

Truth

Magazine

TM

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DENOMINATIONAL CONTRADICTIONS

**“Whatever you do in word or deed,
do all in the name of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks through Him to God
the Father” (Col. 3:17, NASB).**



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Features

■ THE SECURITY OF THE BELIEVERS

by Mark Mayberry

pg 4

By rightly dividing the word of God, we can distinguish between the Calvinistic concept of security and genuine confidence that results from our faithful embrace of Christ's redemptive work.

■ "READY TO VANISH AWAY"

by Kyle Pope

pg 6

The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 was a momentous event, but some have built a misguided theology around this date, and thus distort the plain teaching of the biblical text.

■ I COULD NOT DO WITHOUT YOU

by Sherelyn Mayberry

pg 8

Focusing on the words of a beautiful and moving hymn, Sherelyn emphasizes our dependence upon God and need for a Savior.

■ SERMON ON THE MOUNT: HONESTY IN THE KINGDOM

by David Flatt

pg 14

Contrasting today's sad state of ethics and honesty with the high standards outlined in the Sermon on the Mount, David reminds us that integrity is critically important in our efforts to advance Christ's kingdom.

■ I COULD HAVE BEEN A BETTER ATHLETE

by David Halbrook

pg 16

Reflecting on the role that sports played in his youth, David recognizes the trade-offs that result from our priorities and expresses thanks for the blessing of being raised in a godly home that placed a premium upon spiritual growth.

■ QUESTION & ANSWERS

by Bobby L. Graham

pg 18

Considering the context of Colossians 2:14, Bobby discusses what, exactly, was "nailed to the cross."

■ THE VIA DOLOROSA

by Barry Britnell

pg 20

Every day, visitors to Jerusalem walk the Via Dolorosa and later tell their friends that they walked the actual path that Jesus took to the cross. However, is this accurate?



Denominational Contradictions

■ BELIEF IN THE BIBLE, BUT USING CREEDS

by Jesse Flowers

pg 22

Many of our religious friends and neighbors profess belief in the Bible but rely upon creeds, catechisms, and confessions. What is wrong with this approach?

■ TEACHING BAPTISM, BUT NOT FOR SALVATION

by David McPherson

pg 24

Many in the religious world practice some form of baptism but deny that it is essential to salvation. Is this approach scriptural?

■ FOLLOWING CHRIST, BUT IN DIFFERENT WAYS

by Jarrod Jacobs

pg 26

Many profess to follow Jesus Christ but do so in very different ways. Are we permitted such latitude?

■ CHURCHES, BUT NONE ESSENTIAL

by John Isaac Edwards

pg 28

Many emphasize the value of church membership and attendance, yet argue that such is not essential. Is one church as good as another? Does membership matter?

■ WEARING THE NAME “CHRISTIAN,” BUT ALSO WEARING OTHERS

by David Dann

pg 30

Are the denominational designations worn by many who claim to be Christians harmless labels, or are they symptomatic of deeper spiritual problems?

■ WORSHIP, BUT NO EMPHASIS ON TRUTH

by Bob McPherson II

pg 32

Popular notions of “worship” include whatever one decides to offer to God, ironically, often without any consideration of the deference inherent in the act.

The Security of the Believers

by Mark Mayberry

By rightly dividing the word of God, we can distinguish between the Calvinistic concept of security and genuine confidence that results from our faithful embrace of Christ's redemptive work.

Many of our denominational friends emphasize the need for faithfulness, but say that one cannot fall from grace. The Calvinistic concept of "the perseverance of the saints," popularly known as "Once saved, always saved," finds formal expression in *The Westminster Confession of Faith*:

They whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace: but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved (chap. 17, sec. 1).

What is wrong with this approach? By distorting Sacred Scripture, this doctrine provides a false sense of security. In contrast, the New Testament sets forth the basis on which believers may have a true sense of security.

A False Sense of Security

It Contradicts Biblical Teaching

The phrase, "fall away," occurs 11x in ten Bible verses in the New American Standard Bible (NASB). In a physical sense, it described an event that occurred aboard the ship during Paul's journey to Rome, when the soldiers cut away the ropes connected to the lifeboat, letting it *fall away* (Acts 27:30-32, esp. v. 32).

Note David's pronouncement: "I hate the work of those who *fall away*; it shall not fasten its grip on me" (Ps. 101:1-3, esp. v. 3). Consider Jesus' teaching in the Parable of the Sower:

"Those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation *fall away*" (Luke 8:13; cf. Matt. 13:20-21; Mark 4:16-17).

Several predictions about "falling away" occur in the New Testament. Jesus foreshadowed the scattering of the disciples at His betrayal: "You will all *fall away* because of Me this night" (Matt. 26:31, 33; Mark 14:27, 29). Foretelling the mass apostasy that would occur during the Jewish revolt preceding the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, Christ said, "At that time many will *fall away*. . ." (Matt. 24:9-13, esp. v. 10). In like manner, the inspired apostle Paul prophesied of a great *apostasy* (*falling away*) that would occur in the indefinite future (1 Tim. 4:1-5, esp. v. 1).

It Contradicts Biblical Language

The Greek word *skandalizō* means "to put a snare (in the way), hence to cause to stumble" or "to give offense" (Thomas 4624). BDAG says it means "(1) to cause to be brought to a downfall, cause to sin (the sin may consist in a breach of the moral law, in unbelief, or in the acceptance of false teachings)" (Matt. 5:29-30); or "(2) to shock through word or action" (Matt. 13:57; 15:12). As previously noted, Jesus employed this term in discussing the scattering of the disciples (Matt. 26:31; Mark 14:27) and unproductive shallow soil (Matt. 13:21). Other occurrences describe real spiritual danger where one's soul, or that of

another person, hangs in the balance (Matt. 5:29-30; Luke 17:1-2; Rom. 14:21; 1 Cor. 8:13; 2 Cor. 11:29; etc.).

The Greek word *aphistēmi* means "to lead away" or "to depart from" (Thomas 868). BDAG says it means "(1) to cause someone to move from a reference point, in our literature in reference to altering allegiance cause to revolt, mislead; (2) to distance oneself from some person or thing, go away, withdraw." This word is thrice rendered "fall(s) away" (Luke 8:13; 1 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 3:12). Additionally, it communicates the concept of departure (Luke 4:13), desertion (Acts 15:38), or rejection. At the final judgment, Jesus will say to the disobedient, "I do not know where you are from; *depart* from Me, all you evildoers" (Luke 13:27).

The Greek word *ekpiptō* means "to drop away, figuratively, to lose, become inefficient" (Thomas 1601b). BDAG says it means "(1) to fall from some point, *fall*; (2) to drift or be blown off course and run aground, nautical term; (3) to change for the worse from a favorable condition, *lose* figuratively; (4) become inadequate for some function, *fail*, *weaken* figuratively." In addition to its physical usage, of chains falling away from one's hands (Acts 12:7), of a ship running aground (Acts 27:17, 26, 29), or a lifeboat falling away from a ship (Acts 27:32), consider the more consequential spiritual application of falling from grace (Gal. 5:4) or falling from one's own steadfastness (2 Pet. 3:17-18).

It Contradicts Biblical Teaching

From the garden of Eden onward, human history has been repeatedly marred by apostasy and rebellion. The physical nation of Israel *fell away* time and time again. Their failure (and the resulting consequences) serves as a warning to Christians (1 Cor. 10:1-11; Heb. 3:14-19; etc.).

A True Sense of Security

Be Honest with Yourself

We can achieve a true sense of security by avoiding overconfidence. Be honest about your strengths and weaknesses: “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall” (1 Cor. 10:12). In Luke’s account of the last supper, Jesus warned the disciples, saying, “Behold, the hand of the one betraying Me is with Mine on the table” (Luke 22:21-34). Peter did not realize that Satan was about to shake him like a rag-doll. His overconfidence would be his undoing. Remember what Solo said to Skywalker: “Don’t get cocky, Kid!”

Believe in the Lord

We can achieve a true sense of security by believing in the Lord: hear His voice, follow His lead, and trust in His precepts, promises, and power (John 10:22-30). Avoiding an evil, unbelieving heart, let us encourage one another day after day (Heb. 3:12-13; 10:23-25).

Be Alert to Danger

We can achieve a true sense of security by remaining alert to danger. Jesus said, “Be on the alert” (Matt. 24:42-44; 25:13; Mark 13:35, 37). Paul offered a similar warning (Acts 20:31-32; 1 Cor. 16:13; Eph. 6:18). So also did Peter: “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1 Pet. 5:8).

Be Prepared for Conflict

As physical security (of a nation, a business, or a home) involves a balance of defensive and offensive measures, spiritual security requires the same. Using the Roman soldier as an illustration, Paul emphasized the importance of the Christian soldier being fully arrayed with supportive equipment (belt, footwear), defensive equipment (breastplate, shield, helmet) and offensive equipment—the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:10-17; cf. Heb. 4:12).

Avoid Entanglements

As soldiers of Christ, we must guard against distractions (2 Tim. 2:4), and avoid sin’s ensnarement (2 Pet. 2:20). The Greek word *emplekō*, occurring in both these passages, means “to weave” or “entwine” together (Thomas 1707). BDAG says it means “to be involuntarily interlaced to the point of immobility, be entangled.” It could describe a sheep whose wool was caught in thorns. In *Gulliver’s Travels*, Jonathan Swift tells how the Lilliputians (a little people) capture Gulliver (a big man) by binding him with a multitude of ropes. Sin has the same effect in the spiritual realm.

Look for the Way of Escape

Recognizing that God is faithful, determine to be faithful yourself—look for the way of escape (1 Cor. 10:13). God is in control; He knows how to rescue the godly from temptation; yet, we must take responsibility for our own lives. Be accountable. Own your decisions. Do not put yourself (or your family) in a situation where Satan has the upper hand (2 Pet. 2:4-11). In contrast with Lot, who rushed headlong into danger (Gen. 13:5-13), Joseph found the way of escape through flight (Gen. 39:7-12). In the dynamic of fight versus flight, do not be afraid to run—if so doing puts you on a more defensible battlefield position. Flee immorality (1 Cor. 6:18-20) and youthful lusts (2 Tim.

2:22). However, when the battle is upon you, stand and fight (Eph. 6:10-17).

Be Faithful in Testing

How does a metalworker/bladesmith make a strong sword that will not break in combat? Assuming that the blade is made of steel, you can increase the tensile strength by heating it to around 727 Celsius (or around 1340 Fahrenheit) and then rapidly quenching it in water.

God is the Master Craftsman. With a mallet in hand, He places us on the anvil, and hammers away, testing our mettle (i.e., our courage to carry on) by fire (1 Pet. 1:6-7; 4:12-13). The Blade Maker shapes and sharpens and strengthens. Although God subjects us to intense stress, He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you can bear (1 Cor. 10:13). He knows what we can take (Rev. 2:10; 3:10). 📖

Sources

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“Ready to Vanish Away”

by Kyle Pope

The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 was a momentous event, but some have built a misguided theology around this date, and thus distort the plain teaching of the biblical text.

Preterists, who advocate the so-called “AD 70 Doctrine,” argue that Mosaic Law continued after Jesus’ death for Jews until it was finally brought to an end at the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. A passage they often cite in defense of their view is the phrase in Hebrews 8:13 that refers to the Law as “ready to vanish away.” Interpreting this as if it is saying, “It was still in force, but *ready* to end,” ignores the context and seriously misinterprets the force of the passage. The Hebrew writer has just quoted the great promise of Jeremiah 31:31-34 of the coming of and conditions under the “New Covenant” (Heb. 8:8-12). He then refers to what he has just quoted, pointing out, “In that He says, ‘A new covenant,’ He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away” (Heb. 8:13, NKJV). The writer is addressing what “He” (i.e., God) said through Jeremiah. When God spoke these words to Jeremiah, the Law was still in force. The Hebrew writer was describing conditions *when* God spoke to Jeremiah, *not* conditions in the first century. In Jeremiah’s time it was “ready to vanish away,” but when the Hebrew writer wrote, it had already *vanished away*. This is clear from what is taught throughout the rest of the book.

For example, in the previous chapter, he taught, “For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law” (Heb. 7:12).

Three chapters earlier, he said, “Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:14-15). We should note that these were Jewish Christians, yet he identifies Christ as their High Priest. If the Law was still in force, did they have *two High Priests*? No. So, either the Law had changed, or Christ was not High Priest—but the Hebrew writer clearly says, “We *have* a great High Priest” (emphasis mine). He does not say we *will have* (in AD 70). He says, “We *have* a [singular] great High Priest” (emphasis mine). That means the Law had changed and was no longer in force.

Furthermore, he taught, “For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect” (Heb. 10:1). If the Law was still in force, it taught that those who offered sacrifices “shall be forgiven” (Lev. 4:20, 26, 31, 35; 5:10, 13, 16, 18; 6:7; 19:22). In contrast, the Gospel taught, “In those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year” (Heb. 10:3). Christ became “the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant” (Heb. 9:15). The fact that

Christ had become Mediator and Sacrifice made the old sacrifices *imperfect* and useless. He explains, “For the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God” (Heb. 7:19). If the Law was still in force, the “better hope” had not yet come. Preterists agree that the writer is urging his Jewish readers not to go back to the Law as the means of justification, but then attempt to argue that it was still binding on Jewish Christians. That doesn’t add up.

