



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>

Email: bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Vol. LV

2026

January

January 5
January 12
January 19
January 26

May

May 4
May 11
May 18
May 25

September

September 7
September 14
September 21
September 28

February

February 2
February 9
February 16
February 23

June

June 1
June 8
June 15
June 22
June 29

October

October 5
October 12
October 19
October 26

March

March 2
March 9
March 16
March 23
March 30

July

July 6
July 13
July 20
July 27

November

November 2
November 9
November 16
November 23
November 30

April

April 6
April 13
April 20
April 27

August

August 3
August 10
August 17
August 24
August 31

December

December 7
December 14
December 21
December 28



BEACON

Vol. LV / No. 1

January 5, 2026

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

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

The Completeness and Perfection of New Testament Forgiveness

Kent Bailey

Forgiveness is a crucial component of God's scheme of Redemption. When we consider this, we find that in the minds of many individuals, it is difficult to comprehend this subject. Some individuals refuse to extend such to others, whereas others find it difficult to accept. Divine forgiveness is extended as a conditional blessing of New Testament Christianity.

The Nature of Forgiveness

Forgiveness (aphesis) denotes a dismissal, release, sending away, or taking leave. It is a medical term often used concerning releasing the consequences of a diseased body. Spiritually speaking, it is identified regarding that of sin. There are affirmative and negative connotations regarding this specific term.

It does not erase the fact that sin has been committed. It does not deny that the attributes of God's righteousness, justice, and holiness have been violated. It does not blot from our minds the reality of the memory of sin (Psa. 51:1-3; 1 Tim. 1:15-16).

New Testament forgiveness is a release from the enormous debt incurred by sin, a renewal of a broken fellowship, and a reconciliation between the offended and the offender. Under the New Testament of Christ, forgiveness is both complete and perfect (Heb. 8:1-13). Contrast New Testament forgiveness with forgiveness

under the covenant of Moses. While one could live and die in good standing with God under the Old Testament, such was accomplished only upon an incomplete pass-over basis. It took the atoning death, burial, and resurrection of Christ for forgiveness to be granted with completeness and perfection (Heb. 9:19-27; Rom. 3:20-25).

The Need for Forgiveness

The case is that the death of Christ was universal in scope for all accountable individuals. All accountable individuals who live in an unforgiven condition live in a state of condemnation outside Salvation (Isa. 53:1-6; 59:1-2; Rom. 3:23; 6:23).

All unforgiven individuals are not guilty of the same sins; however, all unforgiven individuals are guilty of sin. Sins of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21), sins of negligence (Jam. 4:17), religious sins (Col. 3:17; 2 John 9-11; Mat. 7:21-23), and sins of misplaced emphasis (Luke 9:59-62). Accountable humanity stands before God, condemned in sin if not found in a saved state (Rom. 5:1-9).

The Difficulty of Forgiveness

Some individuals have a very low estimate of forgiveness. They view it as insignificant and no greater than an individual placing an order for a material object. While God desires to forgive, one must remember that God's forgiveness

comes at a significant cost (Heb. 9:22; Luke 24:46-47).

To receive God's forgiveness, one must have an attitude of submission. One must be willing to accept the need for such (Rom. 6:23). One must be willing to believe Christ (John 1:12), repent of sins (Acts 17:30), confess our faith in Christ (Rom. 10:10), and be baptized unto the remission of our sins (Acts 2:38). There is also the matter regarding walking in the light (1 John 1:6-10) and maintaining a willingness to forgive others (Mat. 6:14-15; Luke 17:1-3).

God has a justified holy hatred for sin (Pro. 6:16; Heb. 1:9). To view forgiveness as insignificant is to encourage sin. Because of God's love for humanity, He was willing to pay the price that Salvation could be offered.

The Completeness of New Testament Forgiveness

When individuals meet the conditions of Divine forgiveness, God cancels the debt and remembers the sin no more (Mat. 18:27). When sins are forgiven, God no longer holds them against us. When we receive God's forgiveness, God will never remind us of them again (Luke 15; Psa. 103:12; Isa. 38:17).

The Old Testament was given as a schoolmaster to educate humanity regarding the horrible-ness of sin. While God, under the Old Covenant, made provision for sin through animal sacrifice, the completeness of God's forgiveness was not fully realized until the New Covenant became operative (Heb. 10).

The Blessedness of the State of Forgiveness

When one receives God's forgiveness, the barrier brought about by sin is removed. When one receives the forgiveness of God, it relieves the burden of dread and fear (1 John 4:17-18). When one is forgiven by God, it should create within the forgiven a disposition and desire to forgive others when they repent (Eph. 4:31-32; 1 John 4:11). When one is forgiven by God, it causes the human soul to rejoice (Acts 8:39; Rom. 4:6-8).

The Faithful Christian Must Learn to Live with Forgiveness

Even though individuals have either obeyed the Gospel of Christ or have, as fallen children of God, repented of sins and have been restored to the fellowship of Christ, some sincerely question if God has forgiven them. Sin is a horrible concept. The blood of Christ is powerful enough to remove all sins' stains if applied to our lives (1 Tim. 1:12-20; Luke 17:1-4).

Repentance is a change of mind. It is accomplished by our decision to forsake sin. This does not mean that when a Christian sins, he no longer forgives; it means that we still have the promise of forgiveness if we do not move beyond the scope of repentance (Heb. 10:16-17).

Once we meet the conditions of God for forgiveness, we have done all we can. Let us move forward trusting Christ with determination to live for him.

Calhoun, GA

Great Is Your Reward

Charles Pogue

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus instructs that we rejoice and be glad in persecution because "great is your reward in heaven" (Mat. 5:12). Just how great is that reward, and what makes it great? Consider the following characteristics about the heavenly reward.

It will be a secure reward: In this world, men sometimes install locked gates or alarm systems for security. Heaven will need no such security measures. Heaven is so secure, that there is no need for its gates to be shut at all by day, which means they will never have to close, because

there is no night there (Rev. 21:25). Two verses later we learn nothing that defiles, makes abomination, or works a lie can enter therein. Heaven is secure, because it is where the throne of the almighty and everlasting God is. No enemy can enter there.

It Will Be a Sublime Reward

With the city described as having a street of gold and twelve gates of pearl (21:21), it is a glorious place. As brother Teddlie's beloved hymn says, "We read of its beauty, but somehow we know, its glory has never been told." Of course, the street is not literally gold, and the gates are not literal pearls, but the description is what the mind of mortal man can grasp. The reward of heaven where we will be in the presence of the Creator, and the perfect Christ who gave His life for us, cannot be surpassed for its magnificence and grandeur, or for the character of all its inhabitants.

It Will Be a Shared Reward

When Paul wrote to Timothy that there was a crown of righteousness laid up for him (2 Tim. 4:8), he also said, "And not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." Sometimes people are asked, if you could sit down and converse with any famous person from history, who would you choose? What an expectation it is that we shall be in heaven with all the redeemed from all the ages. Sharing the great reward with great persons of faith, being able to converse with Moses, Elijah, Jeremiah, Paul, and the martyr Stephen, holds great expectation for those who love God and keep His commands.

It Will Be a Spotless Reward

Nothing will be in heaven that can defile its absolute purity (Rev. 21:27). "For without *are* dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" (22:15). *Pure* is in the description of things described in relation to the city, including the "river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God" (22:1). The purity or spotlessness of the city

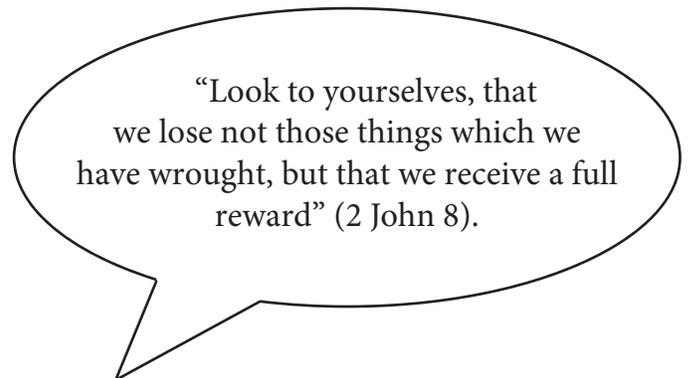
emanates from the absolute sinless perfection of God Himself. How could the Christian's reward in heaven be anything other than spotless?

