist the Savior oppose His precious work.

Preachers who refuse to preach boldly the Word of God (Acts 14:1-3; 1 Pet. 4:11) and directly rebuke error (Phi. 1:17) serve the devil while pretending to be soldiers of Christ. When the final day of Judgment peals forth, their compromising spirit will be exposed! Let us never allow the enemy of righteousness room in our lives to launch his evil deeds: "Neither give place to the devil" (Eph. 4:27). Instead, we should always "resist the devil" (Jam. 4:7) and cause his friends to "tremble" (2:19—KJV).

The fight is on, O Christian soldiers,
And face to face in stern array,
His banner streaming, the armor gleaming,
The right and wrong engage today.

Satan and his servants need to be constantly aware of the fact that they shall not win. The battle is pitched, and we are ready!

Deceased

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermons

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

Bible Classes

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes.html>

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Defender

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/defender.html>

Beacon

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/beacon.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Carla Burleson

Bill & Pam Busch

Tim Busch

Phyllis Brantley

Please Remember

August 31

Fifth Sunday Dinner after the morning service. Singing and a devotional service at 1:00 pm.

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 33

August 18, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

“Christ Sent Me Not to Baptize”

F. B. Srygley

The above title is only part of a sentence taken from 1 Corinthians 1:17. The verse from which it was taken reads, “For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.”

To understand this verse in its proper context, the surrounding context should also be considered. Beginning with verse 12, the writer says:

Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel (1:12-17).

It should be noted that not one word was said about the design of baptism or the position it occupies in the scheme of redemption. Many **assume** that since Christ sent Paul not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel, baptism has no part in the salvation of man. Paul usually had a traveling companion with him. Timothy, who was with him much of the time, could have done the baptizing.

It took an inspired man, then, to preach the Gospel. There was no New Testament written, and the people were dependent upon inspired men to preach the Gospel. But anyone with the physical

ability and sense enough to lead one into the water and bury him could do the baptizing. I know one debater who has a chart with this quotation: “Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.” He seems to think that as baptism is not mentioned in that text as a condition of salvation, it is, therefore, not essential to salvation. He does not look to any other place to find anything about salvation. According to his thinking, it is not mentioned there and, therefore, is no part of salvation. Strange reasoning, it appears to me.

Jesus, the Lord, spoke to Paul on the road to Damascus and said:

But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me (Acts 26:16-18).

The Lord did call Paul to preach the Gospel, but in preaching the Gospel, which is the good news of salvation, he preached what man should do to be saved, for this salvation was conditional. Peter also—on the first Pentecost after the ascension of Christ, preached the Gospel, and when the people were convicted of sin, the record says:

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. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call (Acts 2:37-39).

The Gentile world was embraced in this call, but only those who accept the conditions are embraced by the promise. However, some may say that Peter did not mention faith. No, but he did mention that which is equivalent to faith. In verse 36, he said, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” They could have known this only by faith, by believing it with all their hearts. Peter, therefore, preached faith, repentance, and baptism for the remission of sins. These are what an alien sinner should do to be saved from past sins.

In Romans 6, beginning with verse 3, the apostle said, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” Of course, this means the benefits of His death. Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins (Heb. 9:22). It is only through the blood of Christ that sins can be forgiven. The death of Christ is, therefore, the procuring cause of salvation.

But when and how can sinners reach the benefits of His blood? The apostle continues, “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4).

Notice that the new life begins at the resurrection from the grave of a burial in baptism. Christ died for our sins. Man should die to sin. Christ was raised from the grave. We, too, are raised from the grave of baptism. Why will men attempt to destroy the picture of salvation from sin to save a thing that is not taught in the New Testament?

Deceased

One Number Off

Ken Chumbley

We had a little excitement at the church building on a recent Wednesday evening! Someone (who will remain anonymous—but he knows who he is!) unlocked the door and proceeded to turn off the burglar alarm. At least that is what he thought he was doing. However, he put in the wrong code and the alarm sounded. Fortunately, I came in right behind him and was able to put in the correct code and turn it off, but not before the monitoring service had been alerted. We did find out how quickly they respond and that the sheriff’s department does come by to check. However, the alarm should not have sounded. After all, he was only one number off. Surely, that was not important. However, it was—and is—important; if the

wrong code is entered, the alarm system will sound.

This principle is important in many areas of life and especially when it comes to doing God’s will. If God is to be pleased and we are to be blessed of God, being “one number off” will not work. Man has no right to change what God has commanded in any way.

A good illustration of this principle is found in the account of Nadab and Abihu, recorded in Leviticus 10:

And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded

them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. Then Moses said unto Aaron, This *is it* that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace (10:1-3).

They were only “one number off.” They used fire, but the **wrong** fire, and we see that they perished because of their failure to honor God and do as He had commanded.

Another Old Testament illustration is found in 2 Samuel 6:

And when they came to Nachon’s threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth *his hand* to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook *it*. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for *his error*; and there he died by the ark of God (6:6-7).

Now what was so wrong with that? Uzzah was only steadying the ark so it would not fall. Why did the Lord slay Uzzah? After all, he was only “one number off”! God had instructed that when the ark was moved, it was to be carried by the Levites (1 Chr. 15:2); no others were authorized to carry it or to even touch it. The Israelites did not have authority to move the ark in any other way.

Jesus said, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Mat. 28:18). Thus, we cannot change what He has said, even by “one number” and be accepted by Him. It **does** make a difference whether or not we obey the teaching of God’s Word. We have no right to change one thing with respect to the conditions that He has made regarding salvation and entry into His church. Neither do we have the right to change those things that God has authorized for the work and worship of the church or to add to or take away from that which He has authorized. “One number off” does make a difference!

Deceased

Does He Even Know Your Name?

H. L. Gradowith (Tim Smith)

In the morning we shall meet Him
In a City bright and fair;
We forever shall be happy
Free from worry, strife or care! *

*CHORUS:

Are you walking close beside Him?
Does He even know your name?
He’s saved others thru the Ages,
Let Him save you just the same!

None will ever interfere then
With the blessings of our Lord,
Of this City we may read now
On the pages of His Word!

*CHORUS

Though the journey be not easy:
Many burdens we must bear,
He’ll be with us as we travel
All our trials He will share!

*CHORUS

Those who’ve gone on to be with Him
Will be waiting when we come,
Then we’ll hear that blest pronouncement,
“Enter in,” He’ll say, “Well done!”

*CHORUS

All the cost has been paid for us
By the Lord so long ago...
Ours is but to follow closely
On the path that He will show!

*CHORUS

Deceased

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermons

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

Bible Classes

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes.html>

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Defender

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/defender.html>

Beacon

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/beacon.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Carla Burleson

Bill & Pam Busch

Tim Busch

Phyllis Brantley

Sympathy

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Aleacia Godwin in the death of her brother, Bruce Pierce, on August 12. Please keep Aleacia and her family in your prayers.

Please Remember

August 31

Fifth Sunday Dinner after the morning service. Singing and a devotional service at 1:00 pm.

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 34

August 25, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

What the Church Is and Does

H. Leo Boles

No one should be interested in any church except the one that is revealed in the New Testament. Everyone should be interested in the church that Christ built. Jesus said, “Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” (Mat. 16:18—ASV). Jesus’ church is the greatest institution in the world, and membership is the greatest privilege accorded to man.

What is the Church?

We must let the New Testament answer this question. Man can define human institutions, but only God, through the Holy Spirit, can tell us what this divine institution is. Since Christ built this church and purchased it with His blood (Acts 20:28), He can, through the Holy Spirit, define His church.

The New Testament declares that the church is **the body of Christ**.

And 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).

Here, we have the Holy Spirit speaking through Paul, stating that the church is His body. Again, the Holy Spirit calls the church the body of Christ: “Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body’s sake, which is the church” (Col. 1:24—ASV). Hence, the church is the body of Christ, and the body of Christ is the church.

Moreover, the church is the kingdom of God. Jesus said:

Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven (Mat. 16:18-19).

Here—in one sentence—Jesus calls this institution “my church,” and in the following sentence, He calls the same institution “the kingdom of heaven.” Again, the Holy Spirit said, “who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love” (Col. 1:13—ASV). These same Colossians, who had been translated into the kingdom, also constituted the church at Colosse (1:2).

The church is also said to be **the house of God**. These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God (1 Tim. 3:14-15).

The family of God constitutes the house of God. “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named” (Eph. 3:14-15—ASV).

Further, it is called **the church of God**. The church is called “the church of God” eight times in the New Testament (1 Cor. 1:2; 10:32; 11:22; 15:9; 2 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:13; 1 Tim. 3:5, 15). The plural

is used three times as churches of God (1 Cor. 11:16; 1 The. 2:14; 2 The. 1:4). One time, we have the expression, churches of Christ (Rom. 16:16). Here, *churches* is used in the local or congregational sense as the churches of Christ in various locations.

Again, the church is called a spiritual house: “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood” (1 Pet. 2:5). These and other Scriptures teach us what the church is. No institution but the church of our Lord answers these statements of the Holy Spirit.

How Many Churches?

Which church is used in a general sense and a local sense? All Christians constitute the church in the general sense, and the different congregations of these Christians compose the churches in the local sense. There is but one church over which Christ presides as head. There is but one kingdom of God on earth and one body of Christ. “But now they are many members, but one body” (1 Cor. 12:20—ASV). “For even as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office: so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another” (Rom. 12:4-5—ASV). The New Testament frequently declares that there is but one body and that this one body is the church.

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all (Eph. 4:4-6—ASV).

When used in the plural, **church** refers to the various groups of Christians meeting for worship at different places. We have “the church of God which is at Corinth” (1 Cor. 1:2), “the churches of Galatia” (Gal. 1:2), “the church of the Thessalonians *which is* in God” (1 The. 1:1), “the church which was in Jerusalem” (Acts 11:22), “the church of the Laodiceans” (Col. 4:16), and the church at Ephesus (Acts 20:17).

There are 27 different churches mentioned in the New Testament, and all these churches had

the same faith, wore the same name, and practiced the same things. Their form of worship was the same. They were not different denominations as we have them today. The New Testament does not teach anything about the various denominations constituting “the church of God.” Each member of a denomination wears the peculiar name of that denomination, believes certain tenets of faith as prescribed by that denomination, and practices different forms of worship as may be outlined by that denomination. There is no resemblance between denominations today and “the churches of Christ” of New Testament times (Rom. 16:16).

How to Enter the Church

The New Testament also addresses this question. It teaches how to enter the church of God but not how to enter any other *Church*. Thus, if one joins a denomination, the New Testament does not teach him to do so. One who joins a denomination does so without any divine instruction, without any Word of God.

The New Testament clearly teaches how to enter the church of the New Testament. Certainly, Christ would not establish a church on earth and not instruct people on how to enter it. Since the church is a divine institution, we must have divine instructions on how to enter it. Human instructions may guide one into a denomination, but it takes divine instructions to guide one into the divine institution, the church.

People are added to the church by the Lord. “And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved” (Acts 2:47—ASV). Here, at the close of Pentecost Day, the day on which the church was established, about 3,000 souls were added by the Lord to the church (2:41). Acts 5:14 says, “And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.” Here, we learn that only believers were added to the Lord. Babies or infants are not believers and cannot be added to the church. From the above Scriptures, we conclude that Christ adds folks to His church and does not add anyone to any other.

How does the Lord add to His church? Whom does He add to it? These are important questions. Jesus said to Nicodemus, “Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5—ASV). What is it to “be born of water and the Spirit?” That which puts one into the kingdom of God also puts one into the body of Christ, into the church of God.

One must have faith in Christ. Those who hear the Gospel and believe it have one qualification of a citizen of the kingdom of God. Without faith, it is impossible to please God (Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:6). Those who heard the Gospel preached by Peter on Pentecost and were convinced that Jesus is the Son of God asked what they must do to be saved. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Peter answered, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). They did as Peter commanded and were thus added to the church by this process. Hence, the Lord adds those to His church who believe in Him, are penitent of their sins, and are baptized into Him.

The only way people enter Christ is by baptism: Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:3-4—ASV).

Again, “For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ” (Gal. 3:26-27—ASV). This is the way one enters the church. One cannot be in Christ and not be in His church. Neither can one be in His church without being in Christ. The church is His body.

Can One Be Saved Out of the Church?

The question is not, “Can one be saved out of a denomination?” but “Can one be saved out of the church of the Lord?” Many attempt to evade a direct answer to this question by saying, “The church does not save one.” Indeed, the church does

not save one, but God, through Christ, saves. But where does **God save** one? Does He save in the **church** or outside the church?

God is in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself (2 Cor. 5:19). God saves people in Christ—that is, He saves people in the church. If people can be saved out of the church, then they can be saved out of Christ, out of the kingdom of God, out of the house of God, out of the family of God, out of the body of Christ, out of the building of God, and without becoming living stones in the spiritual house of God. The New Testament declares the church to be all these things, and if one can be saved out of the church, he can be saved out of that which the church is.

Again, if one can be saved out of the church, he can be saved without being redeemed (Eph. 1:3, 7). Redemption and forgiveness of sin are in Christ (1:6-7). Therefore, if one can be saved outside the church, then one can be saved without redemption and forgiveness.

Moreover, the blood of Christ is in the church, which is His body (1:22-23). If people can be saved out of the church, then they can be saved without coming into contact with the blood of Christ. If salvation is outside the church, there would be no need for Christ to establish His church, and He paid too much for it when He purchased it with His blood (Acts 20:28).

Deceased

Do you “blow” out the front door as soon as the “amen” is said? That might make you a “church tornado.” Sometimes, it is true, we have a deadline to meet and appointments to keep. But when we can, let us try to stay around and meet the other Christians, welcome strangers, and greet visitors. The Bible says, “be courteous” (1 Pet. 3:8).

Author Unknown

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermons

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

Bible Classes

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes.html>

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Defender

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/defender.html>

Beacon

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/beacon.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Carla Burleson

Bill & Pam Busch

Tim Busch

Phyllis Brantley

Please Remember

August 31

Fifth Sunday Dinner after the morning service. Singing and a devotional service at 1:00 pm.

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 35

September 1, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

Worship and Parallelism

Doug Post

The most common word for *worship* in the Hebrew Scriptures is *hishtahavah*, meaning “to bow down.” The Greek equivalent is the word *proskuneo*, also meaning “to bow down” or “to prostrate oneself.” Whatever nuances of meaning there may be, both the Hebrew and Greek words for *worship* are synonymous, carrying the idea of “bowing down.”

The Bible indicates that folks bowed their heads and worshiped (Gen. 24:26; Exo. 4:31; etc.), or they bowed down (fell) and worshiped (Jos. 5:14; 2 Chr. 20:18, 29:29; Job 1:20; Psa. 22:29, etc.). Therefore, a distinction is made between “bowing down” (the lexical meaning) and the word *worship* itself. In some passages, it could be literally translated as “bowing down” and “bowing down” (*worship*), but it is translated as “bowing down” and “worshiping” (*bowing down*).

Throughout Scripture, the grammatical construction of *parallelism* is often employed, whereby different words with distinct lexical meanings are used synonymously or coequally. That is, within the context, they refer to the same thing. For instance, in Psalm 19 (a miniature of Psalm 119), David speaks of **the law** of the Lord, **the testimony** of the Lord, **the statutes** of the Lord, **the commandment** of the Lord, **the fear** of the Lord, and **the judgments** of the Lord. In context, each word is synonymous with the others, all referring to the same thing: **the law of**

the Lord, which is the Word of God (See also 1 Pet. 1:22-25).

Moreover, *serve* and *worship* are routinely used together. They are two different words with differing lexical meanings, yet are sometimes used in parallel fashion. Context will certainly determine the meaning. However, when used alone, the lexical meaning of each word becomes the focus.

Praise and *worship* are often used together. Two distinct words, yet both are sometimes used synonymously. Note what David wrote:

I will praise thee with my whole heart: Before the gods will I sing praise unto thee. I will worship toward thy holy temple, And praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: For thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name (Psa. 138:1-2).

Here, we see *praise* used with *worship*. The act of praise is that of singing (cf. Heb. 13:15). Essentially, what is done in praising God is also David’s *bowing down* or *worship* of God—with his whole heart (cf. John 4:23-24; Jos. 24:15). Coincidentally, David, in part, is going to praise or worship God for His **Truth**, which is referred to as His **Word** (John 17:17). David uses these two words synonymously or in parallel fashion. Please note, God magnified His **Word** above His **Name**. However, I am pretty sure liberals would not accuse God of “Bibliolatry.” Since God has placed such a premium on His Word, so must we.

After David recaptured the ark, he wrote a song of thanksgiving, which is recorded in

1 Chronicles 16:7-36. In verse 23, David said to **sing** and then says the Lord is worthy to be **praised** (16:25). Here, again, *singing* is synonymous with *praise*. A little later, David says, “Bring an offering, and come before him: Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness” (16:29). Grammatically, the thought of worshiping God in the beauty of holiness refers to the offering and/or the giving, which in this case, refer to the same thing. The giving is that of the offering, and each is parallel or synonymous with the other. Moreover, worshiping God also involves praising God and singing. Therefore, the worship, here, includes the giving of the offering and the singing of praises. These are the acts of worship David said to provide.

As we consider singing in the New Testament, the Hebrews writer expressly says: “By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips giving thanks to his name” (Heb. 13:15). As noted previously, praise can refer to worship, but it is always con-

nected to worship, since the giving of praise must be a sacrifice of our heart, mind, soul, and strength. We are to sing “psalms hymns and spiritual songs” (Eph. 5:19). While each is different, psalms and hymns are **spiritual songs**, yet they are distinct from all other kinds. They are sacred or spiritual.

When we consider the use of the word *worship* alone, we see that its lexical meaning (*bowing down*) cannot be taken literally within specific contexts. For instance, Abraham said, “I and the lad will go yonder and worship” (Gen. 22:5). Abraham did not mean he and Isaac would go over yonder and literally bow down, but that he would take the boy to be sacrificed. This was the worship contemplated.

The New Testament or “law of Christ,” tells us we must worship God “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). We are under law (God’s authority) to do so (Isa. 2:2). In spirit means with the whole heart; in genuineness and sincerity of heart (cf. Jos. 24:15). Of course, whenever we are to submit to God’s commands and keep them, it must be with the heart (Rom. 6:17). God has specified the acts of worship in the New Testament. Therefore, we must worship according to His Word, the truth (cf. John 17:17). Otherwise, we become guilty of “will-worship” or self-imposed worship (Col. 2:23).

Irving, TX

Four things a man must learn to do
If he would make his record true:
To think, without confusion, clearly;
To act from honest motives, purely;
To love his fellow man, sincerely;
To trust in God and heaven, securely.