When did this “better hope” come? The Hebrew writer also makes this clear. He writes, “For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives” (Heb. 9:16-17). The New Covenant came into force at the cross—upon the “the death of the testator.” Yet, we should note that the Hebrew writer explains that, when he wrote, Christ had already “entered the holy places” which were in “heaven itself” (Heb. 9:24), at a time, he identifies as “now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (Heb. 9:26). Preterists argue that AD 70 was the “end of the ages.” The Holy Spirit says Christ’s death was “at the end of the ages.” This was when the “better hope” came. This was when the Law changed—not in AD 70.

Finally, let's note some significant things the Hebrew writer taught. He speaks of the "annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness" (Heb. 7:18). We have already discussed some ways in which Mosaic Law was *imperfect*, but in this passage, he speaks of the "annulling of the former commandment." Remember, he is talking to Jewish Christians. The Greek word translated "annulling" is *athetēsis* meaning "abolition, disannulling, put away, rejection" (Thayer). That which is *abolished, annulled, or put away* is no longer in force. He writes further, "For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought

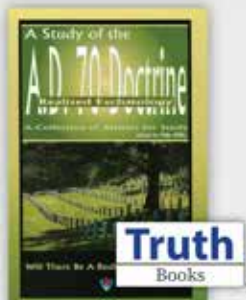
for a second" (Heb. 8:7). He refers to the New Covenant as "a second." Two chapters later he declares of Christ, "He takes away the first that He may establish the second" (Heb. 10:9). That suggests that in order to *establish* the "second" the "first" (i.e., the Mosaic Law) had to be *taken away*. If we argue that the first was still in place, how can we say the second had come? Finally, in discussing ceremonial elements of Mosaic Law, he writes that they were, "concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed *until* the time of reformation" (Heb. 9:10, emphasis mine). We should notice, they were "imposed until" what he calls "the time

of the reformation." I assert that this happened at the cross; preterists say it did not happen until what they call "The Gathering," which they contend occurred in AD 70. This diminishes the value of Christ's sacrifice and the wonder He accomplished in calling all souls into submission unto Him, having taken away the Old Covenant and replacing it with the new. **■**



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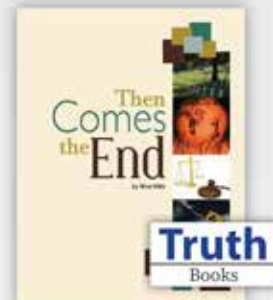
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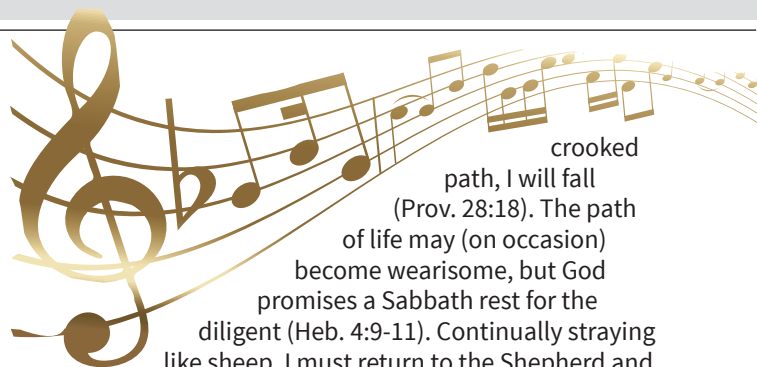
by Sherelyn Mayberry

Focusing on the words of a beautiful and moving hymn, Sherelyn emphasizes our dependence upon God and need for a Savior.

In the song, "I Could Not Do Without You" (*Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs* #313), we learn of the great need that we each have because of our lost condition. We have all sinned and, therefore, need a Savior. What would I do without the Lord? God so loved the world that He sent His Son to die for me that I might have everlasting life (John 3:16). His foreordained plan for man was that the precious blood of Christ would be spilled out as a perfect sacrifice in my stead (1 Pet. 1:17-21). This death of God's Son can redeem me from every lawless deed through my obedience and repentance. As I deny ungodliness and live righteously, I have a blessed hope of the appearing of God and Christ (Titus 2:11-14). Becoming righteous in God's sight through sanctification and redemption, I should not boast in self, but in the Lord (1 Cor. 1:30-31). Realizing that God's blessing of grace gives me the opportunity to be adopted as a son through Jesus Christ, I glory in Him. I plead for mercy while living a holy and blameless life (Eph. 1:3-7).

Apart from God, I have no goodness; I cannot stand alone (Phil. 4:13). As I serve the Lord in this life, I do so by the strength which God supplies (1 Pet. 4:11). Reverence and fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; yet, wisdom does not originate with me (Prov. 9:10). My acknowledgment that I cannot do without Him will lead me to lean on Him and not on my own understanding (Prov. 3:5). When Paul implored the Lord to remove his thorn in the flesh, he recognized that "power is perfected in weakness." Through taking pleasure in distresses for Christ, Paul conceded that his strength came from the Lord. He could say, "For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:9-10).

The "Highway of Holiness" provided by the Lord is the way for the redeemed. Those who walk there have sorrow and sighing replaced with joy and gladness (Isa. 35:8-10). This pathway does not come from man himself, but from the Lord (Jer. 10:23). The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps in the path of righteousness (Prov. 16:9; Ps. 23:3). He will catch me when I fall because He holds my hand and will not forsake the righteous (Ps. 37:23-25). If I walk blamelessly, I will be delivered, but if I choose the



crooked path, I will fall (Prov. 28:18). The path of life may (on occasion) become wearisome, but God promises a Sabbath rest for the diligent (Heb. 4:9-11). Continually straying like sheep, I must return to the Shepherd and Guardian of my soul (1 Pet. 2:25). Thomas said to the Lord, "How do we know the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me" (John 14:5-6).

The life we live is fleeting, but my hope of being with the Lord in eternity gives purpose (Ps. 39:4-5, 7). I do not know what tomorrow may bring, for my life is but a vapor that appears for a little while. What I do know is that God cares for me in this life of passing shadow (Jas. 4:14; Ps. 144:3-4). As I draw near to God, He is my refuge and my good (Ps. 73:28; Jas. 4:8). Maneuvering the storms of life, I trust that the Lord will never leave me, but calms the troubled seas (Luke 8:24). To those who come to God, He offers salvation and draws near to them. The righteous have peace as they face their final rest. Walking through the valley of the shadow of death, they fear no evil for the Lord comforts them and welcomes them home (Ps. 23:4).

Because He offers me salvation through His Son, I cannot do without the Lord. He gives me strength and wisdom to walk throughout my days. God provides the path to lead me to heaven. As I cross over the last river, I long for His outstretched hand, and the words, "It is I" (Mark 6:50). **TL**



Sherelyn Mayberry

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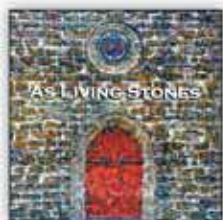
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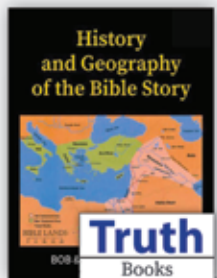
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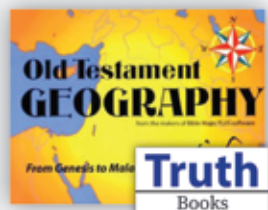
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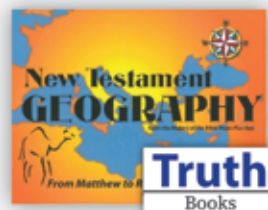
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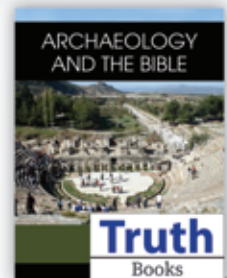
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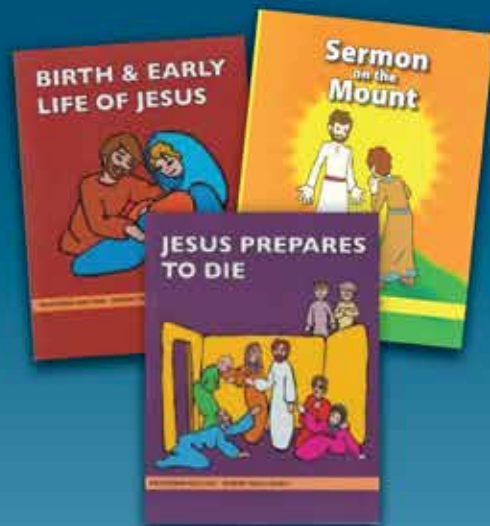


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Discovering



Sermon on the Mount: Honesty in the Kingdom

by David Flatt

Contrasting today's sad state of ethics and honesty with the high standards outlined in the Sermon on the Mount, David reminds us that integrity is critically important in our efforts to advance Christ's kingdom.

Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil (Matt. 5:33-37).

As Jesus continues to describe the ethical holiness of the kingdom, He addresses the subject of honesty. Since the Pharisees had corrupt practices regarding the general mistreatment of others, lust, and marital fidelity, we should not be surprised that they were dishonest people.

Jesus describes a fundamental issue of the Pharisees' perversion of honesty. They were not concerned with honesty so much as they were concerned with perjury. Lying was acceptable so long as a person did not get caught lying while under oath. This is another example of their twisted view of ethics: if something was not illegal, it was ethical. Jesus dealt with this specific flaw of the Pharisees on another occasion:

Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever

shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon (Matt. 23:16-22).

The Pharisees developed a complicated system of oath taking. Like Moses instituting a law to discourage divorce and encourage marital fidelity, the Law was intended to discourage dishonesty and encourage truthfulness (Lev. 19:12-13). Of course, this is not how they interpreted the Law. They found loopholes to legalize deceit. As long as an oath was not taken under God's name, they thought they could be dishonest. They failed to realize that God held them accountable for every word that they spoke, whether under oath or not. Jesus said, "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. 12:36-37).

Honesty Defined

Has our society forgotten what honesty means? Perhaps a basic definition of the term would be helpful for us to consider. The word "honest" means "honorable in principles, intentions, and actions; upright and fair; gained or obtained fairly; sincere; unadulterated; respectable; having a good reputation; truthful or credible" (*Dictionary.com*). None of these terms described the Pharisees. They were leaders without integrity. Although they deceitfully worked to conceal their corrupt practices through hypocrisy, Jesus exposed their true character.

Honesty Today

The qualities of honesty and integrity seem lacking in our society. Many people seem to be most concerned with self-preservation. Everyone seems to be out for themselves. If that means being deceptive and manipulative, so be it. Like the Pharisees, those in positions of leadership today have little regard for truth. Today, people call truth "fake." When confronted with facts, people offer "alternative facts." John Adams once wrote, "Facts are stubborn things; and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passions, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence."

Years ago, people described how absolute truth does not exist in attempts to redefine morality. Today,

we are seeing the effects of such a humanistic worldview. Ethics are now being redefined. Yes, society is quite a mess. Habakkuk, an all-but-forgotten prophet, lamented the lack of integrity in his day when he wrote, “Law is paralyzed, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; so justice goes forth perverted” (Hab. 1:4).

Today, dishonest dealings have led to an ever-present suspicion among people. Love assumes the best; whereas, deceit causes many to assume the worst in everything and everyone (1 Cor. 13). Our leaders are keen on their perception of this present suspicion. They manipulate the masses by feeding the public’s insatiable suspicion and paranoia. Is what is said, reported, posted, or tweeted true? Well, if the information feeds the public’s suspicion and self-interest, they believe it, and promote it. Therefore, our leaders are not solely responsible for the erosion of integrity: we share in the blame. It would seem that what Habakkuk decried all those years ago also applies to our present time.

Before we quickly pass over this brief point in Jesus’ sermon, we would be wise to pause and prayerfully reflect on what He commands. Citizens of His kingdom must be honest people. They are to keep their word and honor their commitments. They are to be truth seekers. They are to be promoters of truth. Honesty is an indispensable asset in gaining a reputation which inspires others to become part of the kingdom.

About Honesty

First of all, honesty produces integrity and justice. The law being ignored and or unfairly applied is proof of dishonest leadership in any context. On a personal level, honesty is that necessary condition of heart which enables people to accurately discern their standing before God and adjust their morals and ethics accordingly. As James wrote, God has called us by the word of His truth.

Unless we meekly receive His word, we will be like a man who looks in a mirror but does nothing about his disheveled appearance (Jas. 1:18-25). Few are willing to be truly honest with themselves. As Jesus explained, men are often afraid of having light expose their hearts, because their deeds are evil. Only those who are true come to the light (John 3:19-21).

Second, honesty is what compels people to admit wrong and seek reconciliation with those whom they have hurt. When King Solomon petitioned God’s presence at the dedication of the Temple, the Lord mentioned Solomon’s father, David. The Lord remembered David as a man of integrity (1 Kings 9:4). With all of David’s failings, how could he have been remembered as a man of integrity? David admitted when he was wrong and passionately sought reconciliation (Ps. 51). Being accountable and making amends are not signs of weakness, but marks of integrity.