It Will Be a Sustained Reward

Jesus said those who leave houses, brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers, wives, children, or lands for His sake and the Gospel would receive a hundred fold in this time and in the world to come, eternal life (Mark 10:29-30). In all, 26 verses in the New Testament refer to "eternal life." Peter wrote that we are begotten, "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Pet. 1:4). Men have a saying that all good things must end, but that is not true of heaven. An old illustration was that if a bird flew around and around the world and only once in each revolution just grazed the surface of the ground, when he would have the earth worn away, eternity would only have just begun. Actually, it is impossible to speak of a beginning or end of eternity, because as Revelation 10:6 says, "there should be time no longer."

The faithful child of God's reward is heaven. Heaven will be a secure, sublime, shared, spotless, and sustained reward. Let us, as John warns look to ourselves that we do not lose what we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward (2 John 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>

Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Carla Burleson

Bill & Pam Busch

Heather Stark

Please Remember

January 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.

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. LV / No. 2

January 12, 2026

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

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

“Master, Thus Saying Thou Reproachest Us Also.”

Lee Moses

The Lord has certainly never been a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34-35). Upon one occasion, Jesus Christ accepted an invitation to dine with a Pharisee, a highly respected member of the community (Luke 11:37; compare with Acts 5:34). But upon reclining to dine, being aware of the false doctrine held by this Pharisee, Christ presented a caustic rebuke of the man's sect (Luke 11:39-44). There was also a lawyer present at the occasion. Lawyers, who were responsible for interpreting, teaching, and making decisions based on the Law of Moses, were closely associated with the Pharisees. As such, the lawyer took offense at Christ's rebuke of the Pharisees and responded, “Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also” (11:45).

The lawyer demonstrated a certain amount of perceptiveness in this observation. Jesus had rebuked the Pharisees for specific charges, including hypocrisy, misplaced priorities, self-exaltation, and causing others to stumble. Though the charges were pretty specific, the application was not limited to those to whom the charges were specifically made. The application was to all who were guilty of those charges.

God has provided mankind with the Bible. Contrary to the assertions of some, the Bible is a book that is relevant, necessary, and applicable to each man and woman who has lived or is yet living today. Some people read the epistles of Paul and assume that the instructions therein

apply only to the churches or individuals to whom they were directly addressed. However, neither Paul nor the Holy Spirit who inspired him intended that his instructions be limited to the churches to whom they were directly addressed. God commanded that the epistles were to be circulated among the different churches: “And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea” (Col. 4:16). Paul taught the same doctrine “every where in every church” (1 Cor. 4:17). So, all the churches were bound by the instructions given to other churches. This is yet true of the church today. The church is built upon the foundation of the doctrine taught by the apostles and prophets (Eph. 2:19-20; 1 Tim. 3:14-15). Does it not then follow that all who seek to be a part of the church of Christ, the body of the saved (Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:23; 1:22-23), must be built upon the doctrine that includes Paul's epistles? (1 Cor. 3:10-11; 1 Pet. 2:5).

Some read the seven letters to the churches of Asia (Rev. 2-3) and see that specific problems were being addressed. Thus, some might once again conclude that the application of these letters is limited to those churches. But note that each letter concludes with the admonition, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches” (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). Do you have an ear? That is, do you have

the capacity to hear or read these things, Divinely revealed to the seven churches of Asia, and to understand them? Then you are commanded to **hear** them. Hearing is not limited to perceiving someone else's problem. The beatitudes are pronounced regarding the book of Revelation, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that **hear** the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein"; and, "blessed is he that **keepeth** the sayings of the prophecy of this book" (1:3; 22:7). When anyone **hears** the Word of God, he also has the responsibility of applying that Word to himself. James warned:

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. 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 (Jam. 1:22-25).

Jesus spoke of the secure salvation of "Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them [**continue** to come, hear, and do]" (Luke 6:47-48). *Whosoever* means anyone in any place and at any time. But one who does not hear and do Jesus' sayings cannot have the solid rock of salvation as his foundation (6:49). Jesus' *sayings* obviously includes His teaching done while on earth (Matthew–John), but it also includes His teaching done through His apostles and the other Divinely inspired writers (John 16:12-13; 1 Cor. 2:16). It is each person's responsibility to hear, apply, and obey the New Testament. Jesus said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). From the time His Word was

given until the last day the earth shall stand, His Word is the one unchanging standard to which all men and women must conform their lives. Even in the Old Testament, lessons are found that need to be applied today (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:6, 11).

Can one not look at the letters written to first-century churches, and see that the same issues need to be addressed today? The specter of denominationalism, which hangs over the religious world today, was addressed by Paul (1:10-13; 3:3-4). As homosexuals today attempt to thrust their agenda upon this country's population, the Scriptures remain that address this subject (Rom. 1:26-27, 32; 1 Cor. 6:9-11). Although materialism continues to claim souls, this was a problem Christ addressed in the first century (Rev. 3:16-18). As television and other media sources attempt to bombard our senses with sensual images, the Christian's defense is found in the New Testament (Eph. 6:11-17; Phi. 4:8). The greatest problem that has ever beset mankind still exists today—how one can be saved from his sins. The answer is to be found only in the New Testament of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:16; 6:16-18).

Many rebukes are found in the New Testament. Although they may be directly addressed to other churches or individuals, one must examine one's own life as one reads the Scriptures. The Word of God is intended to prick the heart of each man and woman that he might correct that which is amiss in his life (Psa. 119:59-60; 2 Cor. 13:5; 2 Tim. 3:14-17; Heb. 4:12; 2 Pet. 1:3-4). As Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for several sins they were guilty of, the lawyer saw that he was guilty of the same sins and thus stood rebuked as well. In this sense, the lawyer demonstrated a perceptiveness that it would serve us well to emulate.

While the lawyer in a sense demonstrated his perceptiveness, he in another sense demonstrated his naïveté and ignorance by attempting

to correct Jesus: “Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also” (Luke 11:45). The lawyer perhaps expected a retraction or apology from Jesus, but there was not forthcoming. Instead, Jesus rebuked the lawyers even more scathingly than He did the Pharisees (11:46-52). Each man or woman living today needs to be perceptive enough to realize when a Biblical rebuke applies to him. However, he must not be so naïve as to think that the Lord will change His mind about

applying either the application or the punishment to anyone.

For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you (1 Pet. 1:24-25).

Union City, TN

Don't Lose Heart

At least seven times in the New Testament, we are told how important it is **not to lose heart** (Luke 18:1; 2 Cor. 4:1, 16; Gal. 6:9; Eph. 3:13; Col. 3:21; Heb. 12:3). Indeed, as Christians, we must not allow discouragement to weigh us down and cause us to give up. **Someone once said that discouragement is the most favorite tool that the devil uses to cause Christians to fall away from God, and I believe it!** Sadly, countless numbers of Christians over the years have given up serving the Lord because they “lost heart.” Whether it was a besetting sin, a fiery trial of some kind, or the lack of *results* in doing God’s work, somehow, they decided that there was no point in trying anymore. They became weary or exhausted and gave up hope. Have you ever felt that way? How can we prevent this from happening? How do we not “lose heart”?

Look to Jesus: “For consider him that hath endured such gainsaying of sinners against himself, that ye wax not weary, fainting in your souls” (Heb. 12:3). Every day we need to consider what Jesus did for us so we could be saved. **Jesus did not give up on us; neither should we give up on Him!**

Look to Eternity: “Wherefore we faint not; but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day” (2 Cor. 4:16). We will lose heart if we lose sight of our

eternal home in Heaven. This world is not all there is. We must look at the things that are “not seen” or eternal every day (4:18).

Look to Your Brethren: “Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God: but exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called To-day; lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin” (Heb. 3:12-13). Isolation from other Christians can be devastating to the heart. Seek out spiritually minded brethren and keep company with them often. Everyone needs encouragement!

Author Unknown

In the footprints on the sands of time
some people leave only the marks of a heel.

Take care of your life and the Lord will
take care of your death.

Example is a lesson all men can read.

Worry is the interest you pay on trouble
before it comes.

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 Burleson

Bill & Pam Busch

Heather Stark

Please Remember

January 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.