Henry Van Dyke

Down to the Very Smallest Detail

Charles Pogue

Did you see the story in the news where seven members of a Washington state family, including five children, were killed on a two-lane highway in Oregon? That is a poignant example of how unpredictable life can be. The words written by James that life is a vapor that appears for a little time, then soon vanishes away, come to mind (Jam. 4:14).

Death is no respecter of persons, as seen in the fact that five of the family members killed were children. If an incident such as this tragedy does not teach us the importance of the way we live our lives, right down to the smallest detail, what would?

Although some of the occurrences do not apply to the present discussion, the two-word

Gospel Meeting with Doug Post October 5 – 9, 2025

phrase “all things” appears 171 times in 152 verses in the King James Version of the Bible. All things are important.

At the end of time, the Lord will send forth His angels to gather out of His kingdom all things that offend and those who do iniquity (Mat. 13:41). Paul wrote to the Corinthians saying, “but *we do* all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying” (2 Cor. 12:19). In respect to not being carried away by every wind of doctrine, but rather speaking the truth in love, that truth is essential for growing up into Him in all things (Eph. 4:15). Paul’s instruction to Titus was for him to show himself a pattern of good works in all things (Tit. 2:7). The conclusion for the Corinthians, the Ephesians, and Titus, as well as every single one of us, is, “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 The. 5:21). “*Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good*” (Rom. 12:9).

In our lives, must we pay attention to every small detail? Absolutely! Jesus put it this way in Matthew 12:36: “But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.” Every idle word, Lord? Yes, He said, “every idle word.” “Who hath despised the day of small things” (Zec. 4:10).

The tragedy of the seven members of the family losing their lives in the aforementioned automobile accident is not an isolated incident.

Such tragedies occur every single day. Who knows, the next person it happens to could be you or me. Because that is true, we must live every single day examining ourselves (2 Cor. 13:5). To examine ourselves is to put ourselves on trial, investigating our actions, words, and even our thoughts against the Word of God, which is the standard of judgment. “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (10:5). Yes, we must live our lives according to the Will of God down to the very smallest detail.

Deceased

Christ existed before the world was. At that time, He was called “the Word.” “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). He created all things that were created. He lived on earth, in the flesh. He was put to death in the flesh, buried in Joseph’s new tomb, arose from the dead the third day, and after forty days ascended to heaven where He is now reigning as “King of kings, and Lord of lords” (1 Tim. 6:15).

E. M. Borden, Deceased

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermons

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

Bible Classes

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes.html>

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Defender

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/defender.html>

Beacon

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/beacon.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ
4850 Saufley Field Road
Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595
Michael Hatcher, Editor
bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Carla Burleson

Bill & Pam Busch

Tim Busch

Phyllis Brantley

Please Remember

September 21

Birthdays and Anniversaries Get-together will be held in the zone room after the afternoon service.

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley
Michael Hatcher
Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 36

September 8, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

“We’re All Sinners”—Really?

Mike Demory

Often, the retort is heard by those who do not want to seem judgmental that “we are all sinners.” There is no doubt that the Bible teaches because of Adam’s poor choice of giving in to Eve’s encouragement to join her in obtaining the knowledge of good and evil, the human race now suffers the consequences of his actions. As Paul pointed out to the Christians in Rome, “For **all** have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23). Even John warned, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8). However, the question before us is not whether we have sinned, because we know that is the case, the question is whether we are **all** sinners.

To support this idea is to lend credence to the false doctrine of Calvinism, which teaches that we are born totally and utterly depraved without the ability to do anything good. This theological myth even goes so far as to teach that the elect (those whom God pre-chose in eternity who alone benefit from the atonement brought about by Christ) continue to be sinners all their lives and can do nothing to change it. Sounds like a good excuse for living any way you want and blaming it all on Adam. Calvinists will tell you that the soul is saved, not the flesh, and that the flesh is uncontrollable; therefore, they will always be sinners.

It is disappointing, at best, to hear members of the Lord’s church support such nonsense by repeating the unscriptural phrase, “We are all sin-

ners.” Does the Word of God prove this to be the case, or could it not be true that there are both sinners and non-sinners? At this point, I will agree with the Calvinists by saying they are correct in the fact that they are sinners, the reason being is because they have never been saved. However, what about the blood-bought disciple doing their best to be holy as God is holy? God considered Noah, Abram, Job, and Asa “perfect,” yet we know they sinned (Rom. 3:23; Gen. 6:9; 17:1; Job 1:1, 8; 2 Chr. 15:17).

Sin, sinned, sinning, sinful, and sinner have different ideas attached to them, and it depends upon which tense that word is used, which determines whether it is one time or a continuous act (aorist or present tense in Greek). Since this is not meant to be an exhaustive study, let us look briefly at 1 John 3, a text often abused by the Calvinists. In verses 6-9, we find *sinneth* and *sin*. John is speaking to Christians and telling them that if we abide in God (maintaining self-control), we will not sin (willful and active sinning). Anyone who willfully and actively sins is of the Devil and does not know God. However, anyone truly born of God does not willfully and actively participate in sin, for God’s seed is in them; therefore, this should prevent willful and active participation in sinful activities.

Christians, that is true children of God, are saints. They are set apart, that is, called out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Pet. 2:9-10; Eph.

5:3). This means that true children of God are not actively or willfully participating in sinful activities. Therefore, the answer to our question is **no**, we are **not** all sinners. The truth is that Christians

will never be sinless, and they should always strive to sin less, but that does not make them sinners, for sinners are children of the devil.

Mexico, MO

Gospel Meeting with Doug Post Canceled

The meeting with brother Post has been canceled due to his upcoming surgery.
We wish him well in his recovery.

Answering the “Hows” of the Spirit *Doug Post*

Did God speak in times of old? **Yes!** (Heb. 1:1-2). Does God still speak? Yes! But the question that remains is, **how?** God speaks to me. After all, the Bible says God has “in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son” (1:2). It would be proper, fair, and reasonable to press me on the matter. You will want to know if I mean that God speaks **directly** to me or if I am claiming that God speaks to me **indirectly** through His Word. You would go to various other passages showing me that God speaks or reveals His mind to me through His Word (1 Cor. 2; cf. John 12:48).

Similarly, if I say the Holy Spirit leads me (Rom. 8:14), you would do well to question whether I mean that He **directly** or **indirectly** leads me through His Word and press me on the question, “**How** does the Spirit lead?” Of course, that would be fair and reasonable of you because you know that the Scriptures lead us through their teaching, their reproof, their correction, and their instruction in righteousness and they make us complete (2 Tim. 3:16-17). The Scriptures are a lamp to my feet and a light to my path (Psa. 119:105; 1 John

1:7). Jesus said the words He spoke were spirit and life (John 6:63). We learn that the Word of God is the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17), the very means by which the Spirit wields His influence. Additionally, we know that we get understanding, clarity, and guidance from the inspired Scriptures (Psa. 119:104, 130).

If I say the Holy Spirit strengthens me, again you would press me on what I mean. Do I mean He **directly** or **indirectly** strengthens me through His inspired Word? Paul specifically says to be strong (Eph. 6:10). Where? In the Lord! How? In the strength of His power—the Word or Gospel of Christ (cf. Rom. 1:16). We are to put on **truth** (the Word—John 17:17), we are to put on **righteousness** (the Word—Psa. 119:172), we are to put on the **Gospel** (the Word—Rom. 1:16), we are to put on the shield of **the faith** (the Word—Gal. 1:6-9, 23), we are to put on **salvation** (the Word of salvation—Acts 13:26; Jam. 1:21), and all of this is the Sword of the Spirit—the Word of God (Eph. 6:17). To be strengthened in the Lord is to be

strengthened by the Lord's Word. The Word of His grace strengthens us (Acts 20:32).

Likewise, if I say God dwells in me, you will press me to ask, "How does God dwell in me?" **Directly** or **indirectly**? Of course, **indirectly** through or by means of His Word (John 14:23; 2 John 9; Eph. 3:17 "the faith"; Gal. 3:2; 1 John 3:24; etc.). Of course, from these passages, we understand we dwell in God, obviously, **indi-**

rectly rather than literally or **directly**. Therefore, this "dwelling" concept describes a relationship—a relationship between God and the person who keeps His Word, continues abiding in His Word, and quite simply continues obeying His Word. Therefore, a relationship that is based upon the Word of God or is "through, or by, the Word."

Irving, TX

Here and There

J. Noel Merideth

One of the real problems we face today is the problem of indifference. We plead with people to attend Sunday school and worship services, and they are indifferent to our efforts. We plead with parents to teach Christian principles to their children, and they are not concerned. We plead with people to heed what they hear and beware of the doctrines of men, and they pay no attention. So many today are following cultic teachers and popular speakers instead of insisting on the truth.

The problem with the church at Laodicea was that they were "lukewarm" and neither cold nor hot; they were just plain indifferent. A problem in the church at Pergamos was that they had those who held the doctrine of Balaam and the

doctrine of the Nicolaitans. Such people need to hear the message of *repentance*. They need to learn to be *zealous* for the truth. We are to "hear what the Spirit" saith. When you hear a sermon, examine the Bible and see if that is what God's Word teaches. Faithful preachers have nothing to fear from examination.

Paul writes, "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim. 6:12). Jude writes, "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). Paul writes, "be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58).

Take time to work—it is the price of success;
Take time to think—it is the source of power;
Take time to play—it is the secret of perpetual youth;
Take time to read—it is the foundation of wisdom;
Take time to worship—it is the highway to reverence;
Take time to be friendly—it is the road to happiness;
Take time to dream—it is hitching our wagon to a star;
Take time to love and be loved—it is the greatest thing in the world.

Deceased

Friends

Friendship is like a garden
Of flowers fine and rare;
It cannot reach perfection
Except through loving care
Then, new and lovely blossoms
With each new day appears;
For friendship, like a garden
Grows in beauty year by year.

Author Unknown

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermons

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

Bible Classes

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes.html>

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Defender

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/defender.html>

Beacon

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/beacon.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Carla Burleson

Bill & Pam Busch

Tim Busch

Phyllis Brantley

Please Remember

September 21

Birthdays and Anniversaries Get-together will be held in the zone room after the afternoon service.

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 37

September 15, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

There is Only One Church

Brad Green

Men have made many claims regarding the church. We have all heard statements like, “One Church is as good as another,” “Attend the Church of your choice,” and “We’re all going to the same place; we’re just taking different roads to get there.” How do these man-made claims compare to what the Bible teaches?

Jesus said He would build only one church (Mat. 16:18). The apostle Paul says there is only “one body,” and that body is the church (Eph. 4:4; 1:22-23). Jesus prayed for His followers, “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us” (John 17:21). The only way to have unity with God and His Son is to obey God’s Word (14:15; 1 John 1:7). Paul, by inspiration, begs

by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment (1 Cor. 1:10).

The only way we can speak the same thing and have the same mind and judgment is by using the same standard—God’s Word.

Those who follow God’s plan of salvation are added by God to the church of Christ (Acts 2:38, 47). After about 3,000 obeyed the Gospel on that first Pentecost after Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection, the Bible says, “all that believed were together, and had all things common” (2:44). In like manner, if we desire to be a member of

the New Testament church, we must follow the same pattern. Sadly, many patterns are being followed among religious people today. Those patterns make them members of some denominational body but not members of the one church we read about in the New Testament and the church for which Jesus died. Now, let us consider the initial statements made by men with what God has to say. Man says, “One Church is as good as another.” God says there is **only one** church (Mat. 16:18; Acts 20:28).

Man says, “Attend the Church of your choice.” God said to attend the worship of only the one church His Son built and purchased with His blood (Mat. 16:18; Acts 20:28). Man says, “We’re all going to the same place; we’re just taking different roads.” God says there is only **one** way to Him (John 14:6), and those different roads lead to destruction (Mat. 7:13-14). The New Testament church can be recognized. The church of Christ has no creed but the Bible and has only one Head, Jesus Christ.

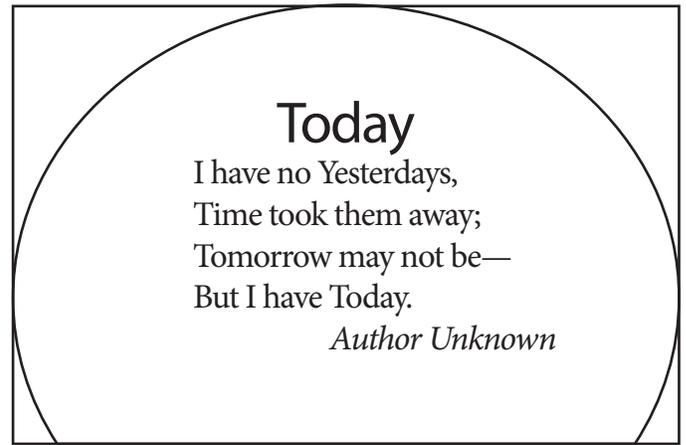
The one church worships in spirit and truth (John 4:24)—singing without mechanical instruments of music (Eph. 5:19), praying to the Father through Christ (1 The. 5:17), teaching and preaching (2 Tim. 4:2), partaking the Lord’s supper (Acts 20:7), and giving (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

The one church is overseen by elders, where men are qualified (1 Tim. 3:1-7), and there are no state or national headquarters. The one church

has no conventions or assemblies larger than the local congregation.

The one church preaches the same Gospel preached in the first century—hear (Rom. 10:17), believe (Heb. 11:6), repent (Acts 2:38), confess (8:37), be baptized to have past sins forgiven (2:38), and live faithfully unto death (Rev. 2:10; 1 John 1:6-9). If we follow **God's** pattern, we can **know** we are in His church and pleasing unto Him.

Lenoir City, TN



Concern for the Growth of Others

Doug Post

While Jesus predicted Peter would deny Him three times, He also predicted that Peter would rise above his betrayal of Christ. Note our Lord's words, "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:32). Having godly sorrow, Peter repented of his betrayal of Jesus (2 Cor. 7:10).

Although Peter committed an unspeakable sin against Jesus, his faith did not fail. Just as Jesus knew Judas would produce an *ungodly sorrow* that would **not** lead to repentance, He knew Peter's faith would produce *godly sorrow*, **leading** to repentance. In other words, Jesus knew Peter's faith would not fail and that he would go on to strengthen His brethren. Peter's newfound strength enabled him to impart strength to his fellow disciples. Therefore, his strength was not merely for his benefit, which is also true with us. Our strength and faith are to be used to help others. It is not enough for each of us to grow personally; we must also be concerned about whether our brothers and sisters are growing as well.

The body grows and does what God intended it to do when the members of the church grow together, each helping the other to develop and mature in the work. Christianity is not a thing

that is done *solo*, with each person having only a private relationship with God. We must take an active part in the spiritual progress of those to whom the blood of Christ connects us.

We probably underestimate how much influence we have on one another. Our example probably does far more than we realize to either encourage or discourage those around us. We need to make sure our example leads our fellow Christians on the upward path of growth. **And beyond example, we need to engage in teaching, admonishing, and prayer on behalf of our brethren in the Lord.**

As we go about our various activities this week, would it not be beneficial for us to reflect on the question of how we can edify one another? Would it not be beneficial for our congregation if we devoted time to considering how we can contribute to the health and growth of our fellow Christians? Let us make this a week of growth—not just growth personally, but the kind of growth that comes from genuine mutual concern and help. And let us study with our children how the church is a relationship of mutual edification. Let us encourage one another so we can impact those outside of Christ.

Irving, TX

These Perilous Times

Johnny Ramsey

In an age when men's thoughts turn more and more away from God, we must stand firm and fast for spiritual landmarks that dare not be moved. In a time when the Bible is seldom consulted, we must hearken back to the precious precepts of God's sacred counsel. In a day of crumbling foundations in human ethics, members of the Lord's church need to be honest in every facet of life, including paying debts! In parental and juvenile delinquency moments, the world's crying need is a home that honors God and develops children for loyal service in the kingdom of Christ. In a chaotic, misspent, universal upheaval, followers of the Prince of Peace must remain constant in devotion to the Captain of our salvation, even Jesus! When society condones rampant unbridled sensuality, we must ever be purer in heart and motivation. When immodesty and obscenity abound, the people of God must be distinctively different. Two notable New Testament passages precisely say what we have in mind. Philippians 2:15 states:

That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.

Titus 2:12 states, "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."

The greatest challenge on earth is to live godly in an ungodly age. These perilous times demand Christian living and heavenly goals. Let us begin anew the devotion necessary for the task before us. Indeed, "Our citizenship is in heaven" (Phi. 3:20).

The responsibilities of citizenship are as follows. (1) The spirit of humility and service. Jesus came to serve and not to be served. He taught that "the greatest among you shall be the servant" (Mat. 23:11). He "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38).

We claim to follow Him. But if only a handful out of each congregation does all the personal evangelism, such a claim is rather hollow, to say the least. Recently, we had 600 present for Sunday morning worship and 40 present for Monday night visitation. That is about par for the course! Who said the restoration was over?

(2) The priesthood of all Christians. Each member of the Lord's body is in the royal priesthood (1 Pet. 2:9). We are a kingdom of priests unto God (Rev. 1:6). There was no clergy-laity system in the first century. Today, a preacher's prayers are no more powerful than other brethren! Our incessant elevation of preachers leads us nearer to Rome and farther from heaven.

(3) Bible knowledge. So much of our plea is based directly on the Scriptures (1 Pet. 4:11) that it ill behooves us to know less than all it says. In the first century, members "went everywhere preaching the Word." Daily, in public and private, the Truth was proclaimed (Acts 5:42). They swarmed the earth like bees; they stormed the world as a mighty army. They knew the message when mankind said, "Tell us the story of the Cross." Indeed, herein, we need to do some restoring.

Deceased

When as a child I laughed and wept, time crept;
When as a youth I laughed and talked, time walked;
When I became a full-grown man, time ran;
When older still I daily grew, time flew;
Soon I shall find in traveling on, time gone.

Author Unknown

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermons

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

Bible Classes

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes.html>

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Defender

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/defender.html>

Beacon

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/beacon.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Carla Bureson

Bill & Pam Busch

Tim Busch

Phyllis Brantley

Please Remember

September 21

Birthdays and Anniversaries Get-together will be held in the zone room after the afternoon service.

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 38

September 22, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

Christ's Law Is a Blessing

Doug Post

Many in the religious world attempt to divorce God from law. Such a desire stems from a disdain for commandment-keeping. It is impossible, however, to separate God from law. The laws of nature, which govern the seasons, the movement of planets, and the universe, were spoken into existence by God (Psa. 33:6-9). The law of faith (Rom. 3:27-28), which is simply the Gospel (1:16-17), has commandments to keep, and keeping those commandments is necessary for salvation (John 14:15; Heb. 5:8-9).

Keeping commandments is simply obedience to His law or Gospel:

“Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:3—NKJV).