Third, honesty is attractive. A leader is not a leader unless he has followers. From this perspective, it seems the Pharisees were leaders without followers. They were disingenuous, and everyone knew it. Contrast this with Jesus. Jesus could not go anywhere without people following Him. There were many reasons why people followed Jesus, but not least among those reasons was His authenticity.

Fourth, honesty produces openness and transparency. There was no pretense about Jesus. When Pilate questioned the Lord about His ministry, He declared that He did nothing in secret:


Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou Me? Ask them which heard Me, what I have said

unto them: behold, they know what I said (John 18:20-21).

We could learn a great deal from the openness and transparency of Jesus. All too often, we quietly attempt to advance our self-interest without others knowing. We spin the truth. We speak in broad generalities. Rather than being forthright, we withhold the whole truth. Even more brazenly, some simply refuse to give explanations for their actions. None of this was true regarding the One who we are supposed to be exemplifying. Jesus had nothing to hide, and neither should we.

Conclusion

Honesty is indispensable in helping to advance the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven. As was briefly mentioned, truth and love go hand in hand. Truth and love are the foundation of all relationships. Therefore, these qualities will most certainly empower the kingdom on earth to advance. We will not find better traits to give us and the cause of Christ a reputable name in the world. Having a blameless and harmless reputation is how we illuminate the light of Christ in this dark world (Phil. 2:12-16).

Rather than feeding suspicions with deceit and self-interest, let us pursue truth and justice, no matter the price. Paul wrote, “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things” (Phil. 4:8). Where might we find what Paul identifies in this passage? Let us begin our search in Jesus and this sermon. 



David Flatt

David Flatt and his family have labored with the Thayer Street congregation in Akron, Ohio since 2008. He can be reached at dflatt85@yahoo.com.

I Could Have Been a Better Athlete

by David Halbrook

Reflecting on the role that sports played in his youth, David recognizes the trade-offs that result from our priorities and expresses thanks for the blessing of being raised in a godly home that placed a premium upon spiritual growth.

By the age of thirteen, I had been selected for the Little League All-Star team several years in a row, and both hoped and expected to be able to continue. Yet, my experiences in sports were not quite as successful in the following years, which disappointed me. At that phase of my life, sports were very important to me—not more important than being a Christian—but still pretty important. As I have looked back, I have wondered why my early success did not continue. Most likely, I was an early bloomer who was soon surpassed by more talented athletes. I believe there's another contributing factor, and, as is in vogue today, in part I blame my parents for my lack of continued success.

If My Parents Had Spent More Time Honing My Athletic Skills, I Could Have Been a Better Athlete.

Do not misunderstand—my parents took me to practices and games and gave me individual attention. They showed an interest in my areas of interest without pressure while making the final decision for the activities of each member of their house (Josh. 24:15). Yet, they could have spent *more* time in the early mornings and evenings honing my athletic skills.

Of course, that would have meant less time reading the Bible and praying together (2 Tim. 3:15). Since there were three of us children, it might have meant my parents spent less

time with my brother or sister, but after all, am I my sibling's keeper (Gen. 4:9)? It would have meant fewer opportunities to visit gospel meetings in the area, where I could meet other Christians, young and old, who, over time, I came to recognize when they would come to our meetings, or who would coincidentally be visiting the same gospel meeting that we attended. After all, they were not members of the same local church, as was I. So I did not have a real responsibility toward them (1 Pet. 2:17). To stir up my teammates and maintain my commitment to my team, I would have had to miss some nights of gospel meetings and Sunday or Wednesday assemblies and classes (Heb. 10:24-25). It would have meant even less time was available to be with other Christians my age (outside of the church's assembly) who were not on my athletic teams. (Isn't it odd how some parents want to find a local church "with young people," but then they make little effort for their children to be with other young people outside of the assembly?) Those things are a small price to pay for the joy of athletic success, right? Yep, my parents are to blame.

If My Parents Had Spent More Money, I Could Have Been a Better Athlete.

Again, be sure you understand—my parents spent money which allowed me to participate in the sports I was permitted to play. However, if they had spent *more*, I might have been better.

I once heard a mother call a financial advice call-in radio show. She asked whether it was fair to ask her fiancée to share the \$500/week (\$25,000/year) costs of figure-skating lessons for her daughter (she said that she made \$80,000 per year). Maybe if my parents had spent just \$100/week on improving my athletic skills, then I could have kept up with the competition.

Of course, doing so might have required that they contribute a smaller portion of their income to the Lord's local work (1 Cor. 16:1-2)—but not necessarily. My mom could have done some extra work on the side, selling her delicious cinnamon rolls. After all, the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31 was probably making and selling garments so that her children could have the luxuries of life (Prov. 31:24). Maybe mom would not have been able to participate in Bible studies with other women, but, after all, are those commanded anyway (Titus 2:3-5)? Maybe she would have had less time to develop close spiritual relationships with other Christians, take food to the sick or bereaved or do other good works (1 Tim. 5:10)—but she would still be giving her son (who already had health, friends, school work, video games, books, etc.) things that he hoped for as any "good mother" would do, right? Or, she would not have had to make any of those sacrifices—Dad could! (Need I list all that Dad could have given up?)

Instead, only my Dad's work resulted in regular income. From that, my parents chose to regularly give to the Lord, as He allowed them to prosper (1 Cor. 16:2). They had money to give to individuals whom they knew were in need (Eph. 4:28). They lived within their means and taught us to do the same. They avoided the debt which adds pressure to the husband who works, the wife who shops, and the regular financial discussions and decisions—all of which take a mental, emotional, and often a spiritual toll on each individual and the family as a whole. After all, everyone has a cross to bear, and anything is worth the smile on a child's face, for whom hundreds of dollars are annually spent on athletics, right?

Your Child Can Be a Better Athlete Too! Have You Counted the Cost?

Parents, I hope that you share in the interests of your children and, without pressure, help them choose wholesome areas of activity. In those areas, your child could probably be a better

athlete, musician, vocal performer, student, etc., than he is currently, but it will cost him and you something. Have you counted that cost?

Someday, your children are going to need the skills of earning an income with thanksgiving (Eph. 4:28), wisely handling money with contentment (1 Tim. 6:6), preparing food (maybe even raising their own food), keeping house (Titus 2:5), understanding the milk and meat of the word (Heb. 5:13-14), personally teaching others the gospel (Matt. 7:12), teaching Bible classes and generally filling their roles in the local church (Eph. 4:16), etc.

When your children grow up and see where they excelled and where they did not excel—what reasons will they remember for their successes and failures? When they are mature enough to look back on their childhood, will their fondest memories be the countless days and dollars spent on athletics? Or will those memories, though fond, pale in comparison to the sacrifices they

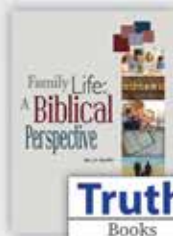
remember their parents taught them to make for the God who loves them?

I could have been a better athlete during my teen years, but, in my opinion, it would have had a negative spiritual impact. Today, I can thank God and my parents that these are some of the reasons why I was not a better athlete. Parents, help your children find healthy interests and *spend time with them* doing those things. Emphasize, focus on, sacrifice for, and hone your children's skills in learning about and serving God and His people. Do your best to maximize their potential as God's children by bringing them up *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord* (Eph. 6:4). **TL**



David Halbrook

David has been among the 160th Avenue church of Christ in Portland, Oregon for one and a half years. He and his wife, Starla, have three children, Joel, Esther, and Eliel. He can be reached at davidhalbrook@hotmail.com.



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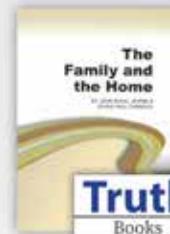
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by Bobby L. Graham



Bobby L. Graham

Bobby participates in fill-in preaching, Belize trips, teaching at Athens Bible School, and in gospel meetings. He and his wife, Karen, have three children: Richard, Mary Katherine Winland (Darren), and Laura Paschall (Jeremy). He can be reached at bobbylgraham@pclnet.net.

QUESTION:

“In recent years I have heard some teach concerning Colossians 2:14 that it was sin that was canceled at the cross, not the Law of Moses? What do you think?”

Answer:

Truth is not, primarily, a matter of what I think, but of what the Bible teaches. The Bible does teach something on this matter, and I must believe it and teach it to please our God. Thinking apart from what the Bible teaches is unsupported thinking, thus unjustified (2 Tim. 3:16-17)?

First, the Bible does teach that Jesus “canceled sin” when He died on the cross (Heb. 2:9; Eph. 1:7; Heb. 9:15). In a figurative manner of speaking, it might be said that Jesus “nailed our sins” to the cross, like the song, *Nailed to the Cross*, so affirms. However, there is no justification for this conclusion in Colossians 2:14.

Secondly, observe that it was “the handwriting of ordinances” (otherwise translated “the bond written in ordinances” in the ASV or “the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against” in NASB) which was nailed to the cross. In each case, the translation cited stresses the laws constituting something against people. It was not the violation of such decrees or ordinances (sin) being stressed; it was the ordinances or decrees themselves. Sin is the violation of ordinances; the ordinances themselves were contrary to the people who were operating under them. Ephesians 2:15 teaches that Jesus “abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances.”

Remember, the apostle Paul was replying to the false teachings of the Judaizers and possibly of the Greeks as well. Both seem to qualify for rebuke in the inspired letter. First, the Judaizers were intent on retaining the Law of Moses and imposing it, at least in part, on both Jews and Gentiles. Secondly, the philosophical ideas of the Greeks also were close enough to the Colossians that the Holy Spirit replied to such in this letter.

In a general way, Paul’s warning against their being despoiled/robbed by the various teachings and philosophies

affecting them, and his affirmation about being complete/full in Christ (Col. 2:10), served as the divine solution to both groups and their respective ideas. He went on to show that in Christ, true circumcision (Col. 2:11-13) and true deliverance from the Law which held them in debt to God (Col. 2:14-15) were available to them because of Jesus’ death on the cross. There He “blotted out the handwriting of ordinances which was against us and contrary to us” and “took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross.” It was the Law of Moses which stood against/was contrary to those under it, because of its demand that they obey it perfectly to find justification by Law. Jesus’ death effectively abrogated/terminated that Law, though it might have been still in operation until the terms of the New Covenant of Jesus Christ were proclaimed on Pentecost. In the death of Christ, One who never violated the Law in any respect offered His life in sacrifice for those guilty under its demands.

Because of His terminating the Law, Paul then cautioned them that they should permit no one to judge (condemn) them in regarding various parts of the Law (meat, drink, feast day, new moon, or sabbaths), none of which remained part of God’s covenant under Jesus Christ (Col. 2:16). While it is possible that “drink” identifies some vague Gentile regulations, it is also possible that Paul refers here to part of the Mosaic Law. The other specific aspects mentioned in verse sixteen belong to the Law. Paul points to the Law when he classifies such ordinances as being a “shadow of the things to come.” The Hebrew letter classifies the ordinances of the Law as shadow compared to substance/body/reality under the New Covenant. No Gentile system ever was thus classified; only the Mosaic Law. Accordingly, there should be no doubt that Colossians 2:14 declares that Jesus’ death abrogated/ended the Law of Moses. This verse is a poor one for teaching that the debt of sin was ended at the cross, though other verses do affirm such. **11**

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The Via Dolorosa

by Barry Britnell

Every day, visitors to Jerusalem walk the Via Dolorosa and later tell their friends that they walked the actual path that Jesus took to the cross. However, is this accurate?

Walking through the Old City of Jerusalem is figuratively and literally walking through history. Around every corner is a building or sidewalk or wall that has some historical significance. Between all of those sites, you have the modern-day shops that are a mixture of typical tourist traps and legitimate stores that the locals use every day to purchase their necessities of life.

One of the most famous paths through the Old City is the Via Dolorosa. This 600-meter path winds its way from its origination point in the Muslim Quarter and ends at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the Christian Quarter. The term “Via Dolorosa” is Latin for the “Way of Grief” or the “Way of Sorrows.” This path is the traditional path Jesus took to Golgotha after being sentenced to death by Pontius Pilate.

To fully understand the actual relevance of the path, you have to understand some key pieces of information.

First, the path *assumes* that Jesus’ final trial before Pontius Pilate took place in the Antonia Fortress, a Roman military barrack on the northwestern corner of the Temple Mount.

Second, the path *assumes* that Golgotha, the site of Jesus’ crucifixion, was in the area of the current location of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the Christian Quarter of the Old City.

Third, the path *assumes* that no geographical changes have occurred in Jerusalem since the first century. In

other words, the location of the ground today is the same as it was 2,000 years ago.

If you were to speak to a casually religious person who has not fully investigated these assumptions for themselves, they would tell you without hesitation that the current Via Dolorosa is the actual path that Jesus walked. Indeed, over the past several years as I have traveled to Jerusalem, I have witnessed hundreds of people walking this same path believing these assumptions to be true.

As students of God’s word, we know that true wisdom comes from an in-depth study of what the Scriptures tell us. With that being said, let us take a closer look at these three assumptions.