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. LV / No. 3

January 19, 2026

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

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

The Lord's Choice in a Church

Marvin L. Weir

There is a slogan that has been extremely popular for many years. In most newspapers that advertise the worship services of churches in any community, you will find these words of encouragement: “**Attend the Church of Your Choice.**” These words please most people and are the primary reason they appear in the paper each week. It is the *democratic* thing to do. Most people are satisfied with the slogan, as they believe it brings glory and honor to Christ. But does it? This is the question for us to consider as we turn to the only book that can give us a truthful answer—the Bible.

Long before the birth of Christ, it was prophesied:

in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever (Dan. 2:44).

Jesus, during His ministry on earth, said to Peter,

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).

One will note that *church* is singular, not plural. Christ promised to build only one church—His church. Other inspired Scriptures affirm this truth. The apostle Paul notes that there is but “one body” (Eph. 4:4). One will also observe that the Scriptures affirm that Christ is the “head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (1:22-23). Paul also records that Christ promised to save only His “body” (5:23).

Since God does not lie (Tit. 1:2) and His Word is always true (John 17:17), let us ask some questions. If Christ were on earth today:

1. Would He attend His church or some man's church?
2. Would the Savior attend the church purchased with His own blood (Acts 20:28) or one purchased with man's money?
3. Would the Lord attend a church of which a man or group of men serves as its head or the one of which He is its head?
4. Do you believe Jesus the Christ would attend a church governed by the creeds and votes of men that continually change or the church that is governed by His Word, which has forever been settled in Heaven (Psa. 119:89)?

5. Would the Lord attend a church authorized by His Word or a church that man authorizes?
6. Does or does not the Lord's choice in a church matter?
7. Which church would He choose to attend?
8. Would Christ choose the church that wears His name and thus gives Him the honor and glory that is rightly His, or would He choose a church wearing a man-made name that honors a human being?

These are questions that demand serious thought, cannot be successfully ignored, and certainly deserve an answer. Most people choose a *church* for the wrong reason:

1. Some choose a particular *church* because of its beautiful architecture. We are not, however, commanded to worship the building, so this is not a valid reason.
2. Some choose a *church* solely because of what it can **offer** their children. Their children's wants and desires evidently mean much more to them than the Lord's commands. They have in mind fun and games, pizza parties, ski trips, camping trips, volleyball, softball, and an appealing chauffeur (oops, youth minister) to shuttle the young folks to and from their entertainment appointments. But the truth of the matter is that the Lord's church is **not** in the entertainment and recreation business. Period! Parents should be the "youth directors," and they are the ones responsible for all recreation and entertainment engaged in by the young people.
3. Some folks choose a *church* because of its size, as if large numbers are to be equated with spiritual success. The truth is that only a few were saved in the ark (1 Pet. 3:20) and a few, not many, will be in Heaven (Mat. 7:13-14). Why is it so often true that numbers carry more weight with men than the Lord's will?

If one is genuinely interested in the salvation of his soul, he will undoubtedly desire to attend the Lord's church! One distinguishing characteristic of the Lord's church is that it was established on the Day of Pentecost in AD 33 as promised in Holy Scripture. Any *church* that comes into existence after AD 33 cannot be the Lord's church. The name (designation) "**church of Christ**" is not a man-made name but a Scriptural term (Rom. 16:16). It does not honor and glorify man. It shows ownership and gives honor and glory to the one whose blood purchased the church—the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:28).

No, the "attend the church of your choice" slogan is **not** found in the Bible! This alone should raise a red flag in the mind of anyone who believes in the authoritative Word of God. This slogan is the product of man's thinking and man's wisdom. One should remember Jehovah declaring:

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, Neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are my ways higher than your ways, And my thoughts than your thoughts (Isa. 55:8-9).

All roads do **not** lead to Heaven, as so many believe. Jesus is clear in declaring, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). There are not many "ways," or many "truths." Eternal life is found only by following the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. One cannot have it his way and the Lord's way!

"Sorrow *is* better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better" (Ecc. 7:3).

Why not choose to be a member of the Lord's church that He promised to build? Obey the Gospel plan of salvation: **Hear** (Rom. 10:17), **Believe** (Heb. 11:6), **Repent** (Luke 13:3), **Confess** (Rom. 10:9-10), and be **Baptized** for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16) so the Lord can add you to His church (Acts 2:47).

Choose the congregation of the **Lord's church** you attend because of people's love, reverence, and respect for the Word of God. Are you willing to abide by the Lord's choice in a "church?" Make your choice the Lord's choice so your soul may prosper (3 John 2)!

Blossom, TX

The Value of Older Christians

Richard Stevens III

"Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I *am* the LORD" (Lev. 19:32). Some definitions are in order. *Hoary* is the Hebrew word *seybah* (say-baw) meaning gray, or gray hairs, symbolizing old age. *Old man* is the Hebrew word *zaqen* (zaw-kane') meaning older man or woman. The conclusion for our learning (Rom. 15:4), is that all older people should be respected and honored because of their old age. Of course, there are older people who live foolishly as though there is no God (Psa. 14:1; 53:1). However, even the aged wino, bum, and prostitute should receive some respect because of their age, maybe in the way of a greeting or answer, "Hello sir," or "no ma'am."

Older people that live for the Lord are esteemed by God, "The hoary head *is* a crown of glory, *If* it be found in the way of righteousness" (Pro. 16:31). God is praising the "spiritual work" in their life. Unfortunately, many brethren have concluded that older Christians are all but useless. They can no longer knock doors, cut the yard, pass communion trays, teach young children, or do a host of other things they used to do. But notice what God says about His older faithful servants, "They shall still bring forth fruit in old age" (Psa. 92:14). Older members, and all Christians for that matter, should always continue, "abounding in the work of the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58).

The problem older Christians face is one of ignorance from the very ones they are supposed to "pass the torch to." Far too many brethren want to put these valuable servants "out to pasture," because of their inability to see their worth. Because age has now rendered them unable to do the physical things they used to do before the "evil days" (Ecc. 12:1), but they most certainly are still capable of making spiritual contributions to the brethren and community through their examples and wisdom.

Just think of it, where would we be without older Christians? If you were to dissect the local congregation into groups, they are the most punctual to our services. They are the ones most likely to have their Bible. Percentage-wise, they are the best givers. They are the wisest, "in length of days understanding" (Job 12:12). Rehoboam made a grave mistake, not listening to the older faithful men (1 Kin. 12). Older Christians are the most faithful in attendance. They come on crutches, walkers, in wheelchairs, or leaning on someone's arm. They come with oxygen masks and tanks. They come in pain and in discomfort. They come to worship God, learn of Him, and live for Him! Older Christians are examples of the type of dedication it takes to go to heaven!

Copied

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>

Example is a lesson all men can read.

Worry is the interest you pay on trouble before it comes.

Real joy comes not from ease or riches or from the praise of men, but from doing something worthwhile.

Author Unknown

Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Carla Bureson

Bill & Pam Busch

Heather Stark

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. LV / No. 4

January 26, 2026

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

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

His Glory, Our Trust—His Death, Our Glory

Doug Post

When a person knows the Lord, they will come to trust Him. How could anyone fail to trust God, and to believe His Word, when they know Him to be the Almighty Creator (*Elohim*), the self-existing One (*Jehovah*), and the gracious Master (*Adonai*)? When they further learn that He is none other than Jesus Christ (“anointed Savior”), surely, they ought to believe and bow in thankful love, calling Him “**Lord**.”

John writes about how knowing and trusting Christ comes about in our own lives:

Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him (1 John 2:3-5—NKJV).

The word for *trust* means “take refuge in.” We can trust our Lord for protection from harm, want, all the attacks of the wicked one, and finally, hell itself. That trust is well placed because the Lord never forsakes those who truly trust Him.

The Word of God establishes this truth over and over again, “for the LORD your God is a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them” (Deu. 4:31). David says, “I have been young, and *now* am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, Nor

his descendants begging bread” (Psa. 37:25). These are glorious promises, fulfilled through the death of Christ for our sins, and to bring about our trust (faith) in the promise of the Father, Jesus had to die.

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting for Him, for whom *are* all things and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified *are* all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying: “*I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.*” **And again:** “*I will put My trust in Him*” (Heb. 2:9-13).