The mountain of the Lord is Mount Zion in Jerusalem. The house of God is the temple in the city of David, Jerusalem, also corresponding to the church: “that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God” (1 Tim. 3:15). Here we also note that the law and the Word of the Lord are the same body of teaching, which contain His ways and His paths. These are His teachings in which we are to walk—a euphemism for living within. When we conform ourselves to Scripture, we are conforming ourselves to God. Conform-

ing means we are living by Scripture, which is how God molds us. Conformity to His Word is following Christ. Following the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2; 1 Cor. 9:21) means obeying the Gospel, which, first, began in Jerusalem on Pentecost following the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

Antinomianism is the idea that no law exists. Such a mindset is rampant in the religious world, rejecting and or opposing His law. Many simply do not want to be constrained by limitations. This manner of thinking leads one to consider law as a curse. True freedom, however, is not defined as the absence of boundaries or limitations. True freedom requires law. By following “the perfect law of liberty” (Jam. 1:25), we can “Stand fast... in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage” (Gal. 5:1).

However, law is a blessing. If there is no law, there is no sin because “sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4). Since “all have sinned” (Rom. 3:23), then law must exist. Without law, chaos reigns. The apostle Paul reminds us that “God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace” (1 Cor. 14:33). If God did not provide man a law by which to adhere, then man would be left to do what they like as Israel of old did that which was “right in his own eyes” (Jud. 21:25). I can think of nothing more chaotic than for every man to determine for himself what is right and what is

wrong. Jeremiah proclaims, “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). But people spurn God’s law by either denying it exists or by acting as if it did not.

Without law, many find themselves claiming to have salvation in ways that are not found in Scripture. The objective standard (Scripture) is replaced with the subjective standard of one’s feelings or “I think so.” It does not matter if you feel you are saved; it matters if you are saved, which, again, is determined by God’s Word—law. When one obeys the Gospel plan of salvation—hear

(Rom. 10:17), believe (Heb. 11:6), repent (Luke 13:3), confess (Acts 8:36), be baptized (2:38), and live faithfully unto death (Rev. 2:10; cf. Col. 1:23)—then one can know they are saved. Jesus says, “If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31-32). Therefore, Christ makes us free (8:36) when we abide in (live by) His Word—law—the Divine standard by which we can measure ourselves (2 Cor. 13:5).

Irving, TX

Chaos to Order / Order to Chaos

Bob Howton

“IN the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). Verse 2 indicates that the Earth was without form and void. What did God do? He spoke into being the Earth and all living creatures as we know them. We can truthfully say God made everything from nothing! Let us note that this magnificent creation was not just left to its own devices, but God set specific rules and regulations in place for all time. Out of chaos, there was order!

God created the land, animals, and man on the sixth day of creation. With ears of faith, we listen as God says, “*It is* not good that the man should be alone” (2:18). Then, with eyes of faith, we look as God passes all of the created beasts, cattle, and fowls before Adam, who gives them a name. (2:19-20). Verse 20 indicates that a suitable help meet was not found for Adam. A veritable implication is embedded within this verse. Since it is stated that “there was not found an help meet for him” (2:20), it naturally follows that someone was looking for someone or something! We know that God is all-knowing, so of truth, He was not looking for anything! Since Adam found no suitable help meet, we can rest assured that there was

no Ape Woman, Female Big Foot, or Evolved Upright Woman to take her place at Adam’s side. Out of this confusion, God brings perfect order! He created lovely Eve, made of man and perfectly suited to his needs.

Let us realize that even before man began to multiply on the Earth, God foresaw the calamity and confusion that man’s multiplying would bring and fixed beforehand rules of order and righteousness to govern His creation. Listen as God says, “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (2:24). Disregarding this divine order, man contrived adultery, lust, incest, divorce, and every sort of ungodly imaginations, among which is homosexuality, cohabitation, and lewdness. So, from “Order to Chaos”!

A periodical that came to my home last week had the headline: “Cohabiting Seniors Should Protect Their Rights!” Cohabiting I have heard about, but Cohabiting Seniors??? I am aghast! Maybe teens, young folks, and the ignorant and unlearned, but Seniors? The article continues: “More and more senior citizens are living together

without getting married. According to U.S. Census data, the number of cohabiting seniors nearly doubled between 1989 and 2000.” Many reasons (excuses) are given, but none of them are Scriptural!

I am reminded of the tale of an old country gentleman who confronted a city slicker who was spouting off about “Just living together as opposed to getting married.” The old farmer listened quietly until the slicker ran out of ideas, but he bristled as the slicker sarcastically asked, “Does everything down on your red-necked farm think you have to get married before you live together?” “No.”

replied the old fellow, “The hogs and the dogs don’t.”

The cited article explained the tax breaks, health care provisions, and other incentives the “Live-in” crowd chooses over righteousness. They have gone from “Order to Chaos”! The Master is clear: “to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband” (1 Cor. 7:2). So! Many in the world now live in rebellion against God’s clear instructions for man and woman! What about “Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil” (Exo. 23:2)?

Deceased

The Power of God’s Word

R. L. Whiteside

There is saving power in the Word. An angel told Cornelius, “Send to Joppa, and fetch Simon, whose surname is Peter; who shall speak unto thee words, whereby thou shalt be saved, thou and all thy house” (Acts 11:13-14). “Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls” (Jam. 1:21). “I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Rom. 1:16).

Of course, no one thinks there is power in the material of which the Bible is made. The power that leads men to Christ is the thoughts, ideas, and

motives presented in the Word of God. There is power in a thought and power in a motive. By using words, men move men, even whole armies and nations. Men’s thoughts have been powerful enough to overthrow kingdoms.

If we want men to act a certain way, we try to fill them with thoughts and motives, tending to lead them in the direction we want them to go. If we can fill people with God’s ideas and thoughts, we will induce them to do God’s will. In this way, God works in people to get them to live different lives. Through the mighty power of the Word, men are drawn to Christ (John 6:44-45).

Deceased

How to Guard Your Lips

1. Open your mouth **wide** at the Throne of Grace.
2. Open it **slowly** in conversation.
3. Open it **thoughtfully** in affliction.
4. Open it **not at all** in repeating the faults of others except where the honor of God and your duty to man require it.

Author Unknown

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermons

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

Bible Classes

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes.html>

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Defender

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/defender.html>

Beacon

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/beacon.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

“Let us make hay while the sun shines” (Miguel de Cervantes). Our time here is limited, and with it our opportunities to act: “For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away” (Jam. 4:14). Before it vanishes, say it, do it, become it, try it, go there, find time—for once time is gone, with it goes the opportunity.

Don't wait until it is too late. God bless.

Tim M. Smith, Deceased

Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Carla Burleson

Bill & Pam Busch

Tim Busch

Phyllis Brantley

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your e-mail address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 39

September 29, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

Religious Deceit

Marvin L. Weir

It does not quite have the right ring, does it? How can something be both *religious* and *deceitful*? There is an ever-growing number of people, both within and without the church, who are emptying themselves of every ounce of integrity to achieve worldly glory and honor. It is an old problem, but we will continue to see more people who prove by their actions that they love “the glory *that is* of men more than the glory *that is* of God” (John 12:43).

Years ago, *The Tennessean* published a report on Sunday, August 22, 1999, about churches that are turning into “name droppers.” These churches “hope to attract new worshipers who are turned off by the word ‘Baptist’ or ‘Presbyterian’ or other old-time church names.” The Rev. Dan Francis said, “We don’t hide it—we just don’t put it out on the front door.” The *Reverend* does a masterful job of indicting himself as lacking in integrity and being full of deceit!

An accurate translation of the above quote is this: “We are a denominational church that follows our denomination’s creed. But you will have to discover that all on your own. We will not make it easy for you to know who we really are.”

It gets more interesting. *The Tennessean* went on to quote the Rev. Mark Norris of River Oaks Community Church in Murfreesboro as saying:

We surveyed folks all over Rutherford County about what they liked and didn’t like about church. Something that came back crystal clear was that people had preconceptions about two church groups—Baptist and Church of Christ. ... In a nutshell, our church stands for find God, follow Christ, and be free to dream.

The Scriptures speak volumes about “religious dreamers,” and none of it is good. The Bible declares:

Behold, I am against them that prophesy lying dreams, saith Jehovah, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their vain boasting; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them; neither do they profit this people at all, saith Jehovah (Jer. 23:32).

There are multitudes of folks today who profess to be religious, who are dreaming all types of dreams that cannot be found in God’s Word. These *dreamers* dream their dreams while steadfastly rejecting a “thus saith the Lord!”

One Southern Baptist Convention spokesman said:

It’s marketing in the best sense of the word... The name on the door isn’t as crucial as the vitality of the worship service itself. Getting the fundamentals right is far more crucial than doing a marketing trick with the sign.

A member who attends the River Oaks Community Church, Linda Priem, says, “The name’s not important—the focus on God is. A person

who attends [here] couldn't care less about the name.”

There are more quotes in the newspaper story that I would like to include in this article, but space constraints prevent it. Let us now give serious thought to this act of **religious deception** that is raging within and without the Lord's church like a prairie wildfire. People say they do not want to hide the name of the church, but they will not put it on the front door. Maybe the name should go on the back door? Perhaps only the janitor or preacher would use those doors!

First, if the name of the church is not on an easily seen sign, on the building, or on the front door, is not deception being used? These people do not want visitors to know their religious affiliation. If they speak the simple truth, they will probably lose a sizable number of those they have **deceitfully attracted**. In Colossians 2:8, Paul says:

Take heed lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

In Mark 7:22, deceit is listed as an evil thing that comes from within one's heart.

Second, finding God and following Christ will not lead to discarding, ignoring, or changing the name given to the church. A follower of Christ will respect the Scriptures and honor sacred matters. Christ is the head of **His** church (Mat. 16:18) which is **His** body (Eph. 1:22-23) that **He** promised to save (5:23). Christ's church was purchased with **His** blood, not the blood of some man (Acts 20:28). There is only **one** body (church) of which Christ is the Head (Eph. 4:4). The “**any name**” will suffice concept of the Lord's church is foreign to New Testament teaching!

Third, Christ did not die for John's Local Diner or Mary's Ice Cream Shop. Why don't churches use the above names if there is nothing

in a name? Remember, that according to a River Oaks Community Church member, the name is not important—“the focus on God is.” Friends, the name is essential as it shows ownership. Whose church is it? It is Christ's church; thus, the designation Church of Christ shows ownership (cf. Rom. 16:16). Denominations were founded by men and glorify their founder with the names they wear. Of names, they say, “It's marketing in the best sense of the word.” The church means nothing more to many than Joe's Pool Parlor. It is simply “worldly economics”: how **many** can we take in, and how **much** can we take out! Now, some churches of Christ have begun to mimic the denominations. They do not want folks to know who they **used** to be! It is fitting that apostate churches have removed “Church of Christ” from their signs, as they are **no longer** His church. It is disgraceful, however, for others to profess to be followers of Christ but are embarrassed and ashamed by the sign that says “Church of Christ.” The Lord Jesus Christ promised to build **His** church (Mat. 16:18), and if a church wears some other name, it goes without saying it does not belong to the Lord!

Please remember that playing “hide and seek” with the name of the church or deleting it altogether from public scrutiny is the height of hypocrisy and religious deceit.

Blossom, TX

★★★★

Goodby, till morning come again,
We part, if part we must, with pain,
But night is short, and hope is sweet,
Faith fills our hearts, and wings our feet;
And so we sing the old refrain,
Goodby, till morning come again.

Author Unknown

★★★★

Our Accounts to God Will Involve Others

Charles Pogue

Every one of us will give an account of himself to God (Rom. 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:10). No one will give an account to God for someone else. Have you ever stopped to think, though, that the account you provide and the succeeding judgment you receive will involve other people?

Husbands are to love their wives (Eph. 5:23). Wives are to submit to their husbands (5:22). Fathers are to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (6:4). Whether I did or did not fulfill my responsibility to my family members will be involved in giving an account of myself to God in the day of judgment.

The great commission is still in effect (Mat. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16). When great persecution arose against the early church and the disciples were scattered abroad they went everywhere preaching the Word (Acts 8:4). Paul instructed Timothy to teach faithful men, who would then teach others (2 Tim. 2:2). Those we have an opportunity to teach in this life, we will give an account of ourselves respecting whether we taught them or failed to teach them.

What kind of example is my life to others? If I live an unrighteous life, and others follow my example. I will give an account for it in judgment. Again, Paul writing to Timothy instructed the young man to let no one despise his youth but to be an example of the believers, or as the ASV says, an example to the believers in his manner of life (1 Tim. 4:12). What if I claim to be a follower of Christ, but live in sin? Others may look at my sinful act and say, "He is a Christian, he does that thing, it must be okay, I'll do it also." I will give an account for that to God.

What about those I have offended or been offended by? Did I ask for forgiveness, or did I discuss with my brother the thing he did that offended me? Jesus said, unless we forgive, we will not be forgiven (Mat. 6:12-15). He further said if

my brother offends me, I am to go and discuss it with him. If he fails to hear, Jesus lays out the balance of the process that is to govern my actions.

What about those who are evil, and I am tempted to engage in their evil works? Paul was stating a self-evident truth when he said evil companions corrupt good morals (1 Cor. 15:33). There are all kinds of ways workers of evil try to trip up the child of God. They will say this thing is not so bad, you have taken all the joy out of your life, or why do you not quit being a stick in the mud, have a little fun. You and I will give an account as to whether we follow good or evil.

Yes, each one of us will give an account of ourselves to God, but we live among other people; how we deal with and react toward them will have a bearing on the account we give of ourselves on the day of judgment. What if today were the end of the world? How would my relationships with my fellow man impact my account to God?

Deceased

We'll never bring the world to Christ, until we take Christ into the world.

We'll never get excited over sowing the seed until we get excited over seeing the need.

We'll never be able to make Christ mean anything to others, until we make Him mean everything to us.

Author Unknown

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermons

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

Bible Classes

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes.html>

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Defender

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/defender.html>

Beacon

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/beacon.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

“Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: Bind them about thy neck; Write them upon the table of thine heart: So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man” (Pro. 3:3-4).

Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Carla Burseson

Bill & Pam Busch

Tim Busch

Phyllis Brantley

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

Send your email address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 40

October 6, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

Divine Devotions

Guy N. Woods

Man is, by nature, a worshiping creature. Students of the sacred writings have long been impressed with this fact and have frequently commented thereon. Wherever man is found, whether among the most elevated of civilizing influences or in the depths of superstition and heathenism, he will be found worshiping some being he considers superior to himself. Anthropologists disagree, touching on the reasons for this characteristic. Some think it is innate, others would attribute it to tradition, while that illusive quality styled **intuition** is assigned by still others. Explain it as one will. The fact remains that this characteristic is pronounced in the human species and must be duly dealt with in any study of man.

An ancient proverb states that a “man is assimilated to the object he worships and can never be superior to it.” This, perhaps more than anything else, explains the vast difference between man in civilization and heathenism. Nature, alone and unaided, whatever its beauties, can never lift man from the state of depravity and make of him such a being as would honor him and glorify his Creator. The utter degradation and debasement that exist among all idol worshipers can be traced to the operation of this principle.

An analysis of the passages in the Scripture containing *worship* will reveal a relatively wide and loose usage of the term. About **sixteen words** are rendered by the one English word *worship*. This word occurs in the English Bible about one hun-

dred ninety times. Ninety-six times, the Hebrew word *shachah* occurs in the Old Testament. It suggests the idea of bowing down, while in the New Testament, the usual word for *worship* is *proskuneo*, occurring fifty-eight times and signifying “to kiss the hand toward.” The leading idea is, therefore, seen to be that of prostration, recognizing the worth or elevated station of another and indulging in acts suggestive of such recognition. This is the origin of our English word *worship*, which, according to Webster, is a contraction of the Old English “worthship”—i.e., recognition of worth in another. It is thus clear that the word *proskuneo*, commonly rendered *worship*, does not imply or require any form of bodily posture to satisfy its requirements. It is used in a figurative sense. In the New Testament, its literal meaning of “kissing the hand toward” has passed into the more metaphorical sense suggested in our word *worship*.

However, it is not enough simply to be conscious of having worshiped. Various types of worship are mentioned in the Scriptures, some of which are expressly stated to be unacceptable to God. It is clear, therefore, that it is impossible to worship God acceptably **accidentally!** Types of worship described as being displeasing to God are:

Vain Worship

When the Pharisees criticized Jesus and His disciples because they refused to follow the tradi-

tional practice of washing hands as a religious rite before they sat down to eat, Jesus said to them:

Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men (Mat. 15:7-9).

It will be seen that these people, thus castigated by our Lord, were worshipping, and worshipping God at that; yet their worship is described as **vain**—i.e., empty, formal, without value. The words “teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” are rendered “observing institutions merely human.” Any act of worship, however acceptable it may be to man with no higher origin than his own authority, is vain. Also forbidden would be the observance of the divine system in an insincere or impure manner and an imperfect or erroneous observance of divine commands. Another type of worship mentioned in the Scriptures as highly unacceptable to God is:

Ignorant Worship

When Paul visited Mars Hill in Athens and saw the superstitious worship characteristic of those benighted idol devotees, he exclaimed:

I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you (Acts 17:22-23).

It will also be noted that the Athenians were worshipping God; despite this, their worship was unacceptable because of **ignorance**. This, where nothing else is said thereon in all the sacred writings, is sufficient to indicate that one cannot expect to worship God acceptably accidentally. Ignorant worship is simply a type of devotion not preceded by an intelligent understanding and appreciation of what God requires. The Scriptures contain the sum of our information touching what pleases Him. Worship, therefore, must be

acceptable to God in the way He has commanded in His Word. All else, however fitting and appropriate it may appear to be to the one offering devotions, is not pleasing in His sight. This is clear from what the apostle says in Colossians 2:20-23 in his discussion of will-worship. The Greek word rendered *will-worship* signifies “worship self-imposed, as distinguished from worship imposed by the Lord.” Any act of worship indulged in as, in the nature of things, deemed suitable by the worshiper without sanction from the Lord is wrong! This, strangely enough, is the one requisite required by those of the world. Why are certain things—such as instrumental music in worship—used? The answer is: It is in keeping with the concepts of the worshiper; it is, in his view, proper; and this, to the average member of denominational churches, is reason enough. Such, however, is within the realm of **will-worship** and, hence, unacceptable.

True worship (John 4:24) consists of (1) worshipping God, (2) worshipping God in spirit, and (3) worshipping God in truth. This alone, of all the types mentioned in the Scriptures, is pleasing in His sight.

Deceased

Misdirected Love

Darkness (John 3:19-20).

The world (1 John 2:15-17; Jam. 4:4; 2 Tim. 4:10).

Money (1 Tim. 6:9-10).

Pleasures (2 Tim. 3:4; 1 Tim. 5:6).

Human praise (John 12:42-43; Mat. 23:5-7).