The first assumption deals with the location of Jesus’ trial before Pilate. When Jesus was led before Pilate, the Scriptures tell us that Jesus was taken to the praetorium to stand before Pilate (Mark 15:16, John 18:33, NKJV). The original meaning of the word praetorium signified a commander’s tent when he was in the field with the soldiers. By the time of the first century, the meaning of the word had changed slightly to mean a headquarters building. Often, this was in the form of a palace. The English Standard Version (ESV) translates the word praetorium in Mark 15 as



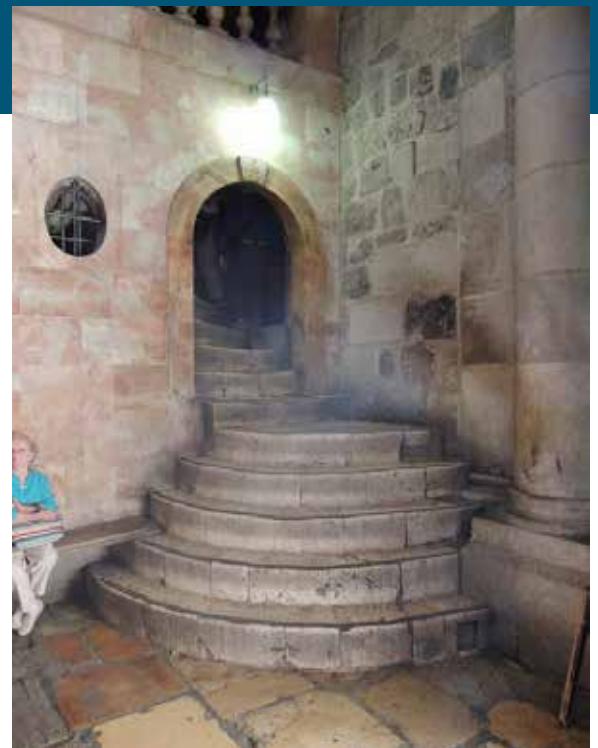
The Ecce Homo Arch which is near the beginning of the Via Dolorosa. “Ecce Homo” is Latin for “Behold the Man.”

“palace” and in John 18 as “governor’s headquarters.” Consequently, Jesus’ trial before Pilate would have likely been in a public area at the Roman palace which was located on the western side of the city instead of at the Antonia Fortress.

The second assumption deals with the location of Jesus’ death. When Constantine became emperor of Rome in the early 4th century AD, he declared religious tolerance for Christianity and



A street sign of the Via Dolorosa.



Steps inside the church leading up to the traditional location of Calvary.

eventually converted to Christianity himself. On his order, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was built on the purported site of the crucifixion and burial of Jesus. Modern-day visitors to the church building will recognize that it falls within the city walls of the Old City of Jerusalem. However, during this first century, this area was outside the city. This agrees with John 19:20 about the location of Golgotha being near the city. While I cannot make the same conclusion that others have made about the very specific location of where the cross was erected and where the actual tomb was located, I do believe that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is in the general location of Golgotha.

The final assumption states that there have been no geographical changes to the city in the last two millennia. Basic archaeology across the city of Jerusalem has proven this false over and over. The city of Jerusalem has been destroyed and rebuilt many times. Each time, rubble collects in the low areas, and the land is consequently reshaped for new construction. Archaeological excavations across the city of Jerusalem reveal that first-century artifacts are found several feet under the present ground level.

So, is the current Via Dolorosa the actual path that Jesus took as He walked to the cross? No. Not only is the first-century level much farther below ground level but given the fact that his final trial before Pilate probably took place in the palace, as opposed to the Antonia Fortress, the current path is probably not even in the right direction.

Even so, as I lead tour groups around the Old City of Jerusalem, we typically will walk the entire Via Dolorosa. I do this for two reasons: First, I want them to understand that walking the path helps them to understand what so many people believe. Knowing and understanding what they believe will help them be better teachers of the truth. Second, walking the path and talking about the events that we read about in the Gospels is a wonderful way to remember what Jesus went through for all of us. Can you think of a better way to spend your day? Neither can I. 🙏



The Church of the Holy Sepulchre.



Barry Britnell

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Belief in the Bible, but Using Creeds

by Jesse Flowers

Many of our religious friends and neighbors profess belief in the Bible but rely upon creeds, catechisms, and confessions. What is wrong with this approach?

More than likely, the majority of our denominational neighbors would state that they believe the Bible is the word of God (John 17:17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17), and that we should follow its teachings. Nevertheless, these same churches that claim to believe and follow the Bible also have creeds.

What is a creed? *Merriam-Webster* says that a creed is “a brief, authoritative formula of religious belief; a set of fundamental beliefs.” *Collins Dictionary* states that “a creed is a set of beliefs, principles, or opinions that strongly influence the way people live or work; a concise, formal statement of the essential articles of Christian belief, such as the *Apostles’ Creed* or the *Nicene Creed*.”

Most denominations have and follow some creed regarding their particular faith or religion. It is possible, even probable, that many of their members are not even aware of such. However, please consider some of the serious problems—on the one hand believing in the Bible—but also using creeds.

Creeds are of Human Origin and Authority, Not Divine

Jesus asked the chief priests and elders of the people: “The baptism of John—where was it from? From heaven or from men?” (Matt. 21:25). Jesus was speaking about the authority for John’s baptism (Matt. 3:1-6; Mark 1:1-5). Was

the source of John’s baptism from God or from men? If from God, it ought to be obeyed. If from men, it ought to be rejected. The same principle of truth applies to creeds. If they are from God, we must receive them, and follow their teachings. However, if they are from men, then we must reject them. From whence came creeds? Well, they are not authorized in the Scriptures (Col. 3:17), by Christ (Matt. 28:18-20) or His apostles (Acts 2:42). They originated in the hearts and imagination of men. No doubt many who put them together had good intentions, but did so without God’s approval (i.e., authority). The Lord sharply rebuked religious men who taught and practiced things based on the authority of men. He said: “Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: ‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men’” (Matt. 15:7-9). Are all religious books other than the Bible wrong? Certainly not! Any book that contradicts the teachings of the New Testament is wrong and ought to be rejected. All denominational creed books conflict with the teachings of Christ and the inspired apostles.

Creeds Often Contradict the Bible

Though the creeds of men may contain some Bible truths, they consist

of many erroneous teachings. For example, Pendleton’s *Church Manual* says that the pardon of sins and the promise of eternal life comes “solely through faith in the Redeemer’s blood” (p. 48). The *Methodist Discipline* states: “Wherefore, that we are justified by faith, only, is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort” (p. 55). However, those teachings are in direct contradiction to the inspired word of God that teaches: “You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only” (Jas. 2:24).

According to Hiscox’s *Baptist Manual*, “Baptism is not essential, for our churches utterly repudiate the dogma of ‘baptismal regeneration’; but it is essential to obedience since Christ commanded it. It is also essential to a public confession of Christ before the world, and to membership in the church which is His body. And no true lover of his Lord will refuse these acts of obedience and tokens of affection” (note 8, p. 21). Nevertheless, Jesus and the apostles make it abundantly clear in the New Testament that baptism IS essential for salvation (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-4; 1 Pet. 3:21).

Creeds Often Add or Subtract from Biblical Truth

Almighty God made it abundantly clear in both the Old and New Testaments that men must not add or take away from His divine words (Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:5-6; Rev. 22:18-

19). We are instructed to speak as the oracles of God (1 Pet. 4:11), and not to think beyond what is written (1 Cor. 4:6). If we foolishly preach a different gospel than the gospel of Christ, we will be accursed (Gal. 1:6-9). Fellowship with God and Christ are forfeited if we neglect or refuse to abide by the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9). Here is the bottom line: If a human creed book contains more than the New Testament, it contains too much. If it contains less than the New Testament, it contains too little. If it exactly reflects what the New Testament reveals, no more and no less, then we have no use for it, since we already have in our possession the perfect law of liberty (Jas. 1:25).

Creeds Imply that the Bible Is Not a Sufficient Rule of Faith and Practice

If the Bible contains all that we need to know and do, then what role does the denominational creed book serve? Their very existence suggests that the Bible is incomplete and inadequate in some way. Is that the case? Not if we accept what the Holy Spirit has revealed. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Notice, not “some” or “most,” but *all* Scripture is given by inspiration (i.e., God-breathed) of God.

Furthermore, “all Scripture” will make the man of God complete and thoroughly equip us for every good work by the teaching, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness that it contains. Notice that the apostle Peter stated that God “has given to us *all* things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue” (2 Pet. 1:3). If

He has given us all things, then what else are we lacking? Jude exhorted his readers “to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (v. 3). The true message of the gospel of Christ has already been delivered one time for all time. The Bible is all-sufficient in meeting every need of man and will endure forever (1 Pet. 1:25).

Creeds Produce Denominational Members, Not Christians

The Roman Catholic *Catechism* when taught, believed and practiced, will produce a Roman Catholic every time—not a Christian. Whenever the *Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants*, and *Pearl of Great Price* are accepted and followed, it will produce a Mormon every time—not a Christian. If it is adhered to, the *Baptist Manual* will make a Baptist; the *Methodist Discipline* will make a Methodist; the Seventh-Day Adventist manual will make a Seventh-Day Adventist, etc. Yet, every single time the incorruptible seed of the word of God (Luke 8:11) is planted in the hearts of men (1 Cor. 3:6) and obeyed, it will produce a simple New Testament Christian (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 11:26; 18:8; 1 Pet. 1:22-23). Why is that? It is the unchanging truth of the seed principle. Seed will always (and only) produce after its kind (Gen. 1:12).

Creeds Bring Division, Not Unity

The New Testament exhorts Christians: “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3). It is impossible to do so if and when men follow denominational creeds. Why? Denominational creeds contain and uphold conflicting doctrines, not only from the Bible but also from the various denominations. In this very same text, the apostle Paul states there is but “one faith” and “one body” (Eph. 4:4-5). The numerous

denominational creeds in existence represent many faiths and many churches (Matt. 15:13). In writing to the saints in Corinth, Paul wrote: “Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor. 1:10)—an impossibility when men accept and follow creeds, and become followers of various men rather than Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:12-13; Luke 6:46).

To accept the Bible is to reject creeds. To accept creeds is to reject the Bible. We should reject denominational creeds because they will not be the standard of judgment. In that great day, men will not be judged by fallible human creeds written to please men. They will be judged by God’s infallible word (John 12:48). Sadly many religious people who do follow them will one day hear: “I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!” (Matt. 7:21-23; cf. 2 Thess. 1:7-9). 📖

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Teaching Baptism, but Not for Salvation

by David McPherson

Many in the religious world practice some form of baptism but deny that it is essential to salvation. Is this approach scriptural?

We must have authority from the Lord for our words and actions. Paul instructed the Colossians, “Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him” (Col. 3:17). Members of the Lord’s church strive to say and do that which is authorized. Sadly, such is not always the case with our denominational friends. At times they will say one thing but do another. For example, many of our religious friends will contradict the Scriptures by teaching baptism, but not for salvation.

It is interesting to me the vast number of pages commentators will write to pervert the plain and simple teaching of our Lord on the subject of baptism. Jesus made it clear, “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:16). Our Lord affirms that baptism is essential to being saved. Now some will argue, “If baptism is really necessary why didn’t Jesus say, “He who does not believe *and is not baptized* will be condemned?” The answer? He didn’t have to. Allow me to illustrate. I might say, “He who eats and digests will live, but he who does not eat will die.” Is it necessary to add “and does not digest” to the latter part of that statement? Absolutely not! It is a given that, if one will not eat, he will not digest. Likewise if one will not

believe the gospel message, he will not obey its command to be baptized!

A person must decide in which part of Mark 16:16 he is interested: being saved or being lost! The first part of the verse tells how to be saved. The second part of the verse tells how to be lost. If salvation is desired, why not accept the words of the Savior? We must believe *and* be baptized in order to be saved.

Most denominations practice baptism in some shape or form, but not for the remission of sins. What does the Bible teach? The apostles preached the gospel to thousands of Jews on the day of Pentecost. Once they were “cut to the heart,” they asked, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). Peter, guided by the Holy Spirit (v. 4), commanded them to “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...” (Acts 2:38). Some tell us that the word “for” in verse thirty-eight means, “because of.” For example, John Doe was sentenced to prison *for* murder (i.e., because of a murder he had already committed). Thus, it is argued, one is baptized *for* (i.e., because) his sins are already remitted. That may sound good on the surface, but we must go beneath the surface!

The New Testament was originally written in the Greek language. In the Greek, there are different words translated “for.” One is *gar*, which means “because of.” However, there

is another Greek word, *eis*, which means “unto,” or “in order to.” This is the word Peter used in Acts 2:38. It is the same word that Jesus used when He instituted the Lord’s supper:

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.” Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many *for* the remission of sins” (Matt. 26:26-28).

Why would Jesus’ blood be shed? He died “for” (*eis*) the remission of sins. His blood was shed “*unto*,” or “*in order to*” provide the remission of sins. Jesus’ blood was not shed because remission of sins had already taken place. Similarly, one is baptized in order to receive the remission of sins, not because remission has already occurred.

Perhaps there is even a simpler approach. What does the Bible say in the book of First Peter? Please notice, “There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 3:21). The King James Version translates it like this: “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us...” Dear reader, does baptism

save us, or not? Men teach that baptism doth also *not* save us. The Bible teaches that baptism doth also *now* save us. Whose word are you going to take?