Of course, men did not kill Jesus by themselves; Jesus allowed men to kill Him as the sacrificial Lamb of God. Jesus tells us this fact:

Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father (John 10:17-18).

John later writes, “By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we

also ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren” (1 John 3:16).

Christ willingly received brutal punishment and shed His blood for our sins. We put our

trust in Him and His sacrifice because we believe the message of the cross (1 Cor. 1:18).

Irving, TX

“Knowing the Terror of the Lord, We Persuade Men”

There are several members of the Lord’s church who, through spiritual weakness, have fallen away and become unfaithful. But in eternity they will be “Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith” (1 Tim. 5:12). And because of this, “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men” (2 Cor. 5:11). **What causes a once faithful member of the Lord’s church to become unfaithful?**

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin (Heb. 3:12-13).

It is when our **faith becomes weak** to the point of unbelief that we fall away. When one falls away, he usually begins to forsake the worship assembly. God’s Word commands us who are faithful not to forsake the assembly of the church (10:24-27). We are to encourage and exhort one another to be faithful. **Unless** that brother or sister, who is forsaking the assembly, repents, there is no longer any sacrifice for forgiveness of his sins. If one dies in that condition, they will be eternally lost. We should never want to see anyone lost in Hell. But Jesus says:

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

Here we see that **only a few** will go to Heaven, **but most people** will be eternally lost in Hell. But what should we do when we see one of our brothers or sisters depart from the faith?

“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). The Lord is depending on us, those of “you who are spiritual,” to help restore one to the Lord. God’s Word tells us, “above all things being fervent in your love

Grace is Conditional

Some cannot comprehend that the grace of God is compatible with works. They surmise that if salvation is by the grace of God, it cannot be by works. On the contrary, salvation is both by grace and works. These works are not works of human merit or works of the law of Moses, but they are works of righteousness (Acts 10:35), which are the conditions God established for man to obey. God extends His grace upon certain conditions.

Suppose a particular rich man tells a young friend that he will give him a million dollars if the friend names his first child after him. When his friend meets the condition, will he earn the million dollars? No! One does not earn a million dollars simply by naming a child after someone. It was a gift; he received it by merely meeting the conditions. So, it is with the grace of God. To receive the grace of God, obey the Gospel, and work the works of righteousness.

Author Unknown

among yourselves” (1 Pet. 4:8—ASV). **If we really love one another**, we will not want to see any of our brothers or sisters in Christ lost. “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). The good we have opportunity to do **includes** helping to restore an unfaithful brother or sister. What greater love could we have for one another? “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9). **The Lord does not want anyone to be lost**; He is depending on all of us to help save the unfaithful and lost. God’s Word tells us:

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).

When this happens, that unfaithful brother or sister in Christ can once again have the hope of Heaven and not Hell.

Please look around and see who has been habitually missing from the services of the church, and make it your mission to visit them—encourage them to return to the Lord and be faithful. If they hear you, you have saved a brother, and the Lord will be very pleased (Luke 15:7).

Author Unknown

The leading rule for a man of every calling is diligence; never put off until tomorrow what you can do today.—Abraham Lincoln

None preaches better than the ant, and she says nothing.—Benjamin Franklin

Every moment is the right one to be kind.—
Author Unknown

Safe at Home

H. L. Gradowith (Tim Smith)

He is coming back to take us Home with
Him
To the Shining City He’s prepared
foursquare,
We will never shed a tear or suffer pain
In that lovely land of praises over there.
We will never weep beside an open grave
And our bodies won’t be touched by sick-
ness then;
We’ll sit down with all the saved of ages
past,
And He’ll once for all remove from us all
sin!

He will call our name up there and say,
“Well done,”
And we’ll walk and talk with all the
sainted dead;
Only we will not be dead there anymore
As the church is joined forever with her
Head!

We will never meet a person we won’t
like,
And up There we’ll know as also we are
known;
When the saints have heard the Resurrec-
tion Call
We will find ourselves at long last safe at
Home!

All the mysteries that here befuddle us
Will at long last be made clear to us as
day,
Now the only question with which we
must deal:
Are you ready with the Lord to fly away?

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

Heather Stark

Please Remember

February 15

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. LV / No. 5

February 2, 2026

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

The Most Disbelieved Verse in the Bible

Charles Pogue

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). The preceding verse, or at least a portion of it, is arguably the most disbelieved verse in the entire Bible. Earlier today, I spent some time on a Bible Helps website that contains numerous versions of the Bible, commentaries, original languages, *Strong’s Concordance*, and a list of sermons. Out of curiosity, I went down the list of sermons on the above verse. Out of approximately 60 sermons, only one was about baptism. The author of this sermon, which included false teaching on the subject, called baptism a Christian rite and denied it was then or is now unto the forgiveness of sins.

Why do men reject what this verse so clearly, plainly, and explicitly says about the command to be baptized for the remission of sins? The simple answer is most religious people have embraced the false idea that man can do nothing toward salvation, which he regards as a human work. With this idea, men contradict their doctrine because they affirm that faith is required for salvation, yet both 1 Thessalonians 1:3 and 2 Timothy 1:11 define faith as a work. Men deny what Acts 2:38 says and their false doctrine that man contributes not one whit to his salvation. As an additional thought, baptism is not man’s work but God’s!

After reading the error about Acts 2:38 in the hosts of sermons on the verse, I wondered what such men would say if the site included some sermons on 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.” There were only three sermons listed as those that dealt with the passage. One dismissed it altogether. One claimed that the water saved one in baptism. No, it is the blood of Christ which washes away sin; baptism is the point when it does (Acts 22:18). The third man hem-hawed around on the verse and attempted to deny the efficacy of baptism by stating in an unclear fashion that baptism cleanses the conscience while the Savior cleanses the soul of sin. Indeed, the Savior cleanses the soul of sin, but we learn when the cleansing occurs in Acts 22:16, which we mentioned above. “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”

In Paul’s letter to the Romans, he wrote these inspired words:

Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known

to all nations for the obedience of faith: To God only wise, *be* glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen (Rom. 16:25-27).

The only faith that will save is obedient faith. To have an obedient faith, one must follow the commands of God. One of those commands is to be baptized. “And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed

they him to tarry certain days” (Acts 10:48). Why will men not lay aside the false doctrine of man that you are saved by faith only then can join the church of your choice instead of being baptized into Christ for the remission of sins and thereby added to the one church which the Lord gave His life to purchase with His blood? (20:28).

Deceased

Blessings Attained from a Study of the Bible

The benefits and blessings of studying God’s Word are innumerable. Perhaps first and foremost is the salvation from sin that is bound up in a thorough knowledge of the Book of books. Without divine revelation, man simply could not know how to please God. Beyond the hope of eternal life, there are those daily benefits that come from a good working knowledge of and an application to one’s life of those things contained within the pages of sacred writ. Volumes have been written, and hours have been spent in declaring verbally the blessings that are attained from a study of the Bible—whether individually, socially, or nationally.

The Power **in** the Word of God

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). Resting in their hands, draped across their laps, or laying on the cold concrete floor in front of them, each of these Christians possessed heaven’s power to move mountains—not physical mountains, but the mountain of a hard heart and stubborn will. This book, which we call “The Holy Bible,” is not a dead letter needing assistance from some direct operation of the Holy Spirit, but a living, active document that breathes life into the spiritually dead soul and gives sight to the spiritually blind. Like the dynamite that was used to reshape this mountain just south of Hyderabad, the Word of God has within it the power to

reshape the lives of those with whom it comes in contact.

The Profitability **from** the Word of God

Every scripture inspired of God *is* also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16).

Our affluent society, with its Wall Street wizards, lives and breathes profit and loss. They have been deceived into thinking that the only profit worth anything is the one that can be measured in a monthly financial statement or the stock market report in the *Wall Street Journal*. These Christians in Hyderabad are likely unfamiliar with the massive profits that come with buying and selling stocks and bonds at the New York Stock Exchange each day. They barely eke out a living, and the experience of making a “profit” is just about as foreign to them as the activities that occur on the other side of the world among those financial giants who know only the profits of material gain. But these Christians, and all Christians, are the only ones who realize actual profit. Their profit cannot be measured in Rupees, Pesos, or Dollars. The profit that comes with a knowledge of God’s Word is experienced in “reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness.” It is God’s Word that provides that profitability.