Preeminence (3 John 9).

Self (2 Tim. 3:2; Rom. 12:3).

Author Unknown

Korban

The one Hebrew word, *Korban*, most often translated as “offering,” generally speaks of the remarkable fact that access to God is gained through the offering. The word appears almost 70 times in this respect. The New Testament counterpart, the Greek word *prosphero*, appears in Hebrews 19 times, referring to the sacrificial sense.

Hebrews 9:14 tells us that Jesus Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice without blemish, and verse 28 says, “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.” He is the way to God.

Author Unknown

Congregational Singing

Why sing? Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 inform us that singing was used by the first century Christians. Singing is a requirement for acceptable worship of God. There is no argument there, but there is still the question, “Why sing?” Why would the Lord want mankind to sing? The following are some possible thoughts concerning why singing was specified.

Singing Unifies

Years ago, prisoners were used to maneuver great ships at sea. Often, these men would sing to unify their efforts. Soldiers have used songs to unify their marching efforts. In this country, people from all walks of life are united in mind and spirit by singing the national anthem. It is difficult, if not impossible, to sing from the heart with those we do not like. Singing unifies a group. The Lord’s body must be unified!

Singing Excites the Heart

In the secular world, songs bring feelings of love, hate, happiness, remorse, etc. Singing about Christ’s love for us brings peace to our minds. Singing about His death brings remorse and guilt. Some hymns remind us of the brevity of life and others of the amount of work to be done. Singing should excite our hearts and encourage us to go forward in living a Christ-centered life.

Singing Teaches

How did you learn your ABCs? How did you learn the books of the Bible? How did you learn

the names of the twelve apostles? Some of us were taught by singing songs containing that information. Could someone visit our assembly and learn about Christ by listening to us sing? I would hope so. Could he learn about Christian living by singing the words to certain hymns? I believe so. What about the Lord’s Supper, prayer, the Gospel, or Heaven? Could we teach others while singing songs about these subjects? Surely, the answer is yes. Even though there is time in our assembly for a preacher to teach, great lessons are taught during the time we spend singing together.

Singing Edifies

People in the advertising business use lyrics put to a jingle to persuade the listeners. Have you ever wanted to buy something because an advertisement enticed you with a catchy song? Many hymns strengthen us and encourage us to act inwardly in our hearts and minds and outwardly in our daily activities. We need to edify each other. Singing in our assembly is one way to do that. Singing as a congregation benefits Christians today just as it did in the first century. Let us sing for unity. Let us sing to excite our hearts and the hearts of those who hear our singing. Let us sing to teach and edify. Let us be involved in the song service just as we are when we address God in prayer or commune together.

Author Unknown

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermons

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

Bible Classes

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes.html>

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Defender

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/defender.html>

Beacon

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/beacon.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Carla Burlison

Bill & Pam Busch

Please Remember

October 19

Birthdays and Anniversaries Get-together will be held in the zone room after the afternoon service.

October 29

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

Defender and Beacon

Available Via Email

Send your email address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 41

October 13, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

Atheistic Proselytizing on the Internet

Lee Moses

Atheists have become much more publicly militant and belligerent in recent years. They have taken to the Internet as their bullying playground. They have found the Internet a favorable medium to spew out godless vitriol and have had some success converting people to their cause by so doing. They do not typically gain their Internet converts through logical reasoning. While holding a public debate, one renowned Internet atheist admitted to the audience, “My job is to confuse the [expletive] out of you.” This seems to be a focus of their online approach as well—simply to confuse people, rather than by proving their view is correct.

The primary way online atheists confuse people is by throwing out lies and half-truths. Of course, a half-truth is a whole lie, but sometimes they give added credence to those lies by throwing in an element of truth. A commonly perpetuated Internet lie is that “radical (i.e., actual, Bible-believing) Christians are just as dangerous as radical Muslims.” And as *proof*, they will cite Timothy McVeigh and Anders Behring Breivik as examples of Christian terrorists. McVeigh was guilty of killing 168 people when he bombed the Oklahoma City federal building in 1995; Breivik killed eight people in a bombing in Oslo, Norway, and then murdered 69 more in a mass shooting at a nearby youth camp. However, neither of them was a Christian, even in the denominational sense, much

less the Biblical sense. Consider this quote: “It is essential that science take an undisputed precedence over biblical teachings.” Does this sound like something a Christian would say? Yet, it is a direct quote from Anders Breivik. What about this quote? “Science is my god”—direct from the lips of Timothy McVeigh. Their views were not remotely Christian, and certainly the Bible did not influence their actions; contrary to Muslim terrorists, who act in direct obedience to the teachings of their supposed “holy book.”

Internet atheists also like to throw out the Crusades as evidence of the supposed atrocity of Christianity. Unlike McVeigh and Breivik, the Crusades were indeed perpetrated by those at least **professing** an allegiance to Christianity. However, this fails to prove anything flawed in the character of true Christianity. The New Testament, the Christian’s constitution, nowhere authorizes waging physical warfare against a group of people simply because they are not Christians (the causes of the Crusades were more complex than this, but that is a story for another day). Conversely, the New Testament states explicitly, “The weapons of our warfare *are not* carnal” (2 Cor. 10:4). Jesus **rebuked** Peter when he attempted to defend Christ’s Cause with a literal sword (Mat. 26:51-53). The fact that certain people professing Christianity have acted immorally proves nothing—one must establish that the **teachings** of Christianity (the

New Testament) compel people to act immorally. And this no atheist can do, but that will not stop atheists from attempting to cloud the air with such accusations.

Remember, an atheist has no reason to see himself as having a moral obligation to tell the truth. The more a lie is repeated, the more it seems to be the truth in people's minds. Hitler's Minister of Propaganda is credited with saying, "If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it," and Internet atheists seem to adhere closely to this maxim.

And as might be expected with bullies, Internet atheists also attempt to win arguments and proselytes through name-calling. One of their favorite epithets is "flat-earth creationists," as if to believe in creation were equivalent to believing in a flat earth. They cast any number of insults in such a way as to insinuate that believing in the Bible renders one less intelligent or incapable of thinking for oneself. However, it does no such thing. One who blinds his mind to the abundant evidence for God is the one who

dulls and darkens his intellect (Rom. 1:19-22). "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge" (Pro. 1:7); all knowledge to be obtained rests on this most fundamental awareness.

The Christian, who ventures online, needs to understand that online inhabitants are typically not interested in a fair exchange of ideas. That goes at least double for atheist trolls who lurk online to seduce the innocent. Seeking to engage and reason with atheistic proselytizers online is typically a waste of time. This does not mean that one should never consider:

In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And *that* they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will (2 Tim. 2:25-26).

However, if atheists encountered online continue to "oppose themselves and blaspheme," you need to be ready to move along to better soil and a better environment for a Christian soul to dwell (cf. Acts 18:6).

Union City, TN

Interesting Facts About the Bible

The Bible is, in fact, a library of sixty-six books, thirty-nine in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New. In all, three-quarters of a million verses are spelled with three and a half million letters. While its size to some is forbidding, only seventy hours and forty minutes are required to read it from cover to cover at an average rate of speed. The shortest chapter is Psalm 117, and the longest is Psalm 119. The shortest verse is John 11:35 [in English], revealing the heart of God, "Jesus wept." Psalm 119 is literally a Bible in itself, each section beginning successively with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and, in almost every verse of the one hundred seventy-six (twenty-two sections of eight

verses each) emphasizing some aspect of the Scriptures as the very Word of God.

A comparison of the opening and closing chapters of the Bible will reveal a marvelous symmetry. Note the following: The Garden of Eden and the Garden of God; the original creation and the new creation; Paradise lost, and Paradise regained; a promised redemption and an accomplished redemption; a tree that was not to be touched and a tree whose leaves were for the healing of the nations; the devil victorious and the devil vanquished; the entrance of sorrow, sin, and death, and the entrance of life where "there shall be no more death...nor crying"; man driven from the presence of God and man welcomed into the bosom of God; the

first words addressed by man to God, “I was afraid, and hid myself” and the last words addressed by man to God, “Even so come, Lord Jesus.” The Old Testament closes in the last paragraph with a curse, and the New Testament with grace.

Only God could have fit together many parts of the structure. Genesis contains the seed plot of the later complete revelation; Isaiah is the whole Bible in miniature; Leviticus in the Old Testament presents the types and figures of the atonement that are to be interpreted centuries later in Hebrews; Jesus Himself asserts that in the Old Testament the face of Christ may be seen, “Search the Scriptures,...for these are they that testify of me”; while John 3:16 presents the message of the divine revelation in a single verse. When Jesus, on the road to Emmaus, “beginning at Moses and all the prophets” to expound the Scriptures concerning Himself (Luke 24:27), He could cite Moses in 1500 BC (Gen. 3:15); the Psalmist, 1000 BC (Psa. 22); and the prophet, 700 BC (Isa. 7:14).

The Bible is a book preeminently of prophecy, and while much of it has already been fulfilled and can be authenticated, there has never been one proven prophecy of error. This is the more remarkable when you consider that Noah, in

forty words, briefly forecasted the whole course of human history (Gen. 9:25-27); Moses outlined the entire history of Israel; the prophets of Israel described the doom of the various nations they touched in their national life, while as early as Genesis 3:15 the coming of the Redeemer was described. But notice these detailed and minute predictions concerning Christ which have already been fulfilled to the letter: His rejection (Psa. 118), His betrayal for thirty pieces of silver (Zec. 11), the parting of His garments (Psa. 22), the taunts of His enemies that He would be given vinegar (Psa. 69), His forsaken cry (Psa. 22), the smitten Shepherd (Zec. 13), suffering at the hands of men (Isa. 50:6), entering Jerusalem (Zec. 9:9), and this one, His return to the Father (the Ancient of Days) in glory (Dan. 7:13).

Finally, the Bible is an eminently practical and personal book. Its precepts are not to be bound on the forehead but buried within the heart. We never know the true purpose or power of the Scriptures until we can say with David, “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee,” or with Jeremiah, “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.”

Author Unknown

Most of us face many health, financial, family, or other serious problems at some point in life. Recently, it seems that “storm clouds” have encircled many because of lost jobs, poor health, the economic situation in our country, the war in Ukraine, and the recent worldwide pandemic. It would be easy to begin counting our problems instead of our blessings. Life is precious. It was given to each of us by God. He understands that we face difficulties in this short sojourn on earth. Yet, trials and suffering are a part of life itself, brought on by the sin in the world since Adam and Eve.

There may be times when we feel we are all alone and overcome by life’s difficulties. God did not promise to take away our troubles, but He did promise that the Lord would never leave nor forsake us (Heb. 13:5). When trials surround us, He offers comfort and hope through His Word (Rom. 15:4). He gives us peace through Christ (John 16:4; Phi. 4:7). If we are in Christ, then nothing can separate us from God’s love (Rom. 8:35-39). **When the storm of life comes our way**, let us call to mind the words of the apostle Peter, “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (1 Pet. 5:7).

Author Unknown

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermons

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

Bible Classes

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes.html>

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Defender

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/defender.html>

Beacon

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/beacon.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via Email

Send your email address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Carla Burlison

Bill & Pam Busch

Please Remember

October 19

Birthdays and Anniversaries Get-together will be held in the zone room after the afternoon service.

October 29

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

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 42

October 20, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

No One Had to Be a Prophet to See This Coming

Gary W. Summers

When secular humanists began redefining *family*, they did so with one goal in mind, and that was to allow for two adults of the same gender to be able to adopt children (since they obviously cannot have any of their own). It took a few years, but sure enough, the Supreme Court decided that two homosexuals could be married and granted family status. When that occurred, many of us predicted that it would not be long until polygamy would be sanctioned because once the definition of a *family* begins to be altered, there is no stopping point. In other words, when it ceases being one male and one female, plus children born to them or adopted, then almost every combination becomes a consideration—not just the ludicrous formation of two of the same gender.

The time has come already—in Canada. According to a post by Ken Ham of “Answers in Genesis,” that nation has just recognized two men and one woman as the parents of one child on the infant’s birth certificate. Although they are not legally married, they are still in a “relationship” together. Sadly, no one needed to be a prophet to see this action coming. How did “homosexual marriages” come to be? Homosexuals complained that they had no legal status, so homosexual *unions* were allowed, but eventually, that did not suffice; nothing would do but to have legitimate *marriages*. The process is simply repeating itself.

Those in “polyamorous” (many loves) relationships will whine that they have no legal standing, and eventually, polygamy will become legal, just as predicted.

The judge who wrote the decision said, “Society is continually changing, and family structures are changing along with it.” Really? Does not this imply that society is the final arbiter of right and wrong—and that there is no objective moral standard? So, if drug cartels take over Canada and force through a law that drug dealers cannot be incarcerated, will that be alright? What if the powers that be decided that too much money is wasted on prolonging the lives of their elderly citizens? Will they open “Moving On” centers to hasten the departures of seniors? What if the culture desires that solution?

While the judge said his law was in the child’s best interest, such is clearly not the case. Only one of the men is the father, and the child inherits his genetic code. Also, this will be a roadblock to genealogical research—especially if a court decides to outlaw a DNA test to find out who the biological father is. How many generations will it take—how many centuries must roll by—how many people must suffer from subjectivism before mankind realizes that God knew what He was doing when He designed the family (Jud. 21:25)?

Winter Park, FL

Lot's Wife

Fred E. Dennis

Jesus said to those who were contemporaneous with Him, "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke 17:32). There must be reasons why we should remember that woman. Why single out Lot's wife and tell us to remember her? In this sinful age in which we are living, we do well when we remember Lot and his wife.

The Bible is full of danger signals. Lot's wife is one of these. Abraham and Lot were agreeing nicely. Both were rich. Both had great flocks and herds. Finally, the herdsmen fell out among themselves. Abraham learned about this and sent for his nephew. The old patriarch said to Lot, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we *be* brethren" (Gen. 13:8). Abraham was a man of peace. He seemed to think that the very fact that men were brethren ought to be enough to keep down strife between them. And so it ought.

He made a magnanimous offer to Lot, saying:
Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left (13:9).

That was a big offer. It takes a big man to make a big offer. Abraham was older and wiser than Lot. How much better it would have been for Lot to have allowed Abraham to make the decision! But he had his eyes too much on the things of this world. In his anxiety to secure fine pastures for his flocks and herds, he all but forgot his girls. Girls and boys have souls to save. Flocks and herds do not.

And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and

Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD (13:10).

This appealed to Lot. He chose this plain of Jordan. But the book very significantly says: "And pitched his tent toward Sodom" (13:12). What a sad *pitch* that was! And how many others have done the same thing! How many have forgotten God in their mad rush after wealth, social prestige, political ambitions, educational attainments, etc.! Had Lot's wife been as wise as a mother ought to be, she would have advised Lot to move as far from Sodom and Gomorrah as possible. It was a good place for cattle, but a poor place for girls.

Could poor Lot have seen a little way into the distance and could have seen how hard it would be to extricate himself from this wicked environment, never would he have made the choice he did. So, it has been with millions of others. Our shortsightedness is pitiful.

"But the men of Sodom *were* wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly" (13:13). They got no better but instead grew worse. Finally, the Almighty decreed that these cities should be destroyed from the face of the earth. Faithful Abraham went to his knees, pleading on behalf of these cities for the sake of Lot and his loved ones. What a spirit to manifest! In his petitions to God, Abraham said:

Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that *are* therein? (18:23-24).

God assured him that if there were fifty righteous within the city, He would spare the city for their sake. Abraham knew the wickedness of the place. He kept pleading for the city until he had the promise of the Lord that if there were ten righteous in the town, He would spare the city.

Ten righteous people would have been the physical salvation of Sodom and Gomorrah. But they were not to be found. Angels warned Lot to flee from the city, but his wicked sons-in-law mocked him. Lot's mistake had been made in coming into this wicked place, in the first place, with those girls of his. They had married the wicked Sodomites. What a mistake it is for a pure Christian girl or boy to marry a wicked and sinful person! Finally, the angels laid hands on Lot, his wife, and their two daughters and brought them out of the city, commanding them:

Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed (19:17).

But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt (19:26).

And this is the last time that she ever disobeyed God! You know there will come a last time.

Jesus told somebody to remember this woman. There are so many things that we ought to learn and remember from her. We ought to be able to see that the things this world has to offer do not compensate for the loss of a soul. We ought to put first things first. The salvation of our souls and the souls of others ought to be our first consideration. Do not allow business, pleasure, or anything else to come before our duty to God. We should be able to see the danger of putting our children in wicked environments and under the influence of the ungodly. One of the most dangerous things is to marry outside of the family of God. Thanks be to God; it has worked out many times to the salvation of the one who was not a Christian. And while this is true, numberless are the times when it works the other way. Just think of the eternal consequences involved! These dangerous alliances will influence unborn generations.

Then we should learn from Lot's wife that when we have been delivered from the pollu-

The Town of Don't-You-Worry

There's a town called Don't-You-Worry,
On the banks of River Smile,
Where the Cheer-up and Be Happy
Blossom sweetly all the while.
Where the Never-Grumble flower
Blooms beside the fragrant Try,
And the Ne'er-Give-Up and Patience
Point their faces to the sky.

Author Unknown

The Satisfying Portion

'Tis religion that can give
Sweetest comfort while we live,
'Tis religion must supply
Solid comfort when we die,
After death, its joys will be
Lasting as eternity;
Be the living God my Friend,
Then my joys shall never end.

Author Unknown

tions of this world, we must not look back. Lot, his wife, and the girls were on their way to safety, but she looked back. Christians have escaped the pollutions of this world and are on their way to heaven, but heaven will not be reached if we look back to the sinful things of this world. Jesus said, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). Many are looking back, some have gone back, and such are not fit for the kingdom of God.

"Remember Lot's wife."

Deceased

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermons

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

Bible Classes

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes.html>

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Defender

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/defender.html>

Beacon

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/beacon.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via Email

Send your email address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Carla Burlison

Bill & Pam Busch

Please Remember

October 29

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

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 43

October 27, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

Life from Luke

J. Noel Merideth

The third Gospel account bears the title “The Gospel According to Saint Luke” in our Bible. The Muratorian Fragment attributes the book to Luke, as well as to Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and many others. The books of Luke and Acts are written by the same author, Luke, and are intended to be read together.

The name Luke is mentioned three times in the New Testament. We read of Luke “the beloved physician” (Col. 4:14), “only Luke is with me” (2 Tim. 4:11), and Philemon 24 where Luke is mentioned among Paul’s “fellow laborers.” He is listed in Colossians in the section for Gentiles. An early tradition in Eusebius and Jerome made him a native of Antioch in Syria, but this is not certain. It has been suggested that Titus was Luke’s brother to account for the absence of their names in Acts, but this is not certain either. One tradition says that Luke was a painter, but this is a late and uncertain matter.