Consider this challenge: Where can I go in the Scriptures and accurately show that baptism is *not* essential for salvation? I can't find the passage, and neither can you, your preacher, or anyone else. However, we can each go to multiple places in God's good book and show where baptism *is* essential for salvation.

In addition to the passages we have already noted, consider Acts 22:16, which says, "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." These words were spoken to Saul of Tarsus after he had seen the Lord on the road to Damascus. The Lord had told Saul, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do" (Acts 9:6). After arriving in the city of Damascus, a disciple named Ananias came to Saul, directing him regarding the Lord's will. For Saul to have his sins washed away,

to properly call on the Lord's name, he needed to arise and be baptized.

The consistency and plurality of Bible verses teaching the necessity of baptism are not surprising when we appreciate texts like 2 Timothy 2:10 coupled with Galatians 3:27. In 2 Timothy 2:10, Paul said of himself, "Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." Dear friend, where is salvation? In Christ Jesus. If I knew nothing more than that, and I was concerned for my soul, the natural question would be, "How do I get into Christ?" The answer is found in Galatians 3:27, which states, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." How did they get into Christ? They were baptized into Him.

Being in Christ has tremendous benefits. Consider the following:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places *in Christ* (Eph. 1:3).

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace (Eph. 1:7).

And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is *in His Son* (1 John 5:11).

All spiritual blessings are found in Christ (Eph. 1:3). Only in Christ do we have redemption (Eph. 1:7). It is only in Christ that we stand to enjoy eternal life (1 John 5:11). Apart from baptism one remains outside of Christ, with no hope, eternally lost.

How sad that many in the religious world teach baptism, but not for salvation. An honest investigation of the word of God exposes the tragic inconsistency. May we avoid such an erroneous contradiction. **!**



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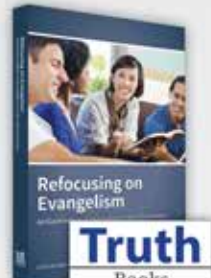
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Following Christ, but in Different Ways

by Jarrod Jacobs

Many profess to follow Jesus Christ but do so in very different ways. Are we permitted such latitude?

Among the many denominational contradictions that we hear today is the teaching that says we can follow Christ in different ways. Perhaps we have heard people talk about heaven and eternity, and we have heard them say, “There are many roads to the same goal.” Some tell us that they are following Jesus in their way, and, therefore, we need to find the way to Christ that fits us best. This line of thinking is common in the religious world. I remember one man said, “You do what you want to do, and I’ll do what I want to do—that’s the way religion ought to be!” I have heard TV preachers say words to the effect that they were thankful for the religious division, and how each “church” provides its own “flavor” so that people can choose a church that fits them best. I know we have heard the old saying: “Choose the church of your choice.” This is an outgrowth of the thinking that we can follow Christ in different ways.

This false doctrine has not only been preached, but it has also been sung through the years. Don Williams, a famous country singer, sang a song written by Roger Cook and Sam Hogin which included the line: “I don’t believe that heaven waits for only those who congregate. I like to think of God as love. . .” This song was seemingly saying that, since God is love, He does not care as much about people “congregating” as men do! Heaven is

not just for those who “congregate” but also for folks who don’t! Isn’t that a nice thought? Tom T. Hall had a hit with the song, “Me and Jesus got our own thing going.” (This song was also “covered” by George Jones, Brad Paisley, and others.) I know we could think of many other examples of songs, articles, sermons, etc., that assert that there are many ways to follow Christ or many roads to the same goal. Regardless of the media outlet, we have been fed a steady diet of this through the years. As a result, anyone who teaches that there is only one way to heaven or one way to follow the Lord is ridiculed. He will be mocked, called a “Pharisee,” “narrow-minded,” or worse.

If the doctrine that says we can follow Christ in different ways is true, would it not make sense that this teaching would be found in Scripture? Of course, it would. However, when we read the Bible, we do not see God teaching such a doctrine. From Genesis through Revelation, we see God emphasizing the fact that there is just one way to please Him. Regardless of the dispensation, this is a consistent theme.

There Was Only One Way to Please God in the Days of the Patriarchs

In the days of Genesis, God said that, in order to please Him, Adam and Eve needed to dress and keep the garden

and not eat of the forbidden tree in the midst of the garden (Gen. 2:15-17). This is pretty straight-forward. When they ate of the tree that was forbidden, they sinned and were driven from the garden that day (Gen. 3:6-24). Reading the context (Gen. 2:15-3:24), do we see room for varying views concerning the eating of the forbidden fruit? Read it and see if there was some way Eve or Adam could have said, “I thought there were many ways to please you, Lord, not just one way. I thought it did not matter if I ate from the tree or not.”

In the next chapter, we see Cain and Abel offering sacrifices to God (Gen. 4:1-5). The Lord was pleased with Abel’s sacrifice but displeased with Cain’s. Why didn’t Cain argue that there are many ways to please God? Why did he not say that he did the best he could with what he had and that God’s love ought to cover him since he tried hard? Where are these types of arguments found in Scripture? Where did Cain try to justify himself by saying there are many ways to please God? No, such statements did not originate with God! In fact, God gave Cain the recipe for success (Gen. 4:7), but he refused and sank deeper into sin (vv. 8-15). In the beginning, God did not teach that there are many ways to please Him.

Another example of there not being many ways to please God can be seen in a study of Noah and the ark. God called upon Noah to build

an ark according to His specifications (Gen. 6:14-16), because He was going to destroy the world by water (v. 17). If anyone wished to be saved from the impending flood, what was necessary? Put simply; they had to get in the ark and stay there! Ultimately, only “eight souls were saved by water” (1 Pet. 3:20). Why were only eight souls saved? It is because only eight souls got in the ark! There was no other ark for folks to enter. Furthermore, no other sailing vessel would do except the ark that Noah had built. There were not many arks floating around where people could choose the ark of their choice! There was only one, and whoever was not on that ark drowned in the flood (1 Pet. 3:20)!

There Was Only One Way to Please God in the Days of the Mosaic Law

When we move into the Mosaic period, the time which spanned from Mount Sinai to the death of Christ, do we find God changing His mind? No, we find God being strict in His commands. It was not for men to argue with God and set up another way to follow Him. Passages like Exodus 20:3 are self-explanatory in showing us that there are not many ways to follow God. There is only one way. Just as we do not have a choice of Gods, we do not have a choice of ways to get to God!

In studying 1 Kings 11-13, we find that Jeroboam tried to set up a new religion for the people to keep the citizens of the Northern Kingdom from returning to Jerusalem. When we read this section, we do not find God or the prophets somehow endorsing this and encouraging Jeroboam’s religion. We do not hear folks saying, “There are many roads to heaven.” We do not read of the prophets saying, “Choose the god of your choice.” God did not condone the actions of Jeroboam. Instead, what we find is Jeroboam being condemned by the

young prophet for his actions (1 Kings 13:1-5). Choosing a “different road” to get to God was strictly condemned throughout the Old Testament!

In the days of Malachi, God condemned the people for their lack of reverence, for stealing from God, and their bad attitude toward God’s worship (Mal. 1:6, 9-14, 3:8). Notice that God did not accept their worship, but challenged them to offer their marred animals to their governor (civil leader) and see if he would accept them (Mal. 1:8). If a man would find this unacceptable, why did they think God would think it is acceptable? Again, we do not see God telling men that there are many ways to please Him, nor that He accepts just any kind of animal, etc. There were not many ways leading to God, but only one. In this book, God told the people they were failing!

There Was Only One Way to Please God in New Testament Days


When studying the New Testament, we do not see a change in God’s attitude. First, while Christ was on earth, He told His apostles, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). In other words, if we wish to have life, and wish to know the truth, we will follow the one way through Christ! There are not many ways to get to the Father. We will go through Christ to the Father, or we will not go! He is our forerunner who has gone ahead, and we must follow Him and no one else (Heb. 6:20)!

Back in John 10, Jesus called Himself, “the door” (John 10:7, 9). He also said that anyone who tries to enter in any other way is a “thief and a robber” (John 10:1). To listen to some folks, we get the impression that there are many doors and many ways to heaven. This is not what Jesus

said! He said there is only one way and we need to respect those words!

In the book of Romans, we see this sentiment once more. In chapter one, we read that the gospel is “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (v. 16). In other words, we see once more that there are not many ways to Christ, but only one! Romans 1:16 affirms that the gospel is God’s “power unto salvation.” Therefore, listening to the words of men, or reading from some ancient tome will not bring about salvation. We cannot follow what we please and still go to heaven. We will follow Christ’s will, His gospel, or we will not go (2 Thess. 1:6-9)! No, there are not different ways to follow Christ. There is only one way! This is taught again in Matthew 7:13-14. There is but one narrow way that leads to life, and we must respect this truth.

Conclusion

No, there are not many different ways to follow Christ. There is just one way to do it—His way! Let us not listen to men who wish to incorporate their opinions into the gospel. When they do this and teach that there are many ways to heaven, they are like the people in Galatians 1:6-9. They have perverted the gospel, and have only the wrath of God to look forward to if they do not repent! Let us not fall for their ways! 



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Churches, but None Essential

by John Isaac Edwards

Many emphasize the value of church membership and attendance, yet argue that such is not essential. Is one church as good as another? Does membership matter?

A denominational contradiction is made when churches are recommended, but it is implied that none is really essential. Some say it is good to be in church, but you really do not have to. The appeal is: Join the church of your choice! This suggests that it really does not matter which church; no particular one is essential; one church is as good as another. They are in essence saying one can be saved without being a member of the Lord's church. What is wrong with this approach?

There Is One Church

The Bible teaches, "There is one body" (Eph. 4:4). The one body is identified as the church (Col. 1:18, 24; Eph. 1:22-23). God planned one church (Eph. 3:10-11). The prophets predicted one (Isa. 2:2-3). Christ built one (Matt. 16:18). Christ loved and gave Himself for one (Eph. 5:25). Christ purchased one (Acts 20:28). Christ is head of one (Col. 1:18). Christ is the Savior of one (Eph. 5:23). The saved are added to one (Acts 2:47). We are called in one (Col. 3:24). We are reconciled unto God in one (Eph. 2:16). One will be delivered up to God (1 Cor. 15:22). No other religious body is as good as this one! Jesus declared, "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matt. 15:13).

It Is Essential


The church is the fullness of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23). Thus, whatever is available in Christ is not found outside the church of Christ. Things found in Christ include: redemption (Rom. 3:24), sanctification (1 Cor. 1:2), hope (1 Cor. 15:19), a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17), liberty (Gal. 2:4), all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3), an inheritance (Eph. 1:11), the promise of life (2 Tim. 1:1), and salvation (2 Tim. 2:10).

Christ and the church are joined together as husband and wife (Eph. 5:22-33), head and body (Eph. 1:22-23), house and foundation (1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Cor. 3:11). The fact that the saved are added to the church (Acts 2:47) and Christ is the Savior of the body (Eph. 5:23) makes the church non-negotiable! If the church is non-essential, then Christ is unessential. If Christ is unessential, then the things found in Christ are needless! We are begotten in Christ through the gospel (1 Cor. 4:15). Thus, the gospel of Christ is made dispensable and expendable by this denominational contradiction! Yet, the Scriptures affirm the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16)!

Baptism Puts One into Christ and the Church

It is written, we must be "...baptized into Jesus Christ..." (Rom. 6:3), "...baptized into Christ..." (Gal. 3:27),

and "...baptized into one body..." (1 Cor. 12:13). The act that puts one into Christ and the church saves (Mark 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21), is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) and washes away sins (Acts 22:16). Thus, folks in the first century were commanded to be baptized in the name of the Lord (Acts 10:48). If Christ and the church are unneeded, then baptism is unnecessary! However, if Christ and the church are necessary, then baptism is essential. They all stand together!

"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4:4-6). Our plea is for you to reject the cry of denominationalism and answer the call of the gospel. Surrender to the authority of the One Lord, be obedient to the one faith, revealed by the one Spirit, in submitting to the one baptism so as to be reconciled unto the One God in the one body and thereby be a partaker of the one hope. 



John Isaac Edwards

John has worked with the church of Christ at Terre Haute (IN) for seven years. He and his wife, Aleisha, have three children. The church website is churchofchristatterrehaute.com. He can be reached at 1977jie@gmail.com.

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Wearing the Name “Christian,” but Also Wearing Others

by David Dann

Are the denominational designations worn by many who claim to be Christians harmless labels, or are they symptomatic of deeper spiritual problems?

Followers of Christ are referred to by various designations in the New Testament, each of which is fitting as it relates to some aspect of the individual’s relationship to God in Christ (Acts 2:47; 5:14; 9:2; 11:26; 20:7; Rom. 8:14; 12:5; 1 Cor. 1:2; Phil. 1:14; 1 John 3:1). As Christians, true followers of Christ wear a name that is noble and honorable because they wear the name of Christ (Jas. 2:7).

What Do We Know about the Name “Christian”?