The Perfection **by** the Word of God

And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build *you* up,

and to give *you* the inheritance among all them that are sanctified (Acts 20:32).

There are two points that emerge from a careful examination of this passage. The first is that God's Word is "able to build *you* up." Perfection is not sinlessness, but maturity. From babies to mature adults, the process is often painful and time-consuming. But a careful and consistent application of God's Word to our lives will slowly give us strength and will provide us with sufficient strength so our resistance to Satan will send him

fleeing as the coward he really is. The second thing that emerges from this passage is the realization that the Word of God can direct and guide every child of God to the inheritance promised to "all them that are sanctified." What a grand day that will be when we hear our Savior say, "Well done, good and faithful servant...enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Mat. 25:21). Only then will we fully understand and appreciate the full value of this wonderful Book we hold in our hands.

Author Unknown

Situation Ethics

Ken Chumbley

Today, we hear, from time to time, the expression, "Situation Ethics." Perhaps some have wondered what this means and whether or not it is an acceptable ethical standard. Let us examine this briefly.

Situation Ethics presents love as the standard for determining whether an action is right or wrong in any given situation. An action is said to be right to the extent that it serves love in the particular situation in which it takes place. Love, therefore, replaces law, vetoes truth, and is determined by the situation. For example, prostitution, murder, etc., would be justifiable if the situation surrounding such contributed to love. (One might ask, "A love for whom and for what?") It is the philosophy of Situation Ethics that is at the root of euthanasia and abortion.

Some attempt to justify Situation Ethics from the Scriptures by quoting and misusing the account of Jesus' disciples plucking ears of corn on the Sabbath Day, as recorded by Matthew in chapter 12. The reasoning that is used is this. Jesus, being Lord of the Sabbath, broke the Mosaic Law out of love for His disciples, thus permitting them to pluck the ears of corn on the Sabbath Day. They contend that David also broke the law out of love for his companions, an act of unlawfulness condoned by Jesus, to justify the

conduct of His disciples. However, an analysis of the passage will prove this to be a spurious interpretation.

First, the disciples' conduct was **lawful**. They had plucked and eaten grain, conduct that was neither immoral nor unlawful (Deu. 23:25). They had only violated the traditions of the Pharisees. Jesus, whose works (John 5:36), teaching (7:16), and commands (12:48-50) were of the Father, termed His disciples "guiltless." They were "guiltless" because they had **not** violated the law, not because Jesus had overridden the law (Mat. 12:1-8).

Further, Jesus did not condone David's actions or those of his followers; instead, He called them **unlawful** (12:4) and used the incident to expose the Pharisees' prejudiced hearts. If the Pharisees had been so concerned about that which was unlawful, why had they not emphasized the flagrant disobedience of David?

That which is right is always right, and that which is wrong is always wrong. Contrary to Situation Ethics, love is governed by and never replaces law.

Matthew 12:1-8 offers no support to the purveyors of Situation Ethics but rather refutes them.

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

Ann Jacobson

Please Remember

February 15

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. LV / No. 6

February 9, 2026

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

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

What About Your Running?

Bob Howton

The book of 2 Samuel is filled with troubling circumstances and contrasts between good and evil. King David is often shown in grave conflict with those of his household. His son Absalom, whom he loved very dearly, but Absalom neither loved nor respected the King, his father. Absalom stood at the city gate and deceived the people with his fair speech and vain promises. He soon had a great following, setting him at variance with his father, King David. This breach continued to grow until, one day, the forces of King David and the followers of Absalom were pitched in mortal combat against each other. You recall that King David charged his men to “*Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom*” (18:5). On a day when 20,000 men were slaughtered, Absalom fled upon a mule and was caught up by his hair, on the limbs of a great oak tree. Joab thrust three darts (Heb. *Macca’ [mas-saw’]*, which means missile, spear, or arrow) into his body and appointed a runner, Cushai, to go and tell the King. Another runner, Ahimaaz, wished to run also, and being allowed, he outran Cushai but had nothing definitive to say to the King. The King sat between the gates, and a watchman was on the rooftop. The watchman spied the first runner and told the porter. He soon spied another runner, and his announcement of the event serves as my focus for the remainder of this article.

The watchman’s words were, “Behold *another* man running alone.... Me thinketh the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok” (18:26-27). Ahimaaz was known for his running, and in a figurative sense, so are we! God sits upon His throne of majesty and mercy and is our Watchman and King. “The eyes of the LORD *are* in every place, Beholding the evil and the good” (Pro. 15:3). David’s watchman said, “Me thinketh,” whereas God would never be in doubt, but would assert, “I know this runner to be (Put your name in this blank!)” In that perspective, let us ask ourselves some soul-searching questions! Remember, “God is not mocked” (Gal. 6:7).

When God beholds me, does He see one who runs to every opportunity to do good? Or rather, does He see one who selfishly tries not to see what needs to be done? Does He watch intently as I run to assemble with the Saints, or does He watch sadly as I attempt to place anything and everything before my Christian duty? When the opportunity comes to give of my means on the Lord’s Day, does He see one who runs to be part of such a wonderful blessing, or does He see one who holds *things* and *worldly treasures* of much greater value than serving God with a thankful heart?

When my “Watchman” sees me dealing with my fellowman, does He observe one who runs to each opportunity to deal kindly and lovingly with

a fellow human being, or does He see a selfish individual who loves only himself? In my worldly pursuits, does God see me running to be with people who have no concern for my spiritual

“It is always more difficult to quarrel with a person after you have prayed with him.”

“Take some of your spare moments and make them into prayer moments.”

Author Unknown

well-being or my interest in God and righteous things? Does He see me running “To” or “From” my duty to God and man? At this traditional “Gift Giving” season, I should like to remind our readers that “now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these *is* charity” (1 Cor 13:13). We know that charity is “Love” and that “God so loved—that He gave.”

May God bless you and yours as you serve Him!

Deceased

How Does the Holy Spirit Dwell in a Child of God Today?

Dub Mowery

In obtaining the answer to the above question, let us commence our inquiry by reading the following Scripture:

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you (Rom. 8:11).

There are several other passages of Scripture that reveal that the Holy Spirit does dwell in a child of God. Therefore, it is not a question as to whether the Holy Spirit dwells in a Christian, but rather **how** He dwells therein. None of those passages designate the manner or mode of the indwelling. There are some unsubstantiated concepts concerning this indwelling of the Holy Spirit. They are as follows: (1) Some believe that the Holy Spirit enters an individual to convert that person. But this is not so because those of the world cannot receive the Spirit (John 14:16-17). In whatever manner a person receives the third person of the Godhead, it is not before they become a child of God. Our God is not a respecter of persons; therefore, He would not send the Holy Spirit to convert some but not others (Acts 10:34-35). The means of converting is the inspired Word given by the Holy Spirit (11:13-14; Jam. 1:21). (2) Others go as far as to

claim to receive the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit. They further boast of being able to speak in tongues and perform other miracles. But the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit was only promised to the apostles (John 14:26; 16:13).

(3) Some brethren are drifting into a concept of special leading of the Holy Spirit separate and apart from the inspired Word. We can be thankful that the Word of God sufficiently provides us spiritual guidance in all things that pertain unto life and godliness (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3).

(4) A fourth concept held by many is that the Holy Spirit literally dwells in us separate and apart from the inspired Word but does not communicate with or influence our human spirit. If that concept were true, the only way a person would know of His indwelling would be from the Bible. But the Scripture does not state that this is a literal indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Not only does the inspired Scripture teach that the Holy Spirit dwells in a child of God, but it also reveals that the Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ also dwell in the redeemed (1 Cor. 6:16; Col. 1:27). How do all three persons of the Godhead dwell in us? The Bible plainly states that “Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith” (Eph. 3:17). This takes place after we learn of Christ by way of the inspired Word and obey His Gospel (Rom.