Luke appears in history for the first time in Paul’s second missionary journey, while Paul was in Troas. This marks the beginning of the “we” sections in Acts. He traveled with the company to Philippi and stayed until Paul’s return to the same city during his third missionary journey, and he seems to have remained with Paul thereafter.

The books of Luke and Acts were written to Theophilus. We have no more data on Theophilus. The title “most excellent” might

refer to a person who occupied a prominent position in the state or society.

The purpose of the book is to “set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed” among Christians. Luke, having had a “perfect understanding” of all things from the very first, wrote “in order” that Theophilus might “know the certainty of those things” wherein he had been instructed (Luke 1:1-4). The book of Luke was a “treatise” of “all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up” (Acts 1:1-2).

Luke presents Christ for all mankind, writing primarily for Gentiles. He traces the Savior’s lineage beyond Abraham to Adam. Luke reports the words of Simeon, who said of the baby Jesus, that he was not only “the glory of thy people Israel” but also “a light to lighten the Gentiles.” Luke reports Jesus’ words, “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

A brief, broad outline of the book of Luke follows.

- I. The preface (1:1-4)
- II. The Birth and Infancy Narratives (1:5–2:52)
- III. The Galilean Ministry (3:1–9:50)
- IV. The Journey to Jerusalem through Samaria (9:51–19:48)
- V. The Jerusalem Ministry (20-21)
- VI. The Passion and Resurrection (22-24)

Luke relates the Biblical events in Palestine to the Roman historical situation. He connects the events recorded to the reigns of the Roman emperors (2:1; 3:1).

The book of Luke presents praise and thanksgiving. There is the praise of Mary when she went to visit Elisabeth (1:46-55), the words spoken by Zacharias at the birth of John (1:67-79), and the words of Simeon at the presentation of the infant Jesus (2:28-32). The praise of the heavenly host to the shepherds at the birth of

Jesus is familiar to us all: “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, Good will toward men” (2:14). The book of Luke contains repeated references to “glorifying,” “praising,” or “blessing” God. *Rejoice* and *joy* appear more often than in the other accounts. *Joy* relates to salvation (15:7, 10, 22-24; 19:6; cf. Acts 8:39).

Luke emphasizes that the salvation offered by Christ is available to all. All four writers quote from Isaiah 40:3-5, but only Luke extends the quotation to include the announcement that “all flesh shall see the salvation of God.” Luke reports God’s grace toward non-Israelites in referring to the sending of Elijah to the Gentile widow of Zarephath and the cleansing of Naaman the Syrian leper (Luke 4:25-28). Luke makes it clear that admission into the kingdom of God is open to all—Jews and Gentiles. Christ Himself declared that He came “to seek and to save that which was lost” (19:10) and directed, in the Great Commission, that “repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations” (24:47).

Luke, alone, records the parables of The Two Debtors, The Good Samaritan, The Lost Piece of Silver, The Prodigal Son, The Rich Man and Lazarus [this is a historical account], and The Pharisee and the Publican. He only tells of the miracles of the Ten Lepers and the Miraculous Draught of Fishes. *Grace* occurs eight times, “to tell glad tidings” ten times, and the words *saviour* and *salvation* fourteen times.

The book presents interesting information about people—men, women, and children. The writer vividly depicts the godly priest Zacharias (1:5-79), the short Zacchaeus (19:1-10), Cleopas and his companion on the Emmaus road (24:13-33), the preaching of John the Baptist (3:3-22), and the sinless life of Jesus Christ. The character of Mary, Jesus’ mother, is treated more fully in Luke. Elisabeth the mother of John (1:5-57), Anna the prophetess (2:36-38), the company of women that assisted Jesus (8:2-3), the women

But I’m Still Here

H. L. Gradowith (Tim Smith)

I may not be long in this old world below,
Though just when He will call me, I do not know;
But whenever it is—it’s all right by me:
For I’m ready the face of my Lord to see.

The years have taken their toll—I’m wearing out,
The end is drawing near, of this I’ve no doubt;
Most of my companions have already gone...
So I’m sure that my time here is nearly done.

The nighttime that once brought to me sweet
repose,
Now lingers so long and the day swiftly goes;
I have no one my many troubles to share:
For, gone are the many friends who used to care.
How I miss their voices and the things we’d do,
With them each moment seemed refreshing
and new...

Now gone are the old times and friends I held
dear,
And I’m left to wonder just why I’m still here.

I may not be long in this old world below,
Though just when He will call me, I do not know;
But whenever it is—it’s all right by me:
For I’m ready the face of my Lord to see.

Deceased

who mourned His execution (23:27-28), and the women who were present at the cross and the tomb (23:55-56; 24:1-11) were all noted. We also learn about Anna (2:36), the widow of Nain (7:11), the repentant sinful women in the house of Simon the Pharisee (7:36), Martha and Mary of Bethany whose hospitality Jesus enjoyed (10:38), and the hunchbacked woman healed in the synagogue (13:10). Only Luke describes Jesus' visit to Jerusalem when He was twelve years old. On that trip, He was lost from His parents for three days, and when they found Him, He was in the temple hearing the doctors of the law and asking them questions. His sublime statement to His parents was, "wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (2:49).

Luke mentions nine occasions when Jesus prayed, seven of which are found only in Luke. Luke mentions Jesus in prayer (1) at His baptism (3:21-22), (2) after a day of miracles (5:16), (3) before choosing the twelve (6:12), (4) before Peter's confession and foretelling His death (9:18-22), (5) at the transfiguration (9:29), (6) at the return of the seventy (10:17-21), (7) before teaching the disciples how to pray (11:1), (8) in Gethsemane (22:39-46), and (9) on the cross (23:34, 46).

Luke demonstrates that the righteous can be found among the poor. It is Luke who preserves the account of the rich man and Lazarus, as well as the story of the foolish rich farmer. The mere possession of riches is not condemned, for in Luke we find wealthy people like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathaea who buried Jesus' body. There should not be strife among Jesus' followers about who is the greatest. The road to genuine greatness lies in serving (22:24-30).

Luke's use of medical language, like that of a physician, is often noted, along with his terms related to boats and the sea. The book of Luke is longer than the other accounts of Jesus' life. About one-third of the events recorded in it are not found in the other books. It mentions about twenty miracles of Jesus, six of which are not mentioned in the others, and it contains about twenty-three parables, eighteen of which are given only by Luke. The book begins with a priest of the Old Dispensation, who offered incense in the Temple, and ends with the disciples who would lead in the New Dispensation waiting in the temple, praising and blessing God. The book of Acts picks up the narrative and tells of the establishment of the church and the spread of the Gospel throughout the world.

Deceased

What God Had Done with Them

H. M. Phillips

Paul and Barnabas were reporting what God had done with them. God can do a great deal now with men if they will let him. Most people do not have the Lord in their reports, but it is what they have done. Some have done a great deal in exciting people into a form of obedience, having members to come forward saying they want to live better. I feel sure all must want to do so, but it is not necessary to go to the front and have a preacher to tell the public about it. If

you have committed some public sin, then you need to publicly confess; otherwise not. A lot of people seem to want to do something with God instead of letting Him do something with them. Do not put the Lord and His Word in the background and preach yourself and your words but leave self out; God is much better. You need to preach the Word, and God will be using you. Let God do with you.

Deceased

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermons

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

Bible Classes

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes.html>

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Defender

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/defender.html>

Beacon

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/beacon.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

“The Christian home is the Master’s workshop where the process of character molding are silently, lovingly, faithfully, and successfully carried on.”

Lord Houghton

Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Carla Burleson

Bill & Pam Busch

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Defender and Beacon

Available Via Email

Send your email address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 44

November 3, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

The Sinfulness of Complaining

John Chowning

And *when* the people complained, it displeased the LORD: and the LORD heard *it*; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed *them that were* in the uttermost parts of the camp. And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the LORD, the fire was quenched. And he called the name of the place Taberah: because the fire of the LORD burnt among them. And the mixt multitude that *was* among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: But now our soul *is* dried away: *there is* nothing at all, beside this manna, *before* our eyes. And the manna *was* as coriander seed, and the colour thereof as the colour of bdellium. *And* the people went about, and gathered *it*, and ground *it* in mills, or beat *it* in a mortar, and baked *it* in pans, and made cakes of it: and the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil. And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it. Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent: and the anger of the LORD was kindled greatly; Moses also was displeased (Num. 11:1-10).

In some recent reading on Numbers 11, I came across an excellent essay by Dennis Prager (a practicing Jew) titled “Constant Complaining

is a Moral Defect.” To make his case, he gave the following eight reasons and comments:

1. Constant complaining is a sign of ingratitude and unhappiness, one which feeds on itself, causing yet more complaining and more unhappiness.
2. Complaining is contagious. It spreads like a virus against which very few people have immunity. When one is with a complainer, it is very tempting to agree with the person and then chime in with one’s own complaints.
3. Constant complaining ruins relationships. Ask anyone married to a constant complainer or the parents of a constantly complaining son or daughter. Eventually, most people try to minimize contact with constant complainers.
4. Constant complainers see themselves as victims. A victim mentality often leads people to either engage in bad behavior or support like-minded people who engage in bad behavior. Almost every violent criminal sees himself as a victim. Almost every violent national or ideological group is rooted in victimhood.
5. Constant complaining prevents people from improving their lives. By definition, constant complaining means the complainer holds others—individually and/or collectively—responsible for the com-

plainer's problems. They will therefore not accept responsibility for any of their problems and for the need to work on themselves.

6. Constant complainers romanticize either the past (as the Israelites did with their enslavement in Egypt in Numbers 11:5) or the future (that is why utopianism is another source of evil, as it makes people incapable of appreciating the good, they do have). Good and psychologically healthy people attempt to enjoy the world in which they live (while attempting to improve it).
7. From a religious perspective, constant complaining is a denial of God's goodness and ultimately a rejection of God. Constant complaining means the world that God has made is defective. When the Israelites complained their lives were better in Egypt, they were saying God should not have liberated them.
8. The religious complainer is a living advertisement for atheism. Grateful and happy religious people, on the other hand, are living arguments for God and religion.

Prager concludes by adding the following, It has been my experience that many people with the most to complain about rarely complain, and many of those with the least to complain about complain the most. At the present time, in our feelings-based, victimhood-encouraging soci-

ety, a commonly offered response to complainers is to say, "I feel your pain," and little more.

That is not the Torah's response. From the Torah's perspective, the best response to those who complain is to offer them empathy but also to challenge them to stop viewing themselves as victims: to be grateful for the blessings they have and to undertake actions necessary to improve their lives. For those of us who use the Bible...to gain the wisdom necessary to lead a good life, God's contempt for ingratitude and its manifestation in constant complaining is one of the great lessons of the great book (Dennis Prager, *Commentary on Numbers 113-115*).

The apostle Paul wrote,

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life...In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you (Phi. 2:12-16; 1 The. 5:18).

Beware of the sinfulness of complaining.

Cookeville, TN

We Miss You When You're Absent

The problem of faithful attendance perplexes and hounds many a congregation of God's people. It is more of a problem with some congregations than others, but it is indeed a common one. Now, how would you solve that difficulty if the responsibility were yours? Perhaps you would contend that occasional attendance is sufficient, or you might vigorously

preach a sermon or two on the need for faithful attendance. You might bitterly denounce the offender and threaten church discipline. Or, you might just shrug your shoulders and say, "**You'll never get them all to come anyway.**" Below is an article that strikes at the root of this devastating problem. An elder, a man of maturity and wisdom, and a physician wrote it. Read it care-

fully; perhaps you will conclude that absenteeism is more than just “**missing another service.**”

“We are concerned with the church absentee not simply because he misses services but because it is a symptom of a deeper problem—a lack of love for God and their brethren. This member needs not a sermon on being present but on sin and the grace of God. What he needs to be told is not that he just sinned by deliberately missing these services but that he was a sinner, a rebel against God, before he ever heard of a worship service. When he can stand at the

foot of the cross and see a love that reaches even unto death, it will not be necessary to preach to him about attending Bible study and worship services. He also missed out on praising God in song and edifying his brethren. Remember these lines the next time you are tempted to sleep late or go to the lake (or mountains) or catch that TV program, or some malady is used to excuse you while God’s people are worshipping Him. Remember, too, that we miss you when you’re absent.”

Author Unknown

The Importance of Integrity

The term *integrity* has been defined in various ways. Some would say it is the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles. Others would say it is doing the right thing all the time simply because it is the right thing—doing the right thing knowing no one will know whether you did it or not. I want to suggest, based on Scripture, a life of integrity is what should characterize each Christian.

A life of integrity makes us like Jesus. Jesus Christ “went about doing good” (Acts 10:38).

A life of integrity protects our reputation.

In all things showing yourself *to be* a pattern of good works; in doctrine *showing* integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you (Tit. 2:7-8).

A life of integrity gives us the confidence to face eternity.

Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain (Phi. 2:14-16).

A life of integrity strengthens the message we share with others.

Beloved, I beg *you* as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by *your* good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation (1 Pet. 2:11-12).

Doing the right thing—doing what Jesus Christ would do—will have a significant impact on our lives and the lives of others. Are we known as people of integrity?

Author Unknown

From what we learn from God’s dealings with the nations, it can be safely said that no nation falls so long as it serves a purpose in God’s plans. That was anciently, and it is true today. If you are squeamish about denouncing false teachers, read Jeremiah. If you think people are so hardened in sin that they hate you for preaching the Word, read Jeremiah. A careful study of Jeremiah is a good tonic.

R. L. Whiteside, Deceased

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermons

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

Bible Classes

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes.html>

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Defender

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/defender.html>

Beacon

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/beacon.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via Email

Send your email address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Carla Bureson

Bill & Pam Busch

Heather Stark

Please Remember

November 16

Birthdays and Anniversaries Get-together will be held in the zone room after the afternoon service.

November 30

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

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 45

November 10, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

Baptism Is Essential for Salvation

Doug Post

As we read through the New Testament, we see how many Christians converted to Christ through faith and baptism (Mark 16:16). The question we want to answer, however, is whether baptism is essential for salvation. Of course, this question has existed for many centuries.

Whether baptism is essential for salvation has been the greatest issue facing *Christendom* since Gnosticism in the second and third centuries. Why is baptism so controversial? Because it is a matter of “heaven or hell.”

Most of the religious world, claiming to be associated with Christ, rejects the idea of baptism being essential for salvation. Most religious groups believe a person is saved the moment they believe (mental assent) before and without baptism. However, they also teach that those of us who teach the necessity of baptism are adding to the finished work of Christ on the cross. So, we are said to be guilty of perverting the Gospel (cf. Gal. 1:69). Moreover, if baptism is **not** necessary for salvation, then there will be many more souls entering into heaven than not, and those of us who teach the necessity of it are doomed. However, if baptism **is** necessary for salvation, then there will be many more souls condemned for refusing and/or rejecting baptism.

The following is the overwhelming “majority” view of the religious world concerning baptism:

No, water baptism is not necessary for salvation. But you might ask, “If the answer is no, then why are there verses that say things like...baptism that now saves you” (1 Pet. 3:21) and “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins” (Acts 2:38)? These are good questions, and they deserve a good answer so we will look at these verses later. But for now, the reason baptism is not necessary for salvation is that we are justified by faith (Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:8) and not by faith and a ceremony (Rom. 4:1-11).

So, here we see the majority view of how a person is saved—by “faith only” (mental assent). However, the majority view is divided into several other groups.

- Some teach the Holy Spirit, supernaturally, provides the necessary faith as a gift (because they cannot produce said faith on their own due to their inherent human weakness). Once they are given this faith, they are saved that very moment, **before and without baptism**, and can never fall from grace.
- Then some teach that the Spirit must illuminate the mind to understand God’s Word, the Bible, and that they receive their faith through the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). When they do, they are saved that

very moment, **before and without baptism**.

- Still, others teach that when one hears the Gospel message and, through their own will, determination, and volition, accepts and trusts it, then they are saved that very moment, **before and without baptism**.

However, the “minority view” teaches salvation by faith, but **not** by faith only (Jam. 2:19-26). Instead, when one hears the Gospel message, and through his own will, determination, and volition, accepts and trusts it, and then repents of his sins, as well as confessing Jesus as Lord and Savior, and immersed (baptized) in water for the forgiveness sins, **then** one is saved, having obeyed the Lord by making the correct application of His Word.

At the heart of the divide over baptism is one passage: “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). This one passage alone proves baptism is essential for salvation.

Most of the controversy over this passage has to do with the little Greek word, *eis*. This little word means “to or for, in order that, on account of, to obtain, unto, towards.” While having various shades of meaning, the word *eis* always looks forward and is always used **prospectively**. However, to get around the force of this word, as well as the force of the verse, some scholars, while correctly providing the lexical meaning of the word, decided to add another little nuance to its meaning. They put forth the unfounded assertion that *eis* may also look backward or retrospectively. In other words, the word can mean “because of.”

Of course, no evidence was provided for such an assertion, and the Scriptures hardly support such a claim. Every time *eis* is used, it is used prospectively of something. For instance, Paul writes: “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is

made unto salvation” (Rom. 10:10). Here we see “believeth **unto**” (to or for, in order that, on account of, to obtain, unto, towards) righteousness. One does not come to believe because he is already righteous. Instead, one believes **unto** (to or for, in order that, on account of, to obtain, unto, towards) righteousness. Same with “confession.” One does not confess because one is already saved. Rather, one confesses **unto** (to or for, in order that, on account of, to obtain, unto, towards) salvation. Even repentance is said to be **unto** (to or for, in order that, on account of, to obtain, unto, towards) life (Acts 11:18).

Moreover, Matthew writes, “For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Mat. 26:28). Here is the same phrase as is found in Acts 2:38—“for the remission of sins.” Even though several verses have been quoted, all I need is one to show that *eis* **never** looks backward or retrospectively, and this one is verse is chief. Jesus did not shed His blood because of the forgiveness of sins. Rather, He shed his blood *eis* (for, unto) the forgiveness of sins—so sins could be forgiven, not because sins were already forgiven. And here, we see the absolute destruction of such an assertion.

While the discussions over the years regarding *eis* have been instructive, and the truth has been firmly established concerning the purpose of baptism being “**for** (*eis* or unto) the remission of sins,” we do not need the very phrase to establish our case. So, pretend, for a moment, that the phrase “for the remission of sins” are not found in the verse, making it read, “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ.”

On the Day of Pentecost, Peter told the gathered crowd that Jesus was the Son of God because of the miracles He worked in their presence (Acts 2:22-23; John 3:1-2). Yet not a soul in the crowd is recorded to have objected. Peter told them all that Jesus had been proven

to be the Son of God by the prophecies He had fulfilled (Acts 2:25-28). Yet not a soul in the crowd is recorded to have objected. Peter also preached to them that Jesus was proven to be the Son of God by His bodily resurrection from the dead (2:29-32). Yet not a soul in the crowd is reported to have objected. Finally, Peter tells them, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (2:36).