1. It is authorized by God.

Of Barnabas and Saul, the Bible says, “So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch” (Acts 11:26, NKJV). Who gave them this name? “The word in our common text which we translate “were called” signifies, in the New Testament, to ‘appoint, warn, or nominate,’ by divine direction” (Clarke, 987). Every time this word (Greek *chrematizo*) is used in the New Testament it refers to instruction from God (Matt. 2:12, 22; Luke 2:26; Acts 10:22; 11:26; Rom. 7:3; Heb. 8:5; 11:7; 12:25). Therefore, it should be understood that followers of Christ have been labeled “Christians” by God Himself.

2. It identifies its wearer with Christ.

To His followers, Jesus said, “For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward” (Mark 9:41). Those who wear the name of Christ are those who belong to Christ. Paul writes, “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27). To wear the name “Christian” is to be identified as one who has obeyed the gospel of Christ and as a disciple of Christ.

3. It honors the Lord.

By being designated as “Christians,” the followers of Jesus honor His holy and exalted name (Phil. 2:9). It is clear that no one else deserves to be honored in this way, since Paul wrote of Jesus, saying, “He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence” (Col. 1:18). To wear the name “Christian” is to honor the Christ who loved us and gave Himself for us.

4. It can be worn without shame.

The apostle Peter wrote to his fellow disciples concerning persecution, saying, “Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter” (1 Pet. 4:16). There are many names and labels that one would be ashamed to wear, such as “adulterer,” “heretic,”

“evildoer,” or “idol worshiper.”

However, a true follower of Christ can unashamedly glorify God while wearing the name “Christian.”

5. It promotes unity.

When Paul preached to King Agrippa, the Bible says, “Then Agrippa said to Paul, ‘You almost persuaded me to become a Christian.’ And Paul said, ‘I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains’” (Acts 26:28-29). Please notice that Paul did not reject the idea that Agrippa should become a “Christian.” Nor did he try to persuade him to become something in addition to a “Christian.” Instead, Paul wanted Agrippa to become the same thing he was—a Christian. To simply be a “Christian,” without adding to, or taking away from, what is prescribed by Christ, is to promote unity among those who would follow Christ.

What about Denominational Names?

In most cases, people who claim to follow Christ are not content to refer to themselves simply as “Christians.” They claim to be Christians, but refer to themselves using labels not found in Scripture, such as, “Roman Catholic,” “Greek Orthodox,” “Baptist,” “Lutheran,” “Presbyterian,” “Methodist,” “Episcopalian,”

“Pentecostal,” “Mennonite,” “Seventh-Day Adventist,” “Evangelical,” “Charismatic,” “Calvinist,” or “Reformed.” Religious people who claim Christ as their Lord wear other names besides the name given by God to identify the followers of Christ (Acts 11:26). The confusion created by this approach did not originate with God but has instead come about as a result of human wisdom injected into spiritual matters (1 Cor. 14:33).

What Is Wrong with Denominational Names?

1. They are not authorized by God.

Since only “one faith” has been established by the Lord, man is not free to develop many different religious “faiths” from which people may choose and by which they may label themselves (Eph. 4:5). The “pattern of sound words” given in Scripture provides no authorization for Christ’s followers to create and wear religious designations of their own devising (2 Tim. 1:13). To wear man-made religious designations is to announce that one is practicing man-made religion. Jesus warned against this approach, saying, “In vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men” (Matt. 15:9). Denominational names are not authorized by the word of God.

2. They promote division.

The New Testament contains an example of Christians applying additional designations to themselves. To the church in Corinth, Paul writes, “Now I say this, that each of you says, ‘I am of Paul,’ or ‘I am of Apollos,’ or ‘I am of Cephas,’ or ‘I am of Christ.’ Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?” (1 Cor. 1:12-13). Instead of regarding these additional labels as harmless innovations, Paul sternly rebukes these Christians for foolishly engaging in divisive behavior. The wearing of man-made names in

religion simply serves to divide those who should stand united in Christ.

3. They do not honor the Lord.

Concerning the name of the Lord, the apostles spoke to the Jewish leaders, saying, “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Since Jesus Christ is the only Savior, why should those who claim to follow Christ think that it is acceptable to refer to themselves as “Lutheran,” “Wesleyan,” “Mennonite,” or “Calvinist?” While one can glorify God by wearing the name “Christian” (1 Pet. 4:16), God is not glorified when those who claim to follow Christ label themselves in ways that do not honor Him.

4. They are often worn with shame.

There is no shame in wearing the name of Christ because He is “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens” (Heb. 7:26). On the other hand, those who wear the names of various denominations must often bear the shame of the sinful acts that have been perpetrated by the founders and leaders of those organizations.

5. They identify their wearers with carnality.

“For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Rom. 8:6). To be “carnal” (Greek *sarkikos*) is to be “under the control of the animal appetites... governed by mere human nature... not by the Spirit of God” (Thayer, 569). Paul rebuked the Corinthians for adopting man-made religious labels with these words: “For you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? For when one says, ‘I am of Paul,’ and another, ‘I am of Apollos,’ are you not

carnal?” (1 Cor. 3:3-4). Denominational names serve to spotlight the carnal mindset of those who wear them.

Conclusion

While followers of Christ are referred to by different acceptable designations in Scripture, we cannot please God by adopting religious labels that are not approved according to the New Testament. We may honor and glorify the Lord as we identify ourselves with Him in simply serving Him as “Christians” and in seeking unity and peace with all others who do so. However, we dare not dishonor the Christ who died for us by wearing the denominational designations devised by men. 📖

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David Dann

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Worship, but No Emphasis on Truth

by Bob McPherson II

Popular notions of “worship” include whatever one decides to offer to God, ironically, often without any consideration of the deference inherent in the act.

This is what the Lord spoke, saying: “By those who come near Me, I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified” (Lev. 10:3, NKJV).

There is no richer description of worship than an attempt to “come near” to God. It was in the context of priestly offerings that God made clear that in worship, perhaps especially in offering worship, He must be “regarded as holy.” The story of Nadab and Abihu demonstrates that their failure to regard God as holy or glorify Him was because they offered worship to Him “which he had not commanded them” (Lev. 10:1-2).

Recognition of the divine requirement to offer our worship to God *with regard for what He has commanded* is largely absent among modern religious people. Today, many religious groups place considerable emphasis on “worship” but little or no emphasis on ensuring that “worship” is in truth, based on the word of God (John 17:17).

The Danger of Innovation in Worship

The principle that God, the object of our worship, determines the content of acceptable worship, has been in place from the earliest Bible account of worship. In Genesis 4:3-5, both Cain and Abel offered sacrifices to God, but only Abel’s was accepted. The specific reason that God distinguished between the two sacrifices is not recorded, but in

Hebrews 11:4, the Holy Spirit provides an inspired explanation: “By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts” (ESV). Because it was offered “by faith,” we infer that Abel’s sacrifice was in harmony with what God commanded. Faith results from hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17).

As J. B. Coffman wrote, “Could it possibly be supposed that these two brothers spontaneously, voluntarily, and simultaneously decided to honor God with a sacrifice at a time when the instruction was unknown and in the absence of any divine regulations whatever concerning such things? How impossible is such a thing even to be imagined?” (Coffman, 75-76). So, although we are not told what guidance (word) God gave, we know that Abel obeyed God and that God “had regard for Abel and his offering.” However, while Cain’s offering was rejected, we do learn an important truth from his sacrifice: simply offering something to God does not necessarily please God.

In his Genesis commentary, Coffman accurately labels Cain “The First Innovator” (Coffman, 78). God had provided instruction, but Cain innovated and offered a sacrifice of his choosing. Are “sacrifices” offered today that originate in the minds of men any different?

Consider some modern “worship” innovations which God “had not commanded.” In contrast to apostolic commands (Eph. 5:19, Col. 3:16) and a New Testament example (1 Cor. 14:15) of congregational singing in worship, the religious world has added mechanical, instrumental music, quartets, praise teams, and even full-blown worship bands. These innovations may entertain the listener and draw crowds, but they are things offered as “worship” that God has not commanded. Consider the emergence of “contemporary worship services.” *The Oxford Dictionary* defines contemporary as “belonging to or occurring in the present” (i.e., “contemporary”). The synonyms provided are telling of the nature and origin of things so described: modern, fashionable, latest, recent, newfangled. The idea of “contemporary worship” admits and promotes a newfangled way to “worship” God. As we look across the current religious landscape, at innovative “worship” offered by those who fail to follow God’s instructions “by faith,” we lovingly repeat Jude’s warning, “Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain” (Jude 11).

The Danger of Presumption in Worship

The willingness to innovate in worship is an example of presumption, or “behavior perceived as arrogant, disrespectful, and transgressing the limits of what is permitted”

(i.e., “presumption”). The story of Nadab and Abihu illustrates God’s view of presumptuous worship:

Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. And fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord (Lev. 10:1-2)

The fire these men offered was strange (unauthorized, ESV) because it was not the fire God had commanded. God had told them what he wanted, but they presumed to substitute their will for His. God’s response speaks to the disrespect and arrogance of worship that, while professing to honor God, transgresses the limits of what He has commanded. Knight rightly concludes: “Theirs was a flagrant piece of disobedience and disloyalty to God. These men were virtually saying, ‘Our fire is as good as yours, God. We do not need yours.’ This is an acted parable of the way secular man thinks about his relation to God” (Knight, 58).

Modern “worship” in the religious world does parallel this incident as man has substituted his “fire” for what God commanded. The early church observed the Lord’s supper every first day of the week (Acts 20:7), yet some have substituted monthly, quarterly, annual or no observation of the Lord’s command to remember His death (1 Cor. 11:23-26). 1 Corinthians 16:2 details an apostolic command for the church to raise funds through a weekly, voluntary contribution as members “put aside and save, as he may prosper.” In contrast, religious bodies raise funds through rummage sales, ticketed special events, or even running businesses. Scriptures plainly teach that Jesus, our High Priest, intercedes with the Father on our behalf (Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:34),

but many today substitute Mary or one of many “saints” in that role.

Remember, Nadab and Abihu were priests, in the process of an act designed to honor God, when their lack of respect for God’s command was decreed a failure to honor God. To presumptuously disrespect God’s instruction for worship by substituting our will is to fail to regard Him as holy. God is glorified when we submissively obey His instruction. That was God’s message for Aaron. “By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; and before all the people I must be glorified” (Lev. 10:3, NKJV). Woe to those who take it upon themselves to decide what “fire” should be offered to God!

The Importance of Truth in Worship

Jesus told the Samaritan woman, “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him *must* worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24). To worship in truth means to worship in accordance with what God has revealed in His word (John 17:17). Jesus affirms this in His answer regarding the proper place to worship under the Law of Moses. He validated Jewish worship as “what we know” (vv. 19-20). The Law directed temple services in Jerusalem and was silent on “strange” worship on Mount Gerizim. True worship must be by revelation, not presumption, and demonstrate adoration, not innovation.

Ultimately, we must truly understand what worship is. The word means “to prostrate oneself in homage” (Strong #4352). *HELPS Word-Studies* adds “this suggests the willingness to make all necessary physical gestures of obeisance [*homage, deference*].” Inherent in the word “worship” is deference to the commands of the one being worshipped—deference that Cain did not show in his sacrifice, and Nadab and Abihu

did not show in their offering. That same deference is missing in the innovative, presumptuous “worship” of the modern religious world.

Jesus applied Isaiah’s prophecy to worship that is offered with no emphasis on truth—that substitutes men’s teachings and practices for that of God: “This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me. *‘But in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men’*” (Matt. 15:8-9). **TL**

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Frostproof church of Christ
40 W. "A" St., Frostproof, FL 33483
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M., (863) 635-2607 or 635-4278

GENEVA

church of Christ
Ave. C and 2nd St.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.
(407) 349-9998

KEY LARGO

Key Largo church of Christ
100695 N. Overseas Hwy.
33037 m.m. 100.7 on US 1
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: William LeDent (305) 451-1194

MARY ESTHER

church of Christ
6 Lane Drive
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Joey Rankin (850) 244-9222

MIAMI

church of Christ
Eglise du Christ de Miami
8343 NE 3rd Court
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M.
Minister: Junot Joseph (305) 244-8295

MIAMI

Flagler Grove church of Christ
(Nearest to Airport), 500 N.W. 53rd Ave.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: John Buttrick (305) 634-5924

MIAMI

church of Christ
12780 Quail Roost Dr.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Clark Pace
(305) 233-9590 or (954) 430-1437

OCALA

Anthony church of Christ
9778 N.E. Jacksonville Rd., Anthony, FL 32617
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Wednesday 6:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Greg Cruz (352) 629-5505
www.anthonycoc.com

ORLANDO

Azalea Park church of Christ
6800 Lake Underhill Rd.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(407) 277-7931

ORLANDO

church of Christ at S. Bumpy
3940 S. Bumpy Ave.
Sunday Worship 9 A.M., Bible Study 10 A.M.
Worship w/ communion 10:55 A.M. (No Evening Service), Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Ken Chapman and Greg Klien
Office: (407) 851-8031

ORLANDO

Pine Hills Church of Christ
890 Hastings Street
Sun. Bible Study 10 A.M., Sun. Worship: 11 A.M.
Sun. Evening Worship: 6 P.M.
Wednesday Bible Study: 7:30 P.M.
(407) 293-2851 or (407) 290-8650

PALMETTO

Palmetto church of Christ
1575 14th Avenue W.
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M.
www.palmettochurchofchrist.com
(941) 722-1307