10:17; 6:3-4; Gal. 3:26-27; 2:20). After learning about the Son of God from the Bible, we hold those truths dear in our heart. As a child of God, it is in that sense that Christ dwells in our hearts by faith. This is exactly the way the Holy Spirit dwells in us. In Galatians 3:2, the apostle Paul writes, "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" The phrase "by the hearing of faith" literally means "by the message of faith." In hearing the Word of God, the Galatians received it into their heart and were

influenced thereby. This continues to be the only way the Holy Spirit directs Christians to do the Heavenly Father's Will. There is nothing mysterious or supernatural in a person studying the inspired Word and applying it to their life. Simply hearing the inspired Word is not enough; we must allow it to germinate in our hearts and bear fruit (Jam. 2:21-22; Mat. 7:21-23; Luke 6:46; Gal. 5:22-26).

Deceased

Ten Reasons Why the Church of Christ Is Nonsectarian

Clarence A. Westapher

1. Because it is a divine institution patterned after the New Testament (Acts 2:38-42).
2. Because the church of Christ does not go beyond the things which are written (1 Cor. 4:6).
3. Because it was established in the right place—Jerusalem; at the right time—the first Pentecost after Christ's resurrection; and under Jewish leadership guided by the Holy Spirit (Acts 2).
4. Because it rejects all human names which cause divisions (1 Cor. 1:12) and wears only Scriptural names (Eph. 3:14-15).
5. Because Jesus purchased it with His blood (Acts 20:28).
6. Because Jesus is the glorified head of the church (Col. 1:18), which is His body (Eph. 1:23).
7. Because a divine institution must have a divine creed needing no revision, nor man made (Mat. 16:18).
8. Because it has no other officers but those we find in the New Testament elders and deacons (Tit. 1:5; 1 Tim. 3:8, 10, 13).
9. Because it insists upon a unity based upon the Bible only (Eph. 4:1-6).
10. Because it will stand forever (Dan. 2:44).

Ten Facts Concerning the Church

1. The church belongs to Jesus the Christ by right of purchase (Acts 20:28).
2. The church will continue to be His church until He shall deliver up the kingdom to God (1 Cor. 15:24).
3. The church includes all of God's children.
4. The church should wear His name because party names and party organizations are condemned in the Bible (1 Cor. 3:4).
5. As Jesus is the head of His church; it would not be fitting for the head to have two hundred and fifty bodies, nor for the body to have two heads.
6. Jesus said, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Mat. 15:13). "Come forth, my people, out of her, that ye have no fellowship with her sins" (Rev. 18:4).
7. Christ never authorized any of the denominational creations.
8. The church of Christ is free from man-made laws, conferences, conventions, synods, and all other ecclesiastical machinery.
9. All spiritual blessings come to the Christian through the church (Eph. 1:3).
10. Christians are promised eternal life (Mat. 25:46; Jam. 1:12).

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

Ann Jacobson

Phyllis Brantley

Please Remember

February 15

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. LV / No. 7

February 16, 2026

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

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

I Am Not Ashamed

Brad Green

Paul, by inspiration, penned:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith (Rom. 1:16-17).

Paul's reasoning for not being ashamed of the Gospel was that God's plan to save man is found therein. To Timothy, Paul wrote:

For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day (2 Tim. 1:12).

Here, Paul introduces the idea of suffering and how it correlates with shame. Based upon Paul's statement, it is noted that one could be made ashamed due to the things that he suffered. Paul, however, was not ashamed despite the things that he suffered for the Cause of Christ. The word here translated, *ashamed*, is from a Greek word which means "to disfigure, to dishonor, to suffuse with shame; make ashamed" (*Thayer's Greek Lexicon*). Paul, therefore, was proclaiming that the sufferings which he endured did not make him feel shame or dishonor. Though many tried to shame, disfigure, and dishonor Paul in an attempt to cause him to cease preaching the truth of God's Word, Paul was not moved. Paul replied:

But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24).

Because Paul loved Jesus and was convinced that Jesus was the Son of God and able to save the souls of those who obey, Paul would let nothing stop him from extolling the glorious Gospel of Christ. Paul would not be shamed, dishonored, or bribed with earthly wealth or fame into preaching anything less or other than "all the counsel of God" (20:27). Paul was determined to continue preaching the truth even if it meant the loss of his life. "I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus" (21:13).

Many today are not ashamed to preach the truth of God's Word, but once faced with shame or dishonor, they are willing to compromise. Though the words which they speak from the pulpit are true, their practice of compromise exposes that they are ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. Preferring the adoration and honor of men rather than the esteem and favor of the Redeemer, many have been shamed into practicing that which they have long taught against (cf. Acts 5:29). The threat of dishonor has led them to ignore the sins of *mighty* men. They have chosen "to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" rather

than “to suffer affliction with the people of God” (cf. Heb. 11:25).

Let us follow the example of the apostle Paul, who was “not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ” and never shamed into compromising the truth of God’s Word for earthly wealth or honor.

Lenoir City, TN

“Then Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

Eight Gifts That Do Not Cost a Cent

The Gift of Listening

But you must REALLY listen.

No interrupting, no daydreaming, no planning your response
Just listening.

The Gift of Affection

Be generous with appropriate hugs, kisses, pats on back, and handholding.

Let these small actions demonstrate the Love you have for family and friends.

The Gift of Laughter

Clip cartoons. Share articles and funny stories
Your gift will say, “I love to laugh with you.”

The Gift of a Written Note

It can be a simple “Thanks for the help” note or a full sonnet.

A brief, handwritten note may be remembered for

A lifetime and may even change a life.

The Gift of a Compliment

A simple and sincere,
“You look great in red,” “You did a super job,”

or “That was a wonderful meal” can make someone’s day.

The Gift of a Favor

Every day, go out of your way to do something kind.

The Gift of Solitude

There are times when we want nothing better than to be left alone.

Be sensitive to those times and give the gift of solitude to others.

The Gift of a Cheerful Disposition

The easiest way to feel good is to extend a kind word to someone.

Really, it’s not that hard to say, “Hello” or “Thank you!”

Friends are a very rare jewel indeed. They make you smile and encourage you to succeed. They lend an ear, they share a word of a praise, and they always want to open their hearts to us. Show your friends how much you care.

Author Unknown

A Funeral Warning

George W. DeHoff

Recently, I had to cancel an engagement with a group of preachers (a dinner engagement, too) to preach a funeral. The funeral was to be at “one o’clock sharp—don’t be late.” I was there—far down a hot dusty road to the back side of nowhere. When I arrived, they had moved the time to three o’clock (sharp). I hung my dignity in the car and walked out to sit under the trees with

a group of men who did not know I was a preacher. They chewed and cussed. They cussed the Campbellites who claim, “You must be in their church to be saved.” Some said they ought to be run out of any community. I kept quiet. My time came at three o’clock.

When I stood to preach that funeral, I counted eighty men who looked like they had never been

to church. Here is part of what I said: “A funeral service is to honor and respect the dead, to speak words of comfort to the sad and words of warning to others. I now give attention to the latter. I see men here who have not been to church in twenty years. Some of you cuss the church and the Bible. You don’t like preachers and do not attend revival meetings. A funeral is the only place a preacher can talk to you because then your big mouths are

closed in the presence of death.” I then described hell as best I could and said that’s where all people will go who do not obey the Gospel and come into the Lord’s kingdom. Fortunately, the lady was a member of the church, so this gave me a good starting point. I know it was out of season, but I preached anyway. No one even thanked me for the sermon.

Deceased

An All-Absorbing Task

Stan Harvey

Every member of the Lord’s church faces an awesome, but rewarding and challenging task, in sharing, defending, and contending for the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3). Handling correctly the Word of God, which is the Truth (John 17:17), must never be approached lightly or unadvisedly! As a faithful Christian, we must “be” all that the Lord demands!

Be purposeful. The world should never have to guess what a Christian’s purpose is, spiritually (2 Tim. 3:10). That purpose, of course, must be the same that Paul wrote:

And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:...According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord (Eph. 3:9, 11).

Although each child of God has differing talents, all should have the same purpose—to reveal the mystery, the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

Be sure, as the Word is sure. Each saint must remember that “the testimony of the LORD *is* sure” (Psa. 19:7). Indeed, God’s “testimonies are very sure” (93:5) and all God’s commandments “*are* sure” (111:7). Peter urges Christians to “give diligence to make your calling and election sure [i.e., firm or steadfast]” (2 Pet. 1:10). Peter does not hesitate to say:

I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know

them, and be established in the present truth (1:12).