Peter just got done telling them they had killed their long-awaited Messiah. They had killed the Son of God, knowing the Father was with Him in working miracles. They had killed the Son of God, knowing He fulfilled the prophecies of the Hebrew Scriptures. They had killed the Son of God, knowing that He was resurrected from the dead. They had murdered the Son of God, the only remedy for their sins, and now they knew it.

So, fearing hell and eternal separation from God, they cried out, "Men and brethren what shall we do?" (2:37). Why did they ask what they should do? Because they knew they were lost in their sins and were presently standing before God without having any forgiveness for murdering Jesus. Verily, how would you feel if you were

in their shoes, having done what they had done? How could you live with yourselves for having murdered the Son of God?

Peter, who loved his Jewish brethren and knew the remedy, responded enthusiastically, excitedly, and joyfully, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ." What were they to do? **Repent and be baptized!** Who was to repent and be baptized? **Every one of you!** By what authority? **In the name of Jesus Christ!** But **why** were they to repent and be baptized? Because they murdered Jesus the Christ and were dead in their sins. Without repentance and baptism, they would never have been forgiven for murdering Jesus. However, they took advantage of the remedy Peter gave them, and three thousand souls were added to the church that day (2:41, 47).

However, the reality is that the phrase "for the remission of sins" is indeed present, and it simply reinforces the necessity of baptism. Now, if *eis* is "because of," then were they supposed to repent because of having forgiveness of their sins already? Of course not. But as with baptism, "to ask is but to answer."

Irving, TX

Is Bible Class Important?

Bobby Dockery

Does attending Bible class regularly really make any difference in the quality of one's life? With all the pressures that our children and young people face today, can regular attendance to Bible class really help to fortify them against evil? Consider this: In a 5-year period, Jude Fossett in Brooklyn sentenced 2,400 juvenile young people to the reformatory. His investigations showed that not one of them as a member of a Bible class anywhere! Or consider this: In a 2-year period, Lee Baxton presided over 2,400 juvenile court cases. He had a standing offer to

pay court costs for any person convicted of a criminal offense if that young person had been regular in attendance to a Bible class during that year. He never had to pay anyone's fine. Attending Bible class is not for a cure-all, but young people who are regularly found there are seldom found in court. A proven fact! Our young people need all the help we can give them. Plan to be at Bible class this Sunday. You have an example to set!

Deceased

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermons

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

Bible Classes

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes.html>

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Defender

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/defender.html>

Beacon

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/beacon.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and *Beacon*

Available Via Email

Send your email address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Carla Burleson

Bill & Pam Busch

Heather Stark

Please Remember

November 16

Birthdays and Anniversaries Get-together will be held in the zone room after the afternoon service.

November 30

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

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 46

November 17, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

Are You Spiritual?

Mike Demory

More and more, we are hearing individuals who claim to be Christians asserting that they are stronger in the faith or spiritually superior because their brand of liberty has no bounds. Several years ago, a brother in Christ and I took the opportunity to visit with erring Brother Pat Boone. He was promoting a new CD, so we stood in line for quite some time to speak with him about his soul. Brother Boone was very cordial and gave us 10 minutes to talk to him about the Gospel, after which he informed us that when we mature in the faith, we will become as spiritual as he was. It is incredible how people can twist the Scriptures and convince themselves that they are conforming to God's will when their fruit plenty reveals the exact opposite.

One of my sisters, who is involved in Pentecostalism, thinks she is more spiritual than I am because her church allows her to give testimonies, witness, and other such nonsense not found in the New Testament. I have heard Christians tell me that their denominational friends look at them as non-spiritual because we do not sing with mechanical instruments, sway back and forth with hands lifted into the air, or fall on the floor in ecstatic writhing. What we must keep in the back of our minds when doubt is cast by those who "seem to be somewhat" is that **they** are **not** spiritual. Roman Catholic monks and nuns are seen as more spir-

itual than others, as are those who walk on their knees up the mountains to pray to Mary. If it is the case that such *spiritual* individuals are involved in things not authorized by God, and most of the time, it is, then why would we ever assume that they understand the meaning of being spiritual?

Being spiritual has **nothing** to do with emotionalism, sensationalism, asceticism, or denominationalism in general but everything to do with our attitude and mindset. It does not matter how many things we deprive ourselves of, the number of ceremonies we participate in, or the things on the outside that appear very religious. It is all done in vain if the correct attitude, motive, and emphasis do not prompt it. The Corinthians thought that they were spiritually superior because they (1) Followed the ones who baptized them, (2) Sought preachers who were great motivators, (3) Allowed incestuous relationships, (4) Ate meat offered to idols without thinking of others, and (5) Bragged about their spiritual gifts (1 Cor). Paul let them know in no uncertain terms that the wisdom of men was foolishness with God (3:19), and they were not spiritual but carnal (3:3).

Men and women can fool themselves all they want to; God will allow them to delude themselves when their attitude is such that they are not trying to find the truth (2 The. 2:10-12). The Pharisees certainly saw themselves as spiritually

superior, as in the case of the one who thanked God that he was not like other men (Luke 18:10-14). Yet, Jesus revealed their lack of spirituality when He pronounced upon them woe after woe because they thought ceremonies and outside appearance were what pleased God (Mat. 23:1-33). When our emphasis in life is to observe God's will with a whole heart (Psa. 119:33-38), then our motivation will be—loving

God and keeping **His** commandments (John 14:15). Being spiritual has everything to do with our attitude, that comes before our actions. Jesus said, "By their fruits, ye shall know them." Through a person's actions, we can tell who is truly spiritual and who is not. **If** our attitude is such that in all our ways, we will acknowledge Him (Pro. 3:6), then we can say we are spiritual.

Mexico, MO

"Jesus Is Lord"

Ken Chumbley

I saw this phrase recently on the bulletin board outside a church building. There is nothing wrong with the statement in and of itself, for indeed, "Jesus is Lord." Peter called Jesus, Lord:

Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias (Mat. 17:4).

John also called Jesus, Lord:

Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea (John 21:7).

The apostle Paul also called Him, Lord:

I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35).

Paul wrote to the churches of Galatia:

But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world (Gal. 6:14).

Indeed, all Christians should glory only "in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." We are also told that there will come a day when every tongue will confess Jesus is Lord: "And *that*

every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phi. 2:11).

However, for those waiting until the Judgment to confess "Jesus is Lord," it will be too late regarding their eternal salvation.

All need to remember the pointed words of Jesus Christ: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). Sadly, too many want to use the expression, Jesus is Lord, but who "do not the things which I say." Jesus makes it clear that it is useless to call Him Lord while being unwilling to keep His commandments. If one truly recognizes Jesus as Lord, he will show his submission to the Lordship of Christ by obedience to His will. Note what Paul writes to Timothy:

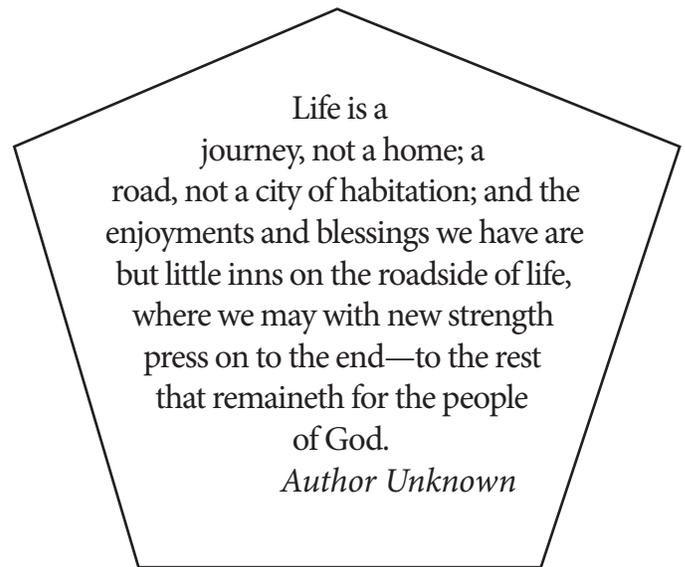
If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness (1 Tim. 6:3).

How can one "consent not" to the words of the Lord Jesus Christ and His doctrine and still legitimately say, "Jesus is Lord"? Remember also what our Lord Himself stated: "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John. 14:15). Do we love the Lord? Is He truly our Lord if we do not keep His commandments?

We rightly point this out concerning those involved in denominationalism who "teach *for* doctrines the commandments of men" (Mat.

15:9), particularly regarding their teachings on how one becomes a Christian. However, there are those in the Lord's church who also teach doctrines that are no more than the commandments of men. The words of Jesus: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46) are equally pertinent to those who teach such doctrines. Each of us needs to examine himself and the doctrine he teaches to ensure that he is teaching the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ that he might legitimately say, "Jesus is Lord."

Deceased



Proper and Improper Uses of Some Words

Charles Pogue

Some words are appropriate to use when used correctly, but are inappropriate when misused. Perhaps a more understandable way to express this is that some words are considered filthy, profane, or dirty when misused, but are not when used correctly.

Damned is found three times in the New Testament. Those instances are found in Mark 16:16, Romans 14:12, and 2 Timothy 2:12. On all three occasions, the word is used to express the eternal destination of those who fail to obey God. When used in either its present tense or past tense in everyday language to express a feeling or reaction to someone or something else, it then becomes a curse word.

Hell is found 54 times in the King James Version of the Bible. Sometimes the word is used referring to the abode of the dead. When it is, it should be translated *hades*, as it is in the American Standard Version. *Hell* is used 13 times in the ASV referring to eternal punishment. *Hades* appears 10 times, referring to the place of departed spirits. The word *hell* is found in both the KJV and the ASV in Matthew 11:23, where it is used in connection with the eternal destruc-

tion of the wicked in hellfire. When *hell* refers to the place of eternal fire in the everlasting destruction of the wicked, it is from the Greek, *gehenna* (pronounced *Gheh-en-nah*). The use of the word in the Bible is appropriate in its usage. *Hell* is used in everyday language to express things such as how one feels or a personal condemnation of someone or something. These and other usages of the word turn it from one used appropriately into one that is now a curse word.

There are doubtless other improper uses of the two examples above, which make them words that in such cases should not emit from a Christian's mouth. There are many different words that, when used properly, are fit to use, but are unfit when they are misused. It should also be noted as has been called to our attention many times before, words which take the place of a profane, filthy, curse, or dirty word (euphemisms) are every bit as bad as the words they replace. "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth" (Col. 3:8).

Deceased

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermons

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

Bible Classes

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes.html>

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Defender

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/defender.html>

Beacon

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/beacon.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and *Beacon*

Available Via Email

Send your email address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Carla Burleson

Bill & Pam Busch

Heather Stark

Please Remember

November 30

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

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 47

November 24, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

What Is a Miracle?

J. Noel Merideth

Miracle is used quite frequently these days. It is obvious that many are unclear about the meaning. It has been said that “a proposition correctly defined is half argued already.” Certainly, we need to understand the terms we use in religious discussions. A paper recently crossed our desk in which the editor made the following comment:

We hear so much today about some brother who is branded a heretic, false teacher, etc., since he believes in miracles, divine or “faith” healing, working of the Holy Spirit. My question is, is there really one Christian on earth who doesn’t? It would seem to me something sillier than a game of five-year-old children for us to eat of the bread and drink of the cup without a miracle taking place. Is the forgiveness of sin through baptism some sort of a human or natural situation? And if we are dead-set against divine healing why on earth do we pray (you hear it in our pulpits every Sunday) for the sick? If we do not expect some kind of a supernatural or act of God to take place, why bother doing it at all?

We wonder if the editor would go to a cemetery and try to raise the dead? Would he say others could do it? The editor’s statements are but a sample of the loose and imprecise expressions uttered today. The editor is in error on the meaning of a miracle. In trying to smooth over

the errors of others, he has failed to understand the word *miracle* himself.

Miracle is defined by *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary*, as

An event or effect in the physical world deviating from the known laws of nature or transcending our knowledge of these laws; an extraordinary, anomalous, or abnormal event brought about by superhuman agency.

A miracle then is an extraordinary event in the natural world which is brought about by “superhuman agency.”

We should study the terminology for miracles in the New Testament.

Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know (Acts 2:22).

Notice the terms used are (1) mighty works, (2) wonders, and (3) signs. “Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, by signs and wonders and mighty works” (2 Cor. 12:12). Here we have (1) signs, (2) wonders, and (3) mighty works (powers). “And beholding signs and great miracles wrought, he was amazed” (Acts 8:13). This text speaks of (1) signs and (2) miracles. A standard work, *Notes on the Miracles of Our Lord*, by Richard C. Trench, deals with the basic terms involved. (1) *Wonder* portrays miracles from the standpoint of the astonishment

which the work produces upon the beholders and so is transferred to the work itself. “Wonders” is used in connection with some other term, so we can understand it refers to miracles (Cf. Acts 14:3; Rom. 15:19; Heb. 2:4). (2) *Sign* is a token and indication of the near presence and working of God. In this word, the ethical purpose of the miracles comes out more prominently. So, we read of the Lord confirming the Word by signs following (Cf. Mark 16:20; Acts 14:3; Heb. 2:4). (3) *Powers, mighty works, or miracles* denotes power of a supernatural origin and character, such as could not be produced by natural means (Cf. Mark 6:13; Acts 8:13; 19:11; 4:16).

But what about the Lord’s supper and regeneration? Catholic theologians teach that a miracle does take place in the Lord’s Supper, so the bread and fruit of the vine are miraculously transformed into the body and blood of Jesus. This doctrine is called transubstantiation. However, upon a close examination of the text in Matthew 26:26-29, one will find that Jesus is using the figure of speech known as *metaphor*. (See D. R. Dungan, *Hermeneutics* 253.) That means Jesus was saying that the bread and fruit of the vine represent or call to mind the body and blood of Jesus. There is no miracle here; there is a memorial supper. Now, about regeneration or conversion. Waymon D. Miller, in a fine work titled *Modern Divine Healing*, raises and answers this question.

When one affirms that he believes the age of miracles past, the usual response from believers in faith healing is: “Then you don’t believe in regeneration today, for that is a great miracle. Don’t you think it nothing short of miraculous that one is born into the family of God, and receives pardon of his sins?”

My answer to this question is: “No, I do not consider this a miracle. I most emphatically deny that it is.”

He continues:

Regeneration involves no miracle at all, but it

is the result of conformity to a fixed spiritual law. The new birth, established by the Lord, is as much a positive spiritual law as physical birth is a positive physical law (John 3:5).

He points out that in the parable of the seed sown in the ground, the seed is employed in the regenerating operation so it follows a preordained law of the Lord (Mat. 13:3-9, 18-23).

In discussing the question of miracles today, let us bring the issue into focus. **First**, it is not a question of miracles yesterday in Bible times, but today. We believe miracles were performed in the first century. “For the man was more than forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was wrought” (Acts 4:22). But there is no passage that teaches we are to have miracles today. **Second**, it is not a question of power, but of will. Indeed, God is powerful enough to heal a man by a miracle today, but what is God’s decision about that today? It is not what God can do but what God does do.

Third, it is not even a question of prayer for the sick. We must even pray for our daily bread. That, however, does not mean that Jehovah will hand us a loaf of bread directly from heaven. Yet, we must pray for it (Mat. 6:11). Bread today must be gotten according to God’s natural law. God has specific natural laws about the sick. To ignore them is to fail in God’s plan for the sick today. God works, yes, but through His law, His natural law. When we pray for the sick today, we do not expect them to take up their bed and walk, being miraculously healed. We pray if it be “according to his will” (1 John 5:14), through the means being administered, that the person may regain his health. **Fourth**, it is not a question of healing. Indeed, God heals today. But how? And such healing is divine but not miraculous. There is a vast difference between being healed miraculously and being healed by using God’s natural laws. All healing is divine, but not all healing is miraculous. All bread is divine. It is provided by natural law. **Fifth**, it is not a

question of so-called testimonials of alleged healings. The issue is what the Bible teaches. Many religious groups, with conflicting doctrines, claim miracles and rely on testimonials to attract converts. However, the Holy Spirit is not responsible for these conflicting testimonies that support different doctrines.

Jesus raised the dead. Who can raise a person from the dead today? Paul struck a man blind. Who is striking people blind today? Jesus could take a few loaves and multiply them to feed thousands. Who can make bread like that today? Jesus could turn water into wine. Who

does that today like He did? Where is the miracle bread-making church? Where is the dead-raising church?

The signs and miracles of Jesus and the apostles of the first century were intended to **confirm** the Word (Mark 16:20; Heb. 2:1-4). The signs for us today are **written** in the New Testament (John 20:30-31). If someone wants a sign today, let him read from the New Testament. To ask for other signs or miracles than “these” signs that are written in the New Testament is to reject the Word of God.

Deceased

Forgiving Self?

One of the difficulties a Christian is faced with is when they cannot forgive their own sins. We pray for forgiveness, often pouring out our disgust with ourselves. Once the deed is exposed and forgiveness has been executed by God, through Christ, we frequently resume personal punishment and torment of our souls, which God has said is “clean through My Son’s Blood.” These sins may range from shoplifting, lying to alcohol or tobacco addictions, to one of the immoral family members of fornication, or even murder. Sometimes, the stain of that sin is so etched on the memory that continued guilt can ruin a job, break up a family, or drive a person mad.

Paul gave us such great advice on this subject in Philippians 3:8-14:

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, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power

of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. 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

Tragedies may come, jobs may be lost, diseases may rack our bodies, or business losses may cause financial disasters. There may be times when we feel we are all alone and overcome by life’s difficulties. God did not promise to take away our troubles. But He did promise that the Lord would never leave nor forsake us (Heb. 13:5). When trials surround us, He offers comfort and hope through His Word (Rom. 15:4). He gives us peace through Christ (John 16:4; Phi. 4:7). If we are in Christ, then nothing can separate us from God’s love (Rom. 8:35-39).

Author Unknown

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermons

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

Bible Classes

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes.html>

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Defender

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/defender.html>

Beacon

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/beacon.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and *Beacon*

Available Via Email

Send your email address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Carla Burseson

Bill & Pam Busch

Heather Stark

Please Remember

November 30

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

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 48

December 1, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

Godly Repentance

Marvin L. Weir

One who desires to go to Heaven must repent of his sins. Jesus ties repentance with forgiveness in saying, “Take heed to yourselves: if thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him” (Luke 17:3). To fail to repent is to fail to obtain forgiveness. Repentance is defined by Thayer as, “to change one’s mind (heart), that is, to repent; to change one’s mind (heart) for the better, to amend heartily with abhorrence of one’s past sins.”

Many definitions and ideals regarding repentance are woefully inadequate. To understand what godly repentance is, let us first study what is **not** godly repentance.