PANAMA CITY BEACH

Beach church of Christ
8910 Front Beach Rd.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(850) 234-2521

SEFFNER

church of Christ
621 E. Wheeler Rd.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:50 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Bobby Witherington (813) 684-1297
www.seffnercoc.org

GEORGIA

CENTERVILLE

Centerville church of Christ
250 Collins Ave. (Near Robins AFB)
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: J. Wiley Adams (478) 922-1158

COLUMBUS

River City Church of Christ
3900 River Road, Columbus GA 31904
Bible Class 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelists Jeff McCrary & Bo Couchman
(205) 451-9028, rivercitychurchofchrist.com
backtothebible@rivercitychurchofchrist.com

CONYERS

Rockdale church of Christ
East Metro Atlanta, 705 Smyrna Road
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5:30 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Building (770) 929-3973

PINE MTN. VALLEY

church of Christ
Route 116 (near Callaway Gardens)
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Tommy W. Thomas
(706) 628-5117 or 628-5229
www.pmvchurch.com

SAVANNAH

Coastal church of Christ
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
(912) 344-1687
coastalchurchofchrist@outlook.com

VALDOSTA

church Of Christ
4313 North Valdosta Rd.
(Located 1 mile E. of Exit 22 off I-75)
Worship 9 A.M., Bible Study 10 A.M.
Communion 11 A.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(229) 244-8630, www.northvaldostacoc.com

IDAHO

BLACKFOOT

church of Christ
370 N. Shilling • P.O. Box 158-83221
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(208) 785-6168 or 681-1552

IOWA

DES MOINES

church of Christ
1310 N.E. 54th Ave.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:40 A.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M., (515) 262-6799

GRINNELL

church of Christ
1402 Third Ave.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M.
(641) 521-6485, (641) 236-3883
www.grinnellcoc.com

ILLINOIS

CHICAGO

church of Christ
1514 West 74th Street
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: James E. Scott
Bldg. (773) 224-9279, (708) 339-6126

DOWNERS GROVE

church of Christ
1236 63rd St., (1 and 1/2 mile E. of I355)
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 9:55 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(630) 968-0760 • www.dgccc.org

GLEN ELLYN

Glen Ellyn Church of Christ
796 Prairie Ave.
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137
Sunday Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Sunday Evening 5 P.M.
Evangelist: Keith E. Brown
(630) 858-2290, (630) 377-3990

MATTOON

Southside church of Christ
1100 S. 17th Street
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(217) 234-3702

SOUTH HOLLAND

Southeast church of Christ
16224 S Vincennes Ave.
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 4 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Donald Hawkins, (708) 339-1008
www.southeastchurchofchrist.com

INDIANA

CLARKSVILLE

Clarksville church of Christ
407 W. Lewis & Clark Parkway, 47129
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Brian Anderson (812) 944-2305
or (812) 948-9917
www.clarksvillechurchofchrist.org

GREENWOOD

Greenwood church of Christ
371 W. Main Street
Sun. Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 4:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelists: Neil Tremblett
(317) 888-8288
www.churchofchristatgreenwood.org

HOBART

church of Christ
300 N. Liberty Street
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Jerry Cleek (219) 942-2663

INDIANAPOLIS

Castleton church of Christ
7701 East 86th Street, 46256
Sun. Worship 11 A.M., Sun. Bible Study 10 A.M.
Wed. Worship 11:15 A.M., Wed. Bible Study 7 P.M.
(317) 710-1204

JAMESTOWN

church of Christ
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:25 A.M.
Evening 4 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: David McPherson
(765) 676-6404 or (270) 994-4397
www.jamestowncoc.com

OOBITIC

church of Christ
400 Lafayette Ave. • P.O. Box 34
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M. Wednesday 7 P.M.
(812) 279-4332

PEKIN

church of Christ
(First St. & Karnes Ct.)
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Jeremy Goen
(812) 967-3437 or 967-3520
www.pekinchurchofchrist.com

PLAINFIELD

church of Christ West
2028 Stafford Rd., Ste. C., (Marsh Shopping Cntr.)
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 9:50 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Johnie Edwards
(317) 964-9404 or (317) 839-1769
www.churchofchristwest.org

SAINT LEON, IN

Church of Christ
7140 Hyland Rd., Guildford, IN 47022
174 exit 164 1 mile south on SR 1
Bible study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6:00 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
812-637-1252 or 513-367-7871

SALEM

Westside church of Christ
2000 West State Rd. 56
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(812) 883-2033, www.westsidechurchofchrist.net

TRAFALGAR

Spearsville Rd. church of Christ, 6244 S. 500W.
(1.2 mi. S. of Hwy. 135)
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Charles Wright
(317) 878-5969 or (317) 300-8790
www.trafalgarchurch.com

KANSAS

TOPEKA

17th Street church of Christ
5600 SW 17th St.
Bible Study 9:15 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M.
(785) 235-8687 or 273-7977
www.17thstreetchurchofchrist.org

KENTUCKY

AUSTIN

Peter's Creek church of Christ
856 Thomerson Park Rd.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M.
Evangelist: David Cox (270) 579-8074 or
(270) 646-0498, www.peterscreekcoc.com

BEAVER DAM

church of Christ
1235 Williams St.
Worship 10 A.M., Bible Study After Worship
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Jerid Gunter
(270) 274-4451

BRANDENBURG

Brandenburg church of Christ
612 Broadway
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 6:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Charles J. White (270) 422-3878

CAMPBELLSVILLE

Sunny Hill Dr. church of Christ
A.M. Worship 9:30 A.M., A.M. Bible Study 10:30 A.M.
A.M. Worship 11:30 A.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Steve Lee (270) 789-1651
stevelee4510@windstream.net
www.sunnyhillcoc.com

CANEYVILLE

Caneyville church of Christ
103 N. Main St. • P.O. Box 233
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Jarrod Jacobs (270) 589-4167 or
(270) 274-3065

DANVILLE

church of Christ
385 E. Lexington Ave.
Worship 10 A.M., Bible Study 11:15 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Scott Vifquain (859) 236-4204

FRANKLIN

31-W North church of Christ
1733 Bowling Green Road
Bible Study 9 A.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Steve Monts, (270) 586-3978
www.31wchurchofchrist.com

HODGENVILLE

Hodgenville church of Christ
613 S Lincoln Blvd.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Don Brady (270) 358-6053
Dbrady1295@aol.com

LEITCHFIELD

Mill St. church of Christ
733 Mill Street, Highway 62 E.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:55 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Michael Hardin
(270) 259-4968 or (270) 300-3239
www.millstreetchurchofchrist.org

LOUISVILLE

Valley Station church of Christ
1803 Dixie Garden Drive
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Dudley Ross Spears (502) 937-2822

LOUISIANA

GONZALES

Southside church of Christ
405 Orice Roth Road, 70737, (Baton Rouge area)
Bible Class 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: R.J. Evans (225) 622-4587
rjevans@eatel.net

MANY

Lakeside church of Christ
12095 Texas Hwy. (Hwy. 6 W.)
12 miles west of Many
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(318) 256-9396

STONEWALL

N. DeSoto church of Christ
2071 Highway 171 (South of Shreveport)
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(318) 925-2733

MARYLAND

SEVERN

Southwest church of Christ
805 Meadow Rd.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Brandon Trout
(410) 969-1420 or (410) 551-6549
www.swcofchrist.com

MAINE

PORTLAND

church of Christ • 856 Brighton Ave.
Leave Maine Turnpike at Exit 48
(Breakwater School)
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Second service immediately following morning
worship. Mid-week Bible Study. Please call for
times & places. (207) 839-3075 or 839-8409

MICHIGAN

CEDAR SPRINGS

W. Michigan church of Christ
Sr. Citizen Center, 44 Park Street
(Grand Rapids Area)
Worship 11 A.M., Bible Study 12:30 P.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Joseph Gladwell, (616) 975-2778
westmichcof10@yahoo.com

MINNESOTA

DULUTH

church of Christ
4401 Glenwood St.
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Bible Study 5:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Taylor Ladd (218) 728-3233

ST. CHARLES

church of Christ
939 Whitewater Avenue
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Bible Study 2:15 P.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M., call for location
FREE Bible correspondence studies
Evangelist: Robert Lehnertz (507) 534-2905

MISSISSIPPI

BOONEVILLE

Oakleigh Dr. church of Christ
101 Oakleigh Dr.
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 4 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Building: (662) 728-1942

CLINTON

McRaven Rd. church of Christ
301 McRaven Rd. (I20, exit 36)
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Leonard White
(601) 925-9757 or 924-2645

MERIDIAN

Grandview church of Christ
2820 Grandview Ave.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Wednesday 6:30 P.M.
Ron Cooper: (601) 934-3675
roncooper@bellsouth.net
Ricky Ethridge: (601) 737-5778
ricky-marsha@bellsouth.net

MERIDIAN

7th St. church of Christ
2914 7th Street
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
(601) 483-3101

SOUTHAVEN

church of Christ
2110 E State Line Rd. (Exit I-55), (Memphis area)
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: James A. Brown
(662) 342-1132 - church Building

MISSOURI

BLUE SPRINGS

Southside church of Christ
4000 SW Christiansen
Worship 9 A.M., Bible Study 10 A.M.
Worship 11 A.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Brett Hogland (816) 228-9262

BRANSON

Eagle Rock Road church of Christ
432 Eagle Rock Road
Sun. Worship 9:30 A.M., Bible Study 10:30 A.M.
Sun. Evening Worship 2 P.M., Wednesday 6 P.M.
Minister: Philip North (417) 239-1036
Email: primrosenor@suddenink.net
www.eaglerockroadchurchofchrist.org

CAPE GIRARDEAU

North Cape church of Christ
121 S. Broadview St. Suite 2,
Cape Girardeau, MO 63703
Sunday Bible Study 9:15 A.M. & 10 A.M.,
Worship 11 A.M., No Evening Service
Wednesday 6 P.M./CST, 7 P.M./DST
Evangelist: Jerry Lee Westbrook (573) 334-9673

DONIPHAN

Southside church of Christ
Hwy. 142 E. ½ mile (P.O. Box 220)
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(573) 996-3251 or 996-3513

FAIR GROVE

church of Christ
217 N. Orchard Blvd.
Bible Study 9 A.M., Bible Study 10 A.M.
Worship 11 A.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Walter Myers (417) 830-8972 or
(417) 736-2663

KENNETT

church of Christ
703 Harrison St.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(573) 888-6778 or (870) 650-1648
Preacher: Nolan Glover
www.westsidechurchofchrist.us

LILBOURN

church of Christ
211 Benton Street
First Worship 9 A.M., Bible Study 10 A.M.,
Second Worship 10:45 A.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Ben Lawrence, (501) 470-5390

RAYTOWN

Sterling Ave. church of Christ
5825 Sterling Ave. (Near Sports Complex)
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Justin Berss
(816) 356-3096 or (270) 320-6157
www.sterlingavechurchofchrist.org

ST. JAMES

church of Christ
685 Sidney St.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:15 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Lynn Huggins (573) 265-8628

ST. JOSEPH

County Line church of Christ
2727 County Line Rd.
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 9:50 A.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M.
(816) 279-4737
www.countylinechurchofchrist.com

NEBRASKA

BEATRICE

church of Christ • 7th and Bell
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 6:30 P.M., 233-4102 or 228-3827
www.churchofchrist7bell.com

NEW JERSEY

VAUXHALL

church of Christ
Milbourn Mall Suite 6., 2933 Vauxhall Rd.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Contact: Harry Persaud
phone: (908) 964-6356 • cell: (908) 964-8570

NEW MEXICO

ALBUQUERQUE

Heights church of Christ
7801 Zuni Road, S.E.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evanagelist: Darrel Yontz (505) 266-7577
www.heightschurchofchrist.com

NEVADA

RENO

Central church of Christ
2450 Wrondel Way, Suite A
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(775) 786-2888

NORTH CAROLINA

CHARLOTTE

Charlotte church of Christ
5327 S. Tryon Street
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Sun. Worship 10:30 A.M.
Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(704) 525-5655
www.charlottechurchofchrist.org

OHIO

BEAVERCREEK

Knollwood Creek church of Christ
1031 Welford Drive
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:20 A.M.
Afternoon 3 P.M., Wednesday Afternoon 1 P.M.
Wednesday Evening 7 P.M.
(937) 426-1422
www.knollwoodchurch.org

CINCINNATI

Blue Ash church of Christ
4667 Cooper Road
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Russell Dunaway, Jr. (513) 891-3174
www.blueashchurchofchrist.com

CLEVELAND

Lorain Ave. church of Christ
13501 Lorain Ave.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(330) 723-0111 or (330) 590-0227
or (216) 322-9392
www.lorainave-churchofchrist.com

COLUMBUS

Laurel Canyon church of Christ
409 McNaughton Road
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(614) 868-1375, www.iccoc.net

DAYTON

West Carrollton
28 W. Main Street, 45449
Early Worship 9 A.M., Bible Study 9:30 A.M.
Worship 10:25 A.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Michael Grushon (937) 866-5162
or 848-3779, www.wc-cc.org

FRANKLIN

Franklin church of Christ
6417 Franklin-Lebanon Rd. 45005
Sun. Bible Study 10 A.M.
Sun. Worship 10:45 A.M.
Tues. Bible Study 6:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Josh Lee (937) 789-8055
or (937) 746-1249, www.franklin-church.org

FREMONT

church of Christ
3361 W. State Street, 1 mi. W. of Fremont
on U.S. Rt. 20
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(419) 849-3340 or 849-2980
www.fremontchurchofchrist.com

HAMILTON

Westview church of Christ
1040 Azel Ave.
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 9:45 A.M.
Evening 6:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Eugene Ford (513) 856-9288

HILLIARD

church of Christ
4840 Cemetery Rd.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(614) 876-4089

MANSFIELD

Southside church of Christ
687 Mansfield-Lucas Road
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 5 P.M.
James Bond: (419) 526-2868
Leon Bond: (419) 525-3684
church: (419) 522-8982

NEW LEBANON

New Lebanon church of Christ
1973 W Main Street
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.,
Evening 5 P.M., Wed. Bible Study 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Bruce Hastings (937) 687-7150
or (937) 478-0367

MARIETTA-RENO

Marietta-Reno church of Christ
80 Sandhill Road
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Daniel Ruegg: (740) 222-9160 or
Steve Foutty: (740) 473-9028

NORTHWOOD

Frey Road church of Christ
4110 Frey Rd. (Toledo Area)
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Donald Jarabek
(419) 893-3566, (567) 694-5062

UHRICHSVILLE

church of Christ
638 Parrish Street
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6:30 P.M., Mid-week 6:30 P.M.