The exhortation is clear: Be firm, steadfast, sure of “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). This do joyfully!

Be instant. Can the “charge” from the inspired pen of Paul be any clearer? When Paul wrote, among other things, “be instant in season, out of season” (2 Tim. 4:2), he was emphatic. “Take a stand,” “stand upon it or up to it,” “carry on,” and “stick to it” are the defining characteristics of the command given. When this is understood, there will not be room for timidity in one’s defense of the Gospel of our Lord!

Be not ashamed. Paul fearlessly asserted:

I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day (2 Tim. 1:12).

We must not be ashamed of the Gospel (Rom. 1:16-17). There should be no shame in holding “fast the form of sound words” (2 Tim. 1:13). We must never lower our heads when speaking “the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15). The Lord firmly reminds those who remain faithful, “They shall not be ashamed that wait [to hope strongly, to trust] for me” (Isa. 49:23).

Yes! “Be” God’s servant! Use the irreplaceable moments of your life for purposes that will bestow honor and glory upon God and His Word!

Copied

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](https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist)

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

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

“Courage consists not in hazarding without fear, but being resolutely minded in a just cause.”

Plutarch

“Dare to do your duty always; this is the height of true valor.”

C. Simmons

“No smile is so beautiful as the one that struggles through tears.”

Author Unknown

Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Carla Burleson

Bill & Pam Busch

Heather Stark

Ann Jacobson

Phyllis Brantley

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. LV / No. 8

February 23, 2026

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

The Sad Condition of Blind, Ignorant Cowards, of God's Watchmen

Marvin L. Weir

Watch is defined by the *American Heritage Dictionary* as follows:

To look or observe attentively or carefully, to stay awake at night while serving as a guard, sentinel, or watcher, [and] to stay alert as a devotional or religious exercise; keep vigil.

God's watchmen, whether the prophets of old or elders of today, are responsible for sounding forth an alarm about the enemy and for guarding against the backsliding of the people. Our concern is with the Lord's church today and with those who serve as her overseers.

What will become of the Lord's people if the congregation's elders are blind? Isaiah charged the **watchmen** of his day with blindness (Isa. 56:10), and such a charge is appropriate against elders throughout the brotherhood today. So many today, want to proclaim only God's grace while never warning of compromise, transgression, and blatant disrespect for God's authority. The grace of God will never cover those who defiantly rebel against the Lord's commandments.

God sounded forth a warning to Ezekiel that should send a chill down the spine of every man serving as an elder in the Lord's church. Jehovah told His faithful prophet:

Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thy hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul (Eze. 3:17-19).

The writer to the Hebrews notes:

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit *to them*: for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief: for this *were* unprofitable for you (Heb. 13:17).

Elders will be held accountable by the Lord for not warning the congregation of false doctrine, false teachers, and false hope! Spiritual blindness is fatal, and if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit (Mat. 15:14). What will become of the Lord's people if the congregation's elders are ignorant of God's Word? Isaiah called the watchmen of his day dumb dogs and charged them as being without knowledge (Isa. 56:10).

So many elders today are quick to discern what people think and want, but they have no clue what the Bible teaches about salvation and faithfulness. The problem during Hosea's day is the problem of today—people are being destroyed for

lack of knowledge (Hos. 4:6). How many people truly want to know the mind of God? The Holy Scriptures exist so truth about God's will may be attained (John 17:17; 8:32). The wise man's advice was to buy the truth and sell it not (Pro. 23:23). Far too many elders today have sold the precious truth so they can buy entertainment, excitement, and everything else that placates the wishes of worldly-minded members.

What will become of the Lord's people if the congregation's elders are cowards? Isaiah accused the watchmen of his day of being dumb dogs who cannot bark (Isa. 56:10). It is a matter of fact today, that the majority of those serving as elders in the Lord's church will not bark! They prefer the comforts of the world, the praise of the people, and their own dreams to the reality of God's Word. It is the old spiritual disease of loving the glory that is of men more than the glory that is of God (John 12:43). Cowardly elders have no godly convictions and thus quickly forsake truth for the schemes of men. What will become of the Lord's people if the congregation's elders are at ease in Zion (cf. Amos 6:1)?

Isaiah declared that the watchmen of his day were dreaming, lying down, and loving to slumber (Isa. 56:10). Many elders today do not care

that Bible study is soft peddled or neglected in the congregation they pretend to oversee. Diligent study of the Bible (2 Tim. 2:15) is not likely to pack the pews, so every other program is allowed to flourish while study of the Scriptures is engaged in less. The message that so-called preachers are allowed to proclaim from the pulpit in many congregations today does indeed come from the visions and dreams of men and not from the Holy Scriptures. Godly elders will quickly put an end to such nonsense, but ungodly elders who are at ease in Zion will allow such foolishness to flourish and the Lord's church to be swept into apostasy. Souls are being lost that could be saved with the proper warning from prepared, dedicated watchmen! Let us pray for watchmen (elders) who love the truth and boldly warn of false teachers and false doctrine.

Blossom, TX

“Woe to them *that are* at ease in Zion,
And trust in the mountain of Samaria,
Which are named chief of the nations,
To whom the house of Israel came!”
(Amos 6:1)

“If Baptism Is Essential to Salvation, How Was the Thief on the Cross Saved?”

Johnny Ramsey

Baptism is essential unto salvation, for Jesus said so in Mark 16:16. Peter, by inspiration, said the same thing in Acts 2:38 and 1 Peter 3:21. The apostle Paul Scripturally taught the self-same message in Acts 22:16 and Galatians 3:27. So, it is not the case of **if** baptism is essential, for the Bible abundantly proves it is! How about the thief on the cross? It has always amazed me that this question has become so popular. Even some preachers seem to delight in asking such a question of those who teach (as the apostles did) the necessity of

being immersed in water for the remission of past sins.

What would you think of me if I asked, “Why wasn't David baptized?” Or “What about Daniel—he was saved without baptism—why can't I be?” Why, friends, anyone could see that David and Daniel lived and died under a different covenant in another dispensation of time than we! **And** the Bible teaches that the thief on the cross belonged to that same covenant, that same dispensation! If we could move the thief back a

few hundred years, there would be no controversy over him. But the fact that he lived in the waning moments of the New Testament economy, in the shadow of the cross, has confused the minds of many.

Friends, we are under a different law altogether. We are responsible for obeying Christ's commands—not Moses'. In Matthew 26:28, we read that when Christ shed His blood, it was "The blood of the New Testament." In Hebrews 9:15-17, we learn this occurred **after** His death and ushered in the New Covenant. The thief on the cross lived and died subject to the Law of Moses. You and I shall live and die subject to the will of Christ (John 1:17; Gal. 3:19-28). Therefore, the real question for us is not: "What about the thief on the cross?" the question today is: "What does the New Testament command as prerequisites to salvation from past sins?"

Since the Day of Pentecost, AD 30, the day the covenant of Christ became operative, the Lord has demanded that all accountable beings hear the Gospel (Mark 16:15), believe it (John 8:24), repent of their sins (Acts 17:30), and be immersed in water (8:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-5) for the remission of past sins in order to be saved.

The Day of Judgment will not be a case of what about the thief on the cross. Our eternal destiny will be decided by how we handle the Gospel of Christ—not the Law of Moses! Jesus said that **you** must be baptized to be saved. Have you done that? The "thief on the cross" argument will not save you if you have not. In Matthew 26:28, we learn that the shedding of Christ's blood ushered in the New Testament. Hebrews 9:15-17 teaches that the covenant, of which Christ is the mediator, could not possibly have been in force until after His death. Ephesians 1:20-23 tells us that Christ did not begin to reign until He ascended back to Heaven. With these Bible facts before us, it amazes me that anyone would say that the thief lived under the will of Christ. Notice these facts:

(1) The thief on the cross lived and died before the shedding of Christ's blood. Christ said that

His blood was the blood of the New Testament. The thief died under the Old Testament economy.

(2) The thief died before Christ gave the great commission telling men how to be saved in the Christian dispensation (Mat. 28:18-20; Mark 16:16; Luke 24:46-47).

(3) The thief on the cross died before Christ began to reign as "King of kings, and Lord of Lords" (1 Tim. 6:14-15). Thus, we Scripturally concluded that the thief on the cross did not live under the Law of Christ.