First, godly repentance is **not** simply being sorry for our sins. The Bible teaches that there is a right kind of sorrow and a wrong kind of sorrow. The apostle Paul affirms this truth in saying to the Corinthian brethren:

I now rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye were made sorry unto repentance; for ye were made sorry after a godly sort, that ye might suffer loss by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, *a repentance* which bringeth no regret: but the sorrow of the world worketh death (2 Cor. 7:9-10).

Godly sorrow works or produces repentance because the person has a sincere desire to correct his sinful wrongdoing and live a life that pleases God. Worldly sorrow produces only spiritual death because the motivation (what-

ever it may be) is not to turn from sin and please God by conforming to His will.

Second, godly repentance is **not** simply remorse over being caught in a sinful act. One may be embarrassed and sorry for his family’s sake that his sin has become public. He may also be sorry that he was not more careful to avoid being caught. This type of worldly sorrow, however, is not godly sorrow that leads to genuine repentance.

Third, godly repentance is **not** simply making a change in the congregation that one attends. God’s Word has long taught that a person’s sin will find him out (Num. 32:23). Many brethren today, when confronted because of their sinful actions (or when their sin becomes known), simply decide to **change** congregations. Sometimes, this is done to try to avoid church discipline. The Lord, however, does not have *legal loopholes* by which a member can evade the law of God.

Brethren, others not knowing about our sins does not constitute repentance! We may hide our sins from our fellowman, but we cannot hide our sins from God (cf. Heb. 4:12-13).

Fourth, godly repentance is **not** simply slipping back into the services of the Lord’s church. Sometimes, brethren quit attending the services of the church and are absent for months or years before deciding to begin attending again. There is undoubtedly no more public and known sin

than that of forsaking the assembly of the saints (cf. 10:25).

One who some company employs does not walk away from his job one day only to return months or years later, anticipating resuming his regular duties and receiving his full salary while not saying one word about his absence. Why do we convince ourselves that standards for worldly

organizations are **higher** than those for the Lord's church? One's confession needs to be as public as his sins, if repentance is genuine (cf. Jam. 5:16; 1 John 1:9). Let us make sure our repentance from sin is godly repentance! May we also remember that we do have a choice—it is repent or perish (Luke 13:3).

Blossom, TX

What it Means to Say Baptism is Non-Essential

Gayle Oler

1. It means that Peter commanded a non-essential! "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:48). It therefore reduces the commandments of God to absurdities if any one of them is not essential to salvation.

2. It means the remission of sins is not essential to salvation. "And Peter *said* unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins" (2:38—ASV).

3. It means that not one single command of God can consistently be construed as obligatory upon man. By the same rule of reasoning by which baptism is deemed unnecessary to salvation, every other commandment can be so

deemed. Faith is commanded. So is baptism. Faith is exemplified. So is baptism. Jesus said, "except ye believe that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24—ASV). He also said, "Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (3:5).

4. It means that Ananias deceived Paul when he told him, "arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). If Paul's sins had been washed away before his baptism, Ananias did not correctly represent the case to Paul. Paul's sins had not been forgiven before baptism. Neither are men's sins today.

Deceased

If Thou Wouldst Be a Christian

Bob Howton

- Thou wilt have to forsake **all else** if thou wilt please the Master.
- Thou must study the Bible **regularly** if thou wouldst be approved of God.
- Thou must not allow thy **tongue** to turn thee into a **talebearer**.
- Thou must not leave thy **pew** for someone else to warm.
- Thou must **surely** strive to be a **proper** example in **all** thy ways.
- Thou **must** be careful to maintain **good works**, which God will approve.
- Thou shalt **mind** thine **own business** and leave that of others to them.
- Thou must give the **adversary** the **devil**, no reason to be **pleased** with thee.
- Thou shalt strive **each day** to **win** someone to Christ and His church.
- Thou must not **close** thine eyes, or ears, or heart to the **cry** of the **needy**.

- Thou shalt never cease to be of **thankful** heart, and **prayerful** attitude.
- **Thou shalt not allow the tempter to draw thee away at any time, for any reason.**
- Thou **must** stand up for the **truth** at all costs, in every place, under all circumstances.
- Thou shalt understand that **God's Word** applies to thee as well as to others.
- Thou shalt realize that the **rights** of **others**, are **equal** to thine own.
- Thou shalt **not wait** upon **others** to do the work that needs to be done by all.
- Thou shalt **forget** as much as **possible**, all things which thou hast forgiven others.
- Thou **must** as far as possible, and as much as lieth in you, live at **peace** with all men.
- Thou must **pray** to God the **father**, in the **name** of **Christ**, with never a **doubt**.
- Thou **must not forsake** the **assembly** of the Saints on Lord's Days.
- Thou must not fail to **partake** of the Lord's Supper each Lord's Day, if possible.
- Thou must always **keep** thy tongue from **evil**, and thy lips from speaking **guile**.
- Thou must keep **thyself** from **all others**, and faithfully abide thy **spouse**.
- Thou must worship the **Lord** thy **God** and **Him only** shalt thou **serve**.

- Thou must always **do justly**, **love mercy**, and **walk humbly** before thy God.
- Thou must realize that there is a **way** which **seemeth right** to man but may be **wrong**.
- Thou **must** be **faithful** until the day of thy **death** if thou wouldst be saved.

The reader will quickly realize that these are not verses from the Bible, but rather, they are a different approach to some of the truths contained therein. It goes without saying, that one must submit to the Gospel plan of salvation, if he' would be saved. That plan is very simple: (1) One must **Hear** the Gospel, for "faith cometh by hearing the Word of God" (Rom. 10:17); (2) One must **believe** the Gospel for "without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Heb. 11:6); (3) One must **repent**, for God "commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30); (4) One must **confess** Christ as God's Son for, "every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God" (Phi. 2:11); (5) One must be **baptized** for, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). These steps will put one **into** Christ where **all** Spiritual blessings are found (Eph. 1:3, Rom. 6:3-4, Gal. 3:27). **Faithful** adherence to God's Word will ensure a home in Heaven, at last!

Deceased

Steps to Developing a Beautiful Heart

- You must take a serious look at your own life. You must think positively about your potential and possibilities—life is what you make of it (Phi. 4:13).

- You must like yourself. You will never like someone else more than you like yourself (1:20; 1 John 2:28). Also, other people tend to take the same attitude toward you that you take toward yourself.

- You must develop genuine love and concern for other people. Successful people are always

interested in the well-being of others (3:17-18; Jam. 2:1-9).

- Begin every day in a spirit of gratitude. You must have a genuine expectancy that today will be the greatest day of your life (Col. 3:15).

- Keep your focus on things above. When you quit thinking about heaven and spiritual things, you quit looking forward to life (3:2).

Author Unknown

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermons

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

Bible Classes

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes.html>

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Defender

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/defender.html>

Beacon

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/beacon.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via Email

Send your email address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Carla Burluson

Bill & Pam Busch

Heather Stark

Please Remember

December 21

Birthdays and Anniversaries Get-together will be held in the zone room after the afternoon service.

December 31

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

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 49

December 8, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

The Value of the Church

Fred E. Dennis

The church is a divine institution. Jesus said, “I will build my church” (Mat. 16:18). He is the only one who has a right to speak of it as “my church.” When men say, “**my** church,” they are not thinking clearly. We have hundreds of religious organizations in the world started by men. There is no salvation in any human institution, be it religious, social, fraternal, or political.

The church is valuable because of what it cost. It cost God His Son, and it cost the Son His blood. The church was made possible by the blood of Christ, and we are bought with His precious blood. Paul told the Ephesian elders that the church was purchased with the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28).

We do value things in proportion to their cost, and so we should highly value the church. We have not been redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but by the precious blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1:18-19).

The church is valuable because salvation is in it. There is no salvation for any of us outside of Christ. Neither is there salvation in any name other than that of Christ (Acts 4:12). The same thing that saves us makes us members of the church. We are added to the church by the Lord when we are saved from our sins (2:38, 46-47).

When we do the things that God commands us to do to be saved—believe in Jesus as God’s Son (John 8:24), repent of our sins (Luke 13:3), confess Christ before men (Mat. 10:32; Acts

8:37), and are baptized for the remission of sins (2:38)—we are added to the church by Christ Himself. If we all do those things, we will be members of the same church. Doing something else will make us members of something else, but it will not save us.

Sometimes people say, “The church never saved anyone.” It is true that the church does not save, but the saved are in the church, and it is the church which Christ saves (Eph. 5:23; 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). The church is the body of Christ, and He is the Saviour of the body.

The church is valuable because it wears only Christ’s name. No other institution or organization has the divine right to wear the name of Christ. He called it His church, and Paul called various congregations of that church, “churches of Christ” (Rom. 16:16). What a grand privilege to be in the church that honors Christ as its Head and wears His name. The faithful wife loves to wear her husband’s name. The church is the bride of Christ and faithfully wears His name. A faithful wife would wear no name but her husband’s, and a faithful Christian wears no name but Christ’s.

The church is the **only** kingdom that will stand forever. The kingdoms of men are here today, but in a few hundred years, they will fall. But the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed (Dan. 2:44), and that kingdom is the church of Christ (Mat. 16:18-

19). “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Heb. 12:28).

In the clash and destruction of empires today, the humble Christian can rest assured that the kingdom—or church—of Christ will stand forever. It cannot be moved. Therefore, we must be true and faithful in our service to the God of heaven. He has the power to sustain His own, and this He will do.

We are **now** in the kingdom. The kingdom of heaven is not some future earthly kingdom, but a present spiritual reality. It is the church, and we who are in the church are in the kingdom.

Before the kingdom was established, Jesus taught His disciples to pray, “thy kingdom come” (Mat. 6:10). That prayer was in order then but is not now because the kingdom has been here for over 2,000 years. Paul wrote, “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son” (Col. 1:13). All will agree that it would not

have been possible to be translated into a kingdom in Paul’s day that did not exist. It did exist, and the saved were translated into it.

The apostle John said he was in the kingdom. “I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and **in the kingdom** and patience of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 1:9). It would be hard to be a brother in something that did not exist.

We are living in the last age. When Jesus comes again, it will **not** be to set up a kingdom, but to deliver the kingdom up to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24). Christ is now reigning and will come the next time without an offering for sin (Heb. 9:27-28).

Are you ready to meet the Lord when He comes again? Have you done what He commands in the New Testament to become a Christian? We plead with you to become one now. Do not trust the notions of men or religious leaders. Read the New Testament for yourselves and learn the will of God.

Deceased

The Sect Spoken Against

Johnny Ramsey

In Acts 28:22, we learn that followers of the Lord were looked upon as a sect and persecuted because of their stand for the Truth. This one verse teaches us many lessons. It reminds us that Jesus prepared His servants for opposition, duress, and the lack of popularity they would indeed receive. In Luke 6:26 and John 16:2, the Savior said only false teachers would have universal acclaim and faithful servants would be killed. Paul was in jeopardy every hour (1 Cor. 15:30), and Peter was inspired to write about the persecution Christians can expect (1 Pet. 4:12-16). When Noah obeyed God, he condemned the world (Heb. 11:7), and the world did not like that! When we preach the high ideals of the Bible, the world of our day will not applaud

them either. But we cannot lower the standard to please the worldly crowd (Gal. 1:10). Some brethren in our day are changing God’s divine law of marriage and divorce to accommodate “the nations round about us.” In doing such compromising teaching, they overlook repentance, purity, and Jehovah’s first divine institution of marriage and the home. One thing is certain: If the first-century church had blended in with the Roman empire, it would not have been “the sect everywhere spoken against.”

A church must stand for something distinctively different from society to be spoken against. As Christ taught in Matthew, in the Sermon on the Mount, we will be opposed just like the prophets were **when** we are courageous

like Jeremiah, Amos, and Elijah were! When our goal is fame, acceptability, and numerical power, we tend to forget that spiritual greatness comes only one way: by doing God's will in God's way (2 John 9; Luke 6:46).

How can we follow the blessed Redeemer and be praised by sinful men when He was crucified between thieves? In our incessant craving for approval from society, we tend to "go along to get along." Christianity was never based on such a premise. When Truth on any subject embarrasses us, we must get back to conversion basics. Let us search the Scriptures (Acts 17:11) and not "the brotherhood" for our authority!

The church of our Lord is not a democracy when we vote on what we like. It is not a union meeting where carnal machinery decides policy. It is not a caucus arrangement where petition signing overwhelms the scene. The church of our Lord is a divine monarchy where the King has all authority (Mat. 28:18). Educational institutions and doctoral degrees do not dominate the Gospel system, and large congregations in metropolitan areas are no more important than small ones in the country. All men stand on level ground at the foot of the Cross (1 Cor. 2:1-5), and each alike is answerable to the Savior's directives (John 12:48). One thing is guaranteed:

Follow the Man of Galilee, and you will be spoken against! We cannot follow multitudes (Exo. 23:2), but we must be like the apostles who became the garbage of the world (1 Cor. 4:9).

We even have brethren today who send "their church staff" (whatever that is) to large denominations to find out their success secrets. Why not arrange a session with the Devil or the Mafia since so many devotees are on their side? The seed of the kingdom is the Word of God (Luke 8:11), and that is where we ought to be looking.

The Truth will always be controversial, and it will always be in the minority (Mat. 7:13-14). But it will always be distinctive, too (1 Pet. 2:9-12). Christianity has never been a game for sissies, and the faint-hearted usually quit or compromise or join the enemy. Satan and his servants will always speak against the pure Gospel way, so we must "be set for the defence of the gospel" (Phi. 1:17) and contend earnestly for the faith (Jude 3). Sadly, we must even be ready to stand against brethren who apostatize (Rom. 16:17). Our failure to openly stand up for God and the Bible (Acts 17:3) will result in a church so weak that no one will speak against us. I am afraid that is precisely what some brethren want.

Deceased

Are All the Children In?

I think oftimes as the night draws nigh
Of an old house on the hill,
Of a yard all wide and blossom-starred
Where the children played at will.
And when the night at last came down,
Hushing the merry din,
Mother would look around and ask,
"Are all the children in?"
'Tis many and many a year since then,
And the old house on the hill
No longer echoes to childish feet,
And the yard is still, so still.
But I see it all as the shadows creep,

And though many the years have been,
Even now, I can hear my mother ask,
"Are all the children in?"
I wonder if, when the shadows fall
On the last short, earthly day,
When we say goodbye to the world outside,
All the tired with our childish play,
When we step out into that Other Land
Where mother so long has been,
Will we hear her ask, as we did of old,
"Are all the children in?"

Author Unknown.

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermons

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

Bible Classes

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes.html>

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Defender

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/defender.html>

Beacon

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/beacon.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via Email

Send your email address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Carla Burlison

Bill & Pam Busch

Heather Stark

Please Remember

December 21

Birthdays and Anniversaries Get-together will be held in the zone room after the afternoon service.

December 31

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

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 50

December 15, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

The Beauty of Holiness

Mike Demory

Holiness is that quality within the Christian that emulates the character of God by separating oneself from defilement, forsaking sin, and living in godlikeness. Peter wrote, “but like as he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living; because it is written, Ye shall be holy; for I am holy” (1 Pet. 1:15-16—ASV). Luke reminds us that God does not dwell in temples made with hands, neither is He worshipped by men’s hands as though He needed anything (Acts 17:24-25). God deserves to be glorified (1 Cor. 10:31), and one way we can and must glorify God is by being holy as He is holy.

The beauty of holiness finds the Christian described by Peter as a Holy Nation (1 Pet. 2:9). In the exquisite words of a hymn written by P. P. Bliss, we read:

More Holiness give me, more strivings within,
More patience in suffering, more sorrow for
sin,
More faith in my Savior, More sense of His
care,
More joy in His service, more purpose in
prayer.

Concerning holiness in worship, our God deserves a reverent people. People more concerned with mundane worship that honors men and entertains are not cognizant that such expressions do not glorify God. The holy always seeks to please the Holy One of Heaven in

everything they do, teach, and practice. Many do not realize that God **is** holiness, just as much as He **is** righteous, truth, love, justice, mercy, grace, power, wisdom, and immutable. None of these qualities would exist if it were not for the One True Living God. We find a reverent scene in one of John’s visions in Revelation. Twenty-four elders and four living creatures who rest neither day nor night, praise God, saying:

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.... Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power (Rev. 4:8-11).

What will the Holy Nation of God do in Heaven? This is a mere glimpse of what the faithful look forward to when the day comes that we are together and take flight to that everlasting realm of a fadeless day.

Sadly, more and more, those who once sought God with gratitude now, like God’s chosen of the past, serve the gods of the denominational world while assuming God’s grace will allow anything. The audacity of these servants of the prince of this world, who refuse to learn from the past, that circus, drama, ministries galore are acceptance worship to their Creator. Jesus explained to the Samaritan woman:

Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit

and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth (John 4:22-24).

When we fail or refuse to worship God in accordance with His authority, we fail as worshippers of God.

Holiness is a quality that is not optional. Paul told the Corinthians:

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God (2 Cor. 7:1).

How could the abundant life found only in Christ, not elicit the desire to foster the beauty of holiness in our daily lives?

Paul encouraged the brethren at Rome to “present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service” (Rom. 12:1). Should we do any less?

Remember, God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before Him in love (Eph. 1:4) because ours is a holy calling (2 Tim. 1:9). We long for that day when our Lord will return to separate the faithful from the wicked (Mat. 25:40-46). May we prepare ourselves in the beauty of holiness so we will hear our Lord say, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant” (Eph. 5:25-27; Mat. 25:21-23).

Mexico, MO

Before following any advice, it is better to find out the character of him who gives the advice and what possible interest he may have in our following his advice.

R. L. Whiteside, Deceased

Justification by Faith

G. K. Wallace

The Bible teaches justification by faith. It does not teach that we are saved by faith only (Jam. 2:24). There is a vast difference between justification by faith and justification by faith only. The degree of faith that saves is the obedient faith (Rom. 1:5; 16:26). It takes perfect faith to save, and faith is perfected in obedience (Jam. 2:22).

It is a direct contradiction of God’s Word to say that a man can be saved by faith only. Obedience is taught in the New Testament. The following Scriptures will prove this point.

1. One must obey to enter the kingdom (Mat. 7:21).

2. One cannot be a servant of Christ without obeying Him (Rom. 6:16).

3. The foundation of a Christian life cannot be laid without obedience (Mat. 7:24-27).

4. Christ, the author of eternal salvation, only to those who obey Him (Heb. 5:9).

It makes no difference what you believe or how strongly you believe it. You cannot be a servant of Christ unless you obey Him.

There is no distinction between *faith* and *belief* in the Bible. The standard English dictionary provides a theological meaning, wherein a distinction is made. Still, God’s Book knows nothing of the theology of Wesley, Calvin, Luther, et al. The words *faith* and *belief* both come from the same Greek word (*pistis*—a noun). See *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon*.