OKLAHOMA

MCALESTER

North A St. church of Christ
2120 No. A Street
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.
Evening 5:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Rob Lungstrum, Cell: (918) 931-1362
Office: (918) 423-3445

OKLAHOMA CITY

Seminole Pointe church of Christ
16300 N. May Avenue
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: John M. Duvall (405) 340-3189
or (405) 513-6691, www.seminolepointe.church

OREGON

SWEET HOME

Church of Christ
3702 E. Long Street, Sweet Home, OR
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 7 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Building: (541) 367-1599

PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA

church of Christ
7222 Germantown Ave., 19119
Bible Study 10:15 A.M., Worship 11:15 A.M.
Tuesday night 7 P.M.
Evangelist: James H. Baker, Jr. (215) 248-2026
www.mtairychurchofchrist.org

SOUTH CAROLINA

COLUMBIA

Lower Richland church of Christ
3000 Trotter Rd. (Hopkins, SC)
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(803) 730-0452, <http://lowerrichlandchurch.org>

SUMTER

Woodland church of Christ
3370 Broad St. Extension
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: A.A. Granke, Jr. (803) 499-6023

WEST COLUMBIA

Airport church of Christ
4013 Edmund Hwy. (Hwy. 302)
**OUR WEB SITE DISPLAYS OUR
CURRENT ASSEMBLY SCHEDULE.**
Evangelist: Seth Mauldin, Bldg. (803) 834-6978
<http://airport-church-of-christ.com>

TENNESSEE

COLUMBIA

Mooresville Pike church of Christ
417 Mooresville Pike
(.8 mi. N. of Hwy. 50/Jas. Campbell)
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 3:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(931) 388-5828 or (931) 381-7898
www.moorevillepikecoc.com

COSBY

Cosby church of Christ
4894 Hooper Hwy., 37722
(15 mi. E. of Gatlinburg on Hwy. 321)
Bible Study 10A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday Bible Study 6:00 P.M.
Evangelist: Olie Williamson
(423) 487-5540 or (423) 748-0844

JACKSON

Sunset View church of Christ
3618 Hwy 70 East
(Exit 87 off I-40, 7mi. @ Spring Creek)
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Steve Wilkerson (731) 967-0590
or 968-9851

JOHNSON CITY

Brookmead church of Christ
2428 Lakeview Drive
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Kevin Kay (423) 282-6251 or 426-1836

JONESBOROUGH

11-E church of Christ
240 Headtown Road
Bible Study 10:30 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Evangelist: David Wheeler
(423) 557-9119 or (423) 948-6464
www.christianadmonisher.jigsy.com

KINGSTON SPRINGS

Kingston Springs church of Christ
350 North Main Street
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Steve Walker, www.kscoc.com

MT. PLEASANT

Locust St. Church of Christ
108 Locust Street • Mt. Pleasant, TN 38474
931-379-3704 or 931-964-3924
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Daniel H. King, Sr.
www.lscoc.com

KINGSPOORT

Kingsport church of Christ
4938 Fort Henry Dr. • P.O. Box 554
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5:00 P.M., Wednesday 7:00 P.M.
Evangelist: Tom Kinzel, Bldg.# (423) 239-3979
or (423) 579-2002 • www.kptcoc.org

MARYVILLE

Smokey Mt. church of Christ
2206 Montvale Road
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Harold Tabor (865) 977-4230
Lon Spurgeon (865) 388-8749
<http://tinyurl.com/smchurch>

MEMPHIS

Rocky Pt. Road church of Christ
516 E. Rocky Point Rd., Cordova
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10A.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M.
rockypointchurch@gmail.com
www.rockypointchurch.org

MURFREESBORO

Cason Lane church of Christ
1110 Cason Lane
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(615) 896-0090 (Building)
www.casonlanechurch.org

MURFREESBORO

Northfield Blvd. church of Christ
2091 Pitts Ln. at Northfield Blvd.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: David Bunting (615) 893-1200

NASHVILLE

Hillview church of Christ
7471 Charlotte Pike
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(615) 952-5458 or (615) 356-7318
Evangelist: Lee Wildman

NASHVILLE

Perry Heights church of Christ
423 Donelson Pike
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 9:55 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Johnny Felker (615) 883-3118
<http://perryheights.faiithweb.com>

PIGEON FORGE

King Branch Road church of Christ
560 King Branch Road
Worship 10 A.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Facilities available for Sunday evening services
upon request.
Evangelist: Roger Williams (865) 430-5980
www.KingBranchRoadchurchOfChrist.org

SHELBYVILLE

El Bethel church of Christ
1801 Hwy. 41-A North
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 9:50 A.M.
Evening 5:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Donnie V. Rader (931) 607-9099
dvrader@live.com

SHELBYVILLE

Shelbyville Mills church of Christ
1222 W. Jackson St.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Jeff Curtis (931) 607-9118
djcurtis1963@hotmail.com

TEXAS

ALLEN

West Allen church of Christ
1414 W. Exchange Blvd. (2 miles west of Hwy. 75)
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 9:50 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Jerry King (214) 504-0443
Building phone (972) 727-5355

ALVARADO

I-35 church of Christ
E. Service Rd. off I-35, N. of Alvarado
Bible Study 10:00 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6:00 P.M., Wednesday 7:00 P.M.
(817) 295-7277 or 790-7253

ALVIN

Adoue St. church of Christ
605 E. Adoue St
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Mark Mayberry (346) 216-1707
www.ascoc.org & www.markmayberry.net

AUSTIN

Schultz Lane church of Christ
Faber Rd. & Schultz Ln., Pflugerville, TX 78660
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 2 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Ron Lehde

BAYTOWN

church of Christ at Pruett & Lobit
701 North Pruett Street
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:40 A.M.
Evening 6:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Jesse Flowers (281) 515-8939
Building: (281) 422-5926, Weldon: (713) 818-1321

BEAUMONT

Dowlen Rd. church of Christ
3060 Dowlen Road
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelists: Max Dawson & Benjamin Lee
(409) 866-1996

CONROE

Woodland Hills church of Christ
410 Woodland Hills Dr., 77303
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
phone: (936) 756-9322
www.conroechurch.com

CLEVELAND

church of Christ
310 E. Houston Street
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Robert Davis (281) 592-5676
www.clevelandchurchofchrist.org

CORPUS CHRISTI

Hwy. 9 church of Christ
Worship 10 A.M., Bible Study 11 A.M.
Worship 12 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Call for location: Keith Kalies (361) 776-2304
or Patrick Frazier (361) 235-1990

DICKINSON

church of Christ
2919 FM 517 Road E.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:50 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 9:45 A.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M., (281) 534-4870
www.dickinsonchurchofchrist.org

DALLAS

Methodist Street church of Christ
211 Methodist St. • Red Oak TX, 75154
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: D. LeRoy Klice
(972) 576-3119 or 363-7672
www.methodiststreetchurchofchrist.com

DUNCANVILLE

Whispering Hills church of Christ
2126 S. Main (South Dallas)
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(214) 874-5701, info@whchurchofchrist.net

EDNA

church of Christ
301 Robison Street
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(361) 782-5506 or 782-2844
Elders: J. Mercer & S. Mercer

EL PASO

Eastringe church of Christ
3277 Pendleton Road
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(915) 855-1524

FORT WORTH

West Side church of Christ
6110 White Settlement Rd. 76114
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(817) 738-7269

GRANBURY

church of Christ
4313 Old Granbury Road
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
817-913-4209 or 817-279-3351

HOUSTON

Fry Rd. church of Christ
2510 Fry Road (77084)
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:20 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Bob Pulliam: (281) 832-4633, www.fryroad.org

HOUSTON

Spring Woods church of Christ
9955 Neuens Rd. at Witte Road
Worship 9 A.M., Bible Study 10 A.M.
Worship 11 A.M., Evening 6 P.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: (713) 419-1750
www.springwoodschurchofchrist.com

IRVING

Westside church of Christ
2320 Imperial Dr. (closest to DFW Airport)
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 9:50 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Mark Roberts (972) 986-9131
www.JustChristians.com

LANCASTER

Pleasant Run church of Christ
831 W. Pleasant Run Road
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:20 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(972) 227-1708 or 227-2598

LUBBOCK

Indiana Avenue church of Christ
6111 Indiana Avenue
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(806) 795-3377
www.lubbockchurch.com

LUFKIN

Timberland Dr. church of Christ
912 S. Timberland Drive
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 9:50 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelists: Harold Hancock & Reagan McClenny
(936) 634-7110 or 632-7070

MANSFIELD

Northside church of Christ
1820 Mansfield-Webb Road
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:20 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 5:30 P.M.
www.northsidecoc.us
Evangelist: Tom Roberts (817) 466-3160

NACOGDOCHES

Stallings Dr. church of Christ
3831 N.E. Stallings Drive
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:20 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelists: Randy Harshbarger & Jay Taylor

PLANO

Spring Creek church of Christ
2100 W. Spring Creek Pkwy., (North Dallas Suburb)
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(972) 517-5582, www.planochurch.org

SAN ANTONIO

Grissom Rd. church of Christ
5470 Lost Lane at Grissom Rd.
San Antonio, TX 78238-2700
Bible Classes 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday (Ladies Class) 10 A.M.,
Wednesday (Bible Class) 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Terry Starling
www.grissomroadcoc.org

SAN ANTONIO

Pecan Valley church of Christ
268 Utopia Avenue, (I-37 S.E. Exit Pecan Valley)
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Clyde W. Carter (210) 337-6143

SHERMAN

Westwood Village church of Christ
314 N. Tolbert
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Ronald Stringer

TEMPLE

Leon Valley church of Christ
4404 Twin City Blvd.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Jason Garcia
yourfriendjgar@gmail.com
www.biblemoments.org

WACO

Sun Valley church of Christ
340 E. Warren St. (In Hewitt, a suburb of Waco)
Bible Class 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Marc Smith
(254) 666-1020 or 420-1484

THE WOODLANDS

Woodlands church of Christ
1500 Wellman Road • P.O. Box 7664 (77380)
Bible Class 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:20 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(281) 367-2099
www.woodlandschurchofchrist.org

VIRGINIA

CHESAPEAKE

Tidewater church of Christ
217 Taxus Street
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Steve Schlosser (757) 436-6900

CHESTER

Chester church of Christ
12100 Winfree St., (Central to Richmond,
Hopewell, Petersburg, & Colonial Heights)
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5:30 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
church Building: (804) 796-2374, (804) 385-2725
or (804) 271-0877

NEWPORT NEWS

Harpersville Rd. church of Christ
315 Harpersville Road
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Wednesday 7:00 P.M.

RICHMOND (METRO)

Courthouse church of Christ
Courthouse Rd. at Double Creek Ct.
(2.2 miles S of Rt. 288)
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Gene Tope (804) 790-1629
www.courthousechurchofchrist.com

RICHMOND

Forest Hill church of Christ
1208 W. 41st Street
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6:00 P.M., Wednesday 7:00 P.M.
Evangelist: Jack Bise, Jr. (804) 233-5959

RIDGEWAY

church of Christ
2970 Old Leaksville Road
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 5:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(276) 956-6049
www.churchofchristatridgeway.com

ROANOKE

Blue Ridge church of Christ
929 Indiana Avenue N.E. (5 min. from Roanoke
Convention Center)
1st Lesson 9:15 A.M., Bible Study 10 A.M.
Worship 11 A.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(540) 344-2755

VIRGINIA BEACH

Southside church of Christ
5652 Haden Road
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Robert Mallard (757) 464-4574

WASHINGTON

BELLINGHAM

Mt. Baker church of Christ
1860 Mt. Baker Hwy.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Joe Price (360) 752-2692 or 380-2960
www.bibleanswer.com/mtbaker

TACOMA

Manitou Park church of Christ
(meets at Gray Middle