Christ laid down some principles of His religion while He was on earth. The Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5 through 7, is a classic example. Still, the Word of God affirms that Jesus lived and died under the Law of Moses (Gal. 4:4; Mat. 5:17; Heb. 10:9-10). The work of John the Immerser was to **prepare** mankind for the kingdom of Christ. Our Lord's personal ministry also helped in this matter (Mark 1:3; 9:1). There is not any way to escape the fact. The thief on the cross belonged to the Old Mosaic dispensation and not to the regime of Christ. Friends, the will of Christ enjoins baptism as a prerequisite of salvation from past sins (Acts 22:16). You cannot dodge this command by using the thief on the cross.

Deceased

"And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth."

(Heb. 9:15-17).

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>

“Supposing you have tried and failed again and again. You may have a fresh start any moment you choose, for this thing we call ‘failure’ is not the falling down, but the staying down” (Mary Pickford). To stumble is not to fall. To have difficulties is not to fail. The only time failure rests on your shoulders is when you stop getting up. Wanna be a winner? Never stop getting up! God bless.

Tim Smith

Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe	Nancy Travis
Orville & Linda Worley	Carla Burseson
Bill & Pam Busch	Heather Stark
Phyllis Brantley	

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. LV / No. 9

March 2, 2026

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

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

The Second Coming of Christ

Fred E. Dennis

We know that Christ is coming again. There are many reasons why we know this. First, He Himself said so, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there ye may be also*" (John 14:3). This language was uttered by Christ to the apostles the night of His betrayal.

Again, we know that Christ is coming again because the angels say so:

Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven (Acts 1:11).

This language was addressed to the apostles by two angels at the ascension of Christ.

And yet again, we know that Christ is coming again because inspired apostles say so:

And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 The. 1:6-8).

The inspired Paul wrote this to the Thessalonian church.

When is He coming? There has been much speculation and wild guessing along this line. Many dates have been set. These dates have come and gone, but Jesus has not come. What does this prove? It proves that men know nothing "of that day and that hour." When God says that men do

not know, that should settle it. "But of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark 13:32). We ought to thank God that Christ is coming again, and we ought to thank Him that we know not the time of His coming. No doubt there are reasons as high as heaven why the time has not been revealed.

We know not the time of His coming, but we do know something about how He is coming. We have already learned from Acts 1:11 that He is coming as He went. This being true, He is coming in the clouds of heaven.

Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they *also* which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him (Rev. 1:7).

What will take place at His coming? Here, the floodgates of speculation have been torn down! But let us see what the Scriptures say. Let us read slowly and carefully:

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a

shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words (1 The. 4:13-18).

This makes it plain what will happen when the Lord returns. The dead are to be wakened, and “then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.” Yes, we are going to “be caught up together,” and we will all meet the Lord at the same time. What about that word *first*? “The dead in Christ shall rise first.” That is, the ones who are living shall not precede the ones who are dead. No two resurrections with a thousand years or so between are taught in this passage.

When Jesus comes again, the dead will be raised, and all shall be judged. In the last chapter that Paul ever wrote, we hear him saying this:

I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom (2 Tim. 4:1).

What did Paul say Jesus was going to do at His “appearing”? He said He was going to “judge the quick and the dead.” How would you state this more

plainly? If He did not mean what He said, why did He not say what He meant?

In Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus speaks of the judgment “when the Son of man shall come in his glory.” Yes, and He says that at this judgment the “sheep” and the “goats” both will be there! The righteous will be rewarded with eternal life, and the wicked will be punished with eternal damnation. Jesus uses the same word to describe the duration of hell as He does for the duration of heaven. When Jesus comes, that will be the end of time. The gates of time shall be closed, and the doors of eternity opened. May God help us to be ready for the second coming of Christ. My reader, are you a Christian?

Deceased

“Man owes his strength, his energy, chiefly to that striving of the will that conflicts with difficulty, which we call effort. Easy, pleasant work does not make robust minds, does not give men a consciousness of their powers, does not train them to endurance, to perseverance, to steady force of will, that force without which all other acquisitions avail nothing.”

Author Unknown

Sins of Omission

There is much to learn from Jesus’ standing still at the cry of Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46-52). Contemplating the possibility of ruining His perfection with a sin of omission (by ignoring an opportunity to serve when He had the time and ability to do so) is sobering. To have ignored Bartimaeus’ plea on the road from Jericho to Jerusalem would have incurred the same guilt before God as the priest and Levite did when each “passed by on the other side” (Luke 10:31-32). Thankfully, our Lord avoided this potential snare of Satan.

Like termites, sins of omission can slowly weaken and destroy a Christian. Even though you have not committed a scandalous public sin nor has a grievous work of the flesh blackened and scarred your life, you still can be lost. By just minding your own business and doing as little as possible for the cause of Christ, you are feeding a cancerous and deadly sin. In His final parable (Mat. 25:31-46), Jesus declared the real and extreme danger of failing to obey God. The righteous were those who had fed the hungry, given drink to the thirsty, taken in strangers, clothed

the naked, visited the sick, and attended to the prisoners (25:35-36). The unrighteous did not (25:42-43) and were sent away into everlasting punishment (25:46). Failing to do the right thing when you have the opportunity and ability to do good is failing to love your neighbor (Luke 10:25-37). It is impossible to love God acceptably (the greatest commandment) when you fail to love your neighbor (1 John 4:20-21; Mat. 22:37-40).

Doing good unto all (Gal. 6:10) is not a divine suggestion; it is a divine expectation. God expects His children to follow the example of His only begotten Son, who went about doing good (Acts 10:38). Like Jesus, every Christian is to be:

- zealous of good works (Tit. 2:14),
- prepared and ready unto every good work (2 Tim. 2:21; Tit. 3:1),
- walking in good works (Eph. 2:10),
- bearing fruit in every good work (Col. 1:10),
- glorifying God by good works (Mat. 5:16; 1 Pet. 2:12),
- well-reported of for good works (1 Tim. 5:10).

A failure to comply with God's expectations is sin (Jam. 4:17). Sins of omission (i.e., failing to do what God says) are just as effective at keeping you out of heaven as sins of commission (i.e., doing what God says not to do). Therefore, taking an honest and careful inventory of your priorities and actions is essential to being and remaining faithful to God. It is clear, for example, that assembling with brethren for worship and Bible study is God's weekly expectation for His people (Heb. 10:24-25; Eph. 4:15-16). When assembly time comes, are you present, or are you guilty of the sin of omission? Communing with God daily is essential to your spiritual health and growth (Acts 20:32). Reading and meditating upon God's Word, coupled with prayer, are vital to your fellowship with God. Is this your daily habit, or are you guilty of the sin of omission?

God expects His people to show love to strangers (Heb. 13:2). When we have visitors to our services, are you cordial and welcoming, or

Watch What We Sing

Not only is our singing to be scriptural, but we are to guard against singing a lie. For your consideration: The singing of a hymn should be a great experience for us. Someone has written some comparisons on the hymns we sing:

- We sing, "Onward Christian Soldiers" and wait to be drafted into His service.
- We sing, "Sweet Hour of Prayer" and are content with fifteen seconds a day.
- We sing, "O, for a Thousand Tongues" and do not use the one we have as we should.
- We sing, "There Shall Be Showers of Blessings" but do not come to the services of the church when it is raining.
- We sing, "Blest Be the Tie That Binds" and let the least little offense sever it.
- We sing, "Serve the Lord with Gladness" and gripe about all we have to do.
- We sing, "We Are Marching to Zion" but fail to march to Bible school of worship.

Author Unknown

are you guilty of the sin of omission? God expects His children to greet one another warmly. Paul instructed the Philippians to "salute every saint in Christ Jesus" (Phi. 4:21). The apostle John closed his final epistle with the words: "Greet the friends by name" (3 John 14). Paul and Peter both commanded a warm, friendly greeting when brethren are together (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 1 Pet. 5:14). Is this your practice, or are you guilty of the sin of omission?

Sins of omission slowly, steadily, and stealthily extinguish the fire of a Christian's zeal. As zeal diminishes, the deadening disease of lukewarmness increases. Like our Lord, we must ever beware of sins of omission.

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](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

Phyllis Brantley

John Hastie

Please Remember

March 15

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

March 29

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