Whatever justification by faith might mean, it certainly includes obedience. “Being therefore

justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1). When faith justifies, the believer has peace. However, Paul had faith several days before he had peace. If faith only saves, Paul would have had peace the moment he believed. Since Paul did not have peace in that moment, he believed it was conclusive proof that he was not justified at that moment. Faith was engendered in Paul’s heart while on the road to Damascus (Acts 9). When the Lord appeared to Paul (formerly Saul) on the Damascus highway, he believed, but did not have peace until three days later. Peace came to his soul when, in obedience to God’s will, he arose and was baptized (22:16). Jesus says, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). Therefore, when Paul was baptized, he was saved.

Sectarian preachers contend that Paul was saved on the Damascus road—the moment he believed. Paul was not saved on the road to Damascus, as may be seen from the following:

1. If Paul were saved on the Damascus highway, he did not know it. After Paul had believed, he cried out. “What shall I do, Lord?” (Acts 22:10). Is it not strange, given denominational teaching, that the Lord did not say, “Do nothing, Saul, you are now a believer, therefore, you are already saved.” Sectarian preachers say, “When you are saved, you will know it.” Their strongest argument is, “I am saved because I know it.” If he had been saved the moment he believed, he would not have realized it. Since he did not “know it” the moment he believed, he was not saved at that instant, according to their argument.

2. If Saul were saved at the point of faith, the Lord did not know it. The Lord says to Paul, a penitent believer, “arise enter into the city and it shall be told thee what thou must do.” The very fact that the Lord did not recognize Paul as a saved man the moment Paul believed is proof beyond doubt that he was not at that instant

saved. If Saul were a saved man, surely the Lord would have known it. And if the Lord knew Paul was saved, why did he tell him to go to the city where he would be told what to do?

3. If Saul were saved on the Damascus highway, the Lord told a falsehood. Jesus said, “Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do” (22:10). The Word was very specific as to where Saul was to be told what he must do. “Arise and go,” says He, “into Damascus,” and “there,” not “here” but “there” in Damascus, it shall be told thee what to do. It was therefore in Damascus that Paul learned what to do to be saved.

4. If Saul were saved on the Damascus highway, Ananias did not know it. When Ananias came to Saul, he said, “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name” (22:16). Paul was yet in his sins if Ananias told the truth. Ananias did tell the truth, preachers to the contrary notwithstanding.

5. If Saul were saved on the Damascus highway, he was the most miserable saved man I ever read about. Saul was led by the hand to Damascus, “And he was three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink” (9:9). Note the change in Paul after he obeys the will of the Lord. While yet in his sins, even though a penitent believer, he did not have peace. After he arose and was baptized to wash away his sins, he took food and was strengthened (9:18; 22:16). Paul had peace **after** he obeyed in baptism. Therefore, justification by faith includes baptism. When Paul believed and was baptized, he had peace—he was justified.

Since Saul, the Lord, and Ananias did not know that he was saved on the Damascus highway, please explain how the sectarian preachers found out.

Deceased

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermons

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

Bible Classes

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes.html>

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Defender

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/defender.html>

Beacon

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/beacon.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via Email

Send your email address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Carla Burluson

Bill & Pam Busch

Heather Stark

Please Remember

December 21

Birthdays and Anniversaries Get-together will be held in the zone room after the afternoon service.

December 31

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

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops:

Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister:

Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 51

December 22, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

“To Whom Shall We Go?”

Brad Green

Everyone, at some point in life, has experienced a feeling of loneliness. Though at times, everybody needs a little “alone-time,” no one wants to feel “alone.” Such a feeling can lead to apathy, lethargy, and a deep sadness. In everyone’s life, there is a moment in which there is a feeling that everything is going wrong, and questions arise: “Which way do I turn?” “To whom shall I go?”

Jesus knows the feeling of abandonment. When He went to the garden of Gethsemane to pray, Jesus took Peter, James, and John with Him. After praying, He returned to His disciples and found them sleeping (Mat. 26:37-44). That same night, Judas, one of the original twelve disciples, betrayed Jesus into the hands of the Roman authorities. Once Jesus was in Roman custody, “all the disciples forsook Him, and fled” (26:56). Before the night was over, Peter, another of Jesus’ original twelve, denied the Christ three different times (26:75). This was not the first time Jesus had been left “alone.” After preaching in Capernaum:

When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?... From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him (John 6:61, 66).

Sadly, men are still abandoning the sinless Son of God (Gal. 5:4; Heb. 10:24-26; 2 Pet. 2:1-3). The Bible informs us that there are those who

“have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray...who loved the wages of unrighteousness” (2 Pet. 2:15) and those who “have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome” (2:20).

After many of the Lord’s disciples left Him, Jesus turned to the twelve and asked:

Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God (John 6:67-69).

Jesus was sinless, and not in need of salvation (Heb. 4:15), but when He needed comfort, there was only one place for Him to turn—to God, the Father (Mat. 26:39). He could not turn to His disciples, family, or friends, for none could offer what He needed. Although flawed, like all humans are, Peter understood this principle by rhetorically asking Jesus, “to whom shall we go?” Peter knew that he could not entrust his soul (and the salvation of it) to any mortal: friend, family, or even another follower of Christ. The evidence verifies that man cannot afford to relinquish his most precious possession (i.e., his soul) to another man (cf. Acts 5:29). There is only One who knows what it is like to be tempted yet have no sin, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none

other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (4:12)—Jesus.

There is no need to feel alone as long as we have the Word of Christ nearby. When we obey God’s Word, allowing it to permeate our souls and abide in us, we have Christ with us for, “He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath

both the Father and the Son” (2 John 9). We abide in God and His Christ by obedience to God’s commands (1 John 3:24). Let us seek the solace and fellowship in Christ that can only be enjoyed through obedience to His Word.

Lenoir City, TN

“What Is the Difference Between the Soul and the Spirit of Man?”

Guy N. Woods

Though it is characteristic of most people today to use these terms interchangeably, the Scriptures definitely differentiate them. “For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12). Since the sacred writers provided for “the dividing of soul and spirit” in those instances where they differ, so ought we and so we must if we are to entertain Biblical concepts of these words.

Spirit, when denoting the human entity (from the Greek word *pneuma*), is a specific term and designates that part of us that is not susceptible to death and that survives the dissolution of the body (Acts 7:59). It is infused in us directly from God and is not a product of human generation (Heb. 12:9). *Soul*, from the Greek word *psuche*, however, is a generic word and its meaning must be determined, in any given instance, from the context in which it appears. If I were in a conversation with you and used the word *apple*, you would be able to conjure fruit by this name in your mind, and you would not be dependent on my usage of the word to ascertain its meaning. But if I asked, “Define *bark* for me,” you could not possibly know whether I mean by it the sound a dog makes or the outer covering of a tree!

However, should I say, “Bark is thicker this winter than usual,” you can easily gather the term’s meaning from the context in which I have used it.

Similarly, were you to ask, “Define the human spirit for me,” I can at once and correctly say to you, It is the immortal nature—that portion of us derived directly from God, and not subject to death.” But, when you ask, “What is the Biblical significance of the word *soul*?” I must respond by asking, “What passage of Scripture do you have in mind in your reference to the soul?” since it is used in **four** different senses in the sacred writings:

1. As a synonym for *person*: “And there were added *unto them* in that day about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41). “Wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water” (1 Pet. 3:20).

2. To denote the animal life that man possesses in common with the beasts of the field and that is lost in death: “He spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence” (Psa. 78:50). By this it is simply meant that they were suffered to die. Their soul was their physical life.

3. The intellectual nature contrasts the higher spiritual and lower physical nature. “Now the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God” (1 Cor. 2:14). The “natural man” of this passage is literally *the soulish man*

since the adjective “natural” translates a form of the Greek word for *soul*, which may be expressed in English as *psychical*. Thus, this usage is supported by etymology and required by the context. See, especially, Paul’s teaching in 1 Corinthians 1:18-28 and 2:6-16.

4. As a synonym for the never-dying spirit: “Because thou wilt not leave my soul unto Hades, Neither wilt thou give thy Holy One to see corruption” (Acts 2:27). Here, it is obvious that *soul* signifies the immortal nature, that entity of the Lord which was not to undergo death.

It will be seen from this induction of Biblical teaching that there is no pat and easy answer to the question, “What is the soul?” Since my proper reply must consider the significance intended by the inspired penman who used it. It is not unusual for shrewd materialists

(among whom are “Jehovah’s Witnesses,” Adventists, and Christadelphians) to induce an uninformed person in these matters to affirm that “the soul never dies” and then to produce numerous statements from the Old Testament that the soul does indeed die the conclusion then being pressed that man is wholly mortal, his entire being subject to death. The argument is fallacious, and the conclusion is false because it results from assigning a specific meaning to a generic term that was not the intent of the Old Testament writer. The spirit of man is not subject to death (Gen. 25:8; 35:18; Psa. 90:10; Acts 7:59; 2 Cor. 5:1, 6-8). The spirit leaving the body constitutes death (Jam. 2:26), and, in any instance, when some part of us affirms death, it does not embrace the spirit—the immortal nature.

Deceased

When I Reach the Promised Land

H. L. Gradowith (Tim Smith)

I’m gonna shout and sing when I reach the
Promised Land!

I’m gonna shout and sing when by Him I take
my stand!

I’m gonna shout and sing as we stand there
hand in hand!

I’m gonna shout and sing Hallelujah! Praise the
Lord!

I’m gonna jump for joy when I reach the
Promised Land!

I’m gonna jump for joy when by Him I take my
stand!

I’m gonna jump for joy as we stand there hand
in hand!

I’m gonna jump for joy Hallelujah! Praise the
Lord!

I’ll know as I am known when I reach the
Promised Land!

I’ll know as I am known when by Him I take my
stand!

I’ll know as I am known as we stand there hand
in hand!

I’ll know as I am known Hallelujah! Praise the
Lord!

I’ll see Him as He is when I reach the Promised
Land!

I’ll see Him as He is when by Him I take my
stand!

I’ll see Him as He is as we stand there hand in
hand!

I’ll see Him as He is Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

I’m gonna shout and sing when I reach the
Promised Land!

I’m gonna jump for joy when by Him I take my
stand!

I’ll know as I am known as we stand there hand
in hand!

I’ll see Him as He is Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

Deceased

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermons

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

Bible Classes

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes.html>

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Defender

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/defender.html>

Beacon

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/beacon.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and *Beacon*

Available Via Email

Send your email address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Carla Burleson

Bill & Pam Busch

Heather Stark

Please Remember

December 31

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

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad



BEACON

Vol. LIV / No. 52

December 29, 2025

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

Leaving the “Old Man” Out of the “New Year”

Wayne Duren

There is unquestionably a truth that each of us who cares about our souls and the souls of family and others must urgently face! We **cannot** bring ungodly *baggage* that has plagued us this past year into (God willing) the rapidly approaching New Year! This sinful, peace-robbing, joy-depleting, faith-damaging, and trouble-making baggage is represented by the “old man” in our title. He, with all his contagious heartaches, must be, with God’s imperative help, defeated this year and cast totally out of our lives now and forever! This holds true whether we are considering a non-Christian or one who has, at some point, become such but has allowed this persistent “old man” to gain (regain?) control, restricting our effort to be Christlike! Perhaps we have lost that “newness of life” (Rom. 6:4) received at baptism “into Christ” (Gal. 3:27), wherein the baptized believer becomes a “new creature: old things are passed away” whereby “all things are become new” (2 Cor. 5:17), “seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new *man*” (Col. 3:9-10).

But, which man (or woman) are we today, the beautiful, godly “new man,” or has the “old man” and “his deeds” claimed control of our souls and lives? Some are not only accepting such but are pitifully becoming satisfied with it! What happened? If we have indeed, in times past, been baptized for the remission of our sins

(Acts 2:38), having them “washed away” (22:16), and thereby started that new life, putting off the “old man” and putting on the “new man” (Eph. 4:22-24), why then are there so many, in relation to sin, who have become “again entangled therein, and overcome” (2 Pet. 2:20-22), worse off now than ever before? Could it be the case that we never let go of the “old man’s” (our) ways? Or could the answer be something else? Let us investigate a bit.

Jesus spoke in Matthew 12:43-45 of the “unclean spirit,” which left a man he had possessed and remained absent from him for a time. Still, he eventually returned to this man who, very unwisely, had not taken proper advantage of the freedom gained in the spirit’s absence. He had not asked and allowed the Lord to fill in as **he desired** that space with Godliness and blessings! Consequently, the evil spirit did return and “findeth *it* empty, swept, and garnished.” At this time, he again enters that unprepared, “open for evil business” soul and takes with him seven more spirits into the man, even “more evil than himself,” and the last state of that man was worse than the first.

Upon being initially forgiven, is it possible that we failed to request the Father to fill in those blanks wherein our evil deeds and lifestyles once existed and made less than adequate efforts to help ourselves replace the bad with the good? If so, we are probably frustrated and mis-

erable to consistently find the “old man’s” evil footprints all over our lives, lives that are supposed to be much better now than before, with a Christlike brightness illuminating us daily! In truth, this is all on us if we genuinely have fallen into this scary category of those still being controlled by that “old man” who was supposed to have been drowned to death in baptism!

Please join with me in the decision made on this very day to leave **all** sinful baggage of the “old man” behind and enter, Lord willing, into the coming year with this common prayer for all of us, “Create in me a clean heart, O God; And renew a right spirit within me” (Psa. 51:10).

Cottondale, AL

Profane Speech

Guy N. Woods

Jehovah has regarded, with the greatest displeasure, any disposition of man to use His name in flippant, frivolous, and profane fashion. The first commandment of the Decalogue was designed to protect the sanctity of God’s being, the second forbade man to approach Him through some human device, and the third—“Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain: for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain”—was formulated to guarantee respect and reverence for His name (Deu. 5:7-11).

One is profane who uses sacred things in an irreverent and blasphemous manner. In the third commandment of the Decalogue, *vain* is translated from a word in the Hebrew language that means in a light, flippant, and contemptuous fashion. It is a serious consequence that many members of the church today have allowed profanity to creep into their phraseology words and phrases. Others who would not dare to use the holy names, God, Christ, Jesus, Jerusalem, Heaven, Hell, and Hades, as interjections (“An ejaculatory word or form of speech, usually thrown in without grammatical connection,” Webster) and for emphasis, will, nevertheless, use euphemisms (the substitution of a word or phrase less offensive or objectionable), the derivation of which goes back to one of the preceding forms. If those who use these words knew the origin of many common bywords,

they would be greatly shocked! Therefore, we must obtain a clear conception of the significance of such words and phrases and avoid all that even indirectly borders on the profane. Among them are such words as *Gee Whiz*, *Gosh*, *Gad*, *Egad*, *Golly*, *Good Gracious*, *Good Grief*, *My Goodness*, *Jeminy*, *Zounds*, *Jove*, etc., etc.

Gee is a euphemistic construction of the name of Jesus. It is slang and has no proper use in our language. It is used as an interjection and to express surprise. It is, in effect, to say: “Jesus!” (Cf. Webster’s unabridged dictionary, which says that it is “a minced form of Jesus, used in mild oaths”). *Whiz* is slang for anything excellent, “a corker, sometimes applied to a clever person or thing of excellence. Something or some one of exceptional ability or quality.” The words, *Gee Whiz!* are, therefore, an oath in which Jesus and something extraordinary or unusual are joined. *Whiz* originally signified something of a humming or whirring sound, and then anything unusual or exceptional. A *Whizzer* in slang is that which is above and beyond the ordinary.

Gosh is an interjection and is used euphemistically for God. It is an exclamatory slang expression indicating surprise. The *Century Dictionary* says it is “A minced form of God: often used interjectionally as a mild oath.” Webster says it is “a softened form of God, used

as a mild oath.” It is occasionally used in a hyphenated fashion, such as *Gosh-awful*. It is often used as an adjective and euphemistically in this form.

Gad and *Egad* are interjections used euphemistically for the word “God” in mild oaths. They indicate surprise, disgust, dismay, and similar emotions and are ejaculatory in character. *Gee*, *Gosh*, *Gad*, *Egad*, and similar forms are synonymous. They are often joined with other terms for further emphasis.

Golly, of widespread use, is described by the *New World Dictionary* as “an exclamation of surprise, a euphemism for God. It is often used

with the word *by*, i.e., ‘By Golly!’ sometimes as an interjection for the word God.”

Good Gracious! Good Grief! My Goodness! are all mild oaths, where the words *good* or *goodness* are used euphemistically for God. (*Webster’s New World Dictionary, College Edition*). There are many forms of this usage, such as *Goodness Sake! Goodness Knows! Thank Goodness!*—all ejaculatory and exclamatory expressions about the goodness of God, but used slangily and for emphasis. One who thus speaks calls God to witness the statement with which the oath is associated. “In goodness knows who it could have been, it means God only knows, and I do not; in goodness knows it wasn’t I, it means God knows it and could confirm my statement” (*American English Usage*, Nicholson).

Heavens! Good Heavens! For Heaven’s Sake! and similar expressions are statements of exclamatory character in which the heavens are called to witness the truth of the statement or support the affirmation. All such expressions, when used as bywords, as slang, and in flippant, frivolous fashion, violate our Lord’s injunction: “Swear not at all; neither by the heaven, for it is the throne of God; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King” (Mat. 5:34-35).

We are not from this to conclude that it is wrong to use the various names of God in our conversation when such usage is reverent, respectful, and sober. We have, indeed, numerous instances of such usage in the Scriptures (Cf. “God forbid,” “If God wills,” “The Lord grant mercy,” etc.). It is the profane use of sacred things and names against which the Bible denounces, and all such expressions we have analyzed should be rigidly excluded from our vocabularies.

Deceased

No one can doubt that it is right to love that which Christ loves. Nor should we question the ideal of loving to the same degree. Christ “loved the church, and gave himself for it” (Eph. 5:25). His love for the church involved a life-giving commitment. Our love for the church ought to involve a life-long commitment. Love is not a mere accident of personality but a divine commandment. The Bible commands love too frequently for us to assume that loving is not a choice we make. We can choose either to love the Lord or not to love Him. Likewise, we may choose whether we love the church. Of course, the love commanded is not a mere emotion or a giddy sentimentality. **It is a commitment to the church’s welfare.** One who truly loves the church will defend it (when it is right), sacrifice for its good, and be a faithful member.

Author Unknown

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermons

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

Bible Classes

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes.html>

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Defender

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/defender.html>

Beacon

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/beacon.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and *Beacon*

Available Via Email

Send your email address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Carla Burleson

Bill & Pam Busch

Heather Stark

Please Remember

December 31

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

Weekly Services

Sunday

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

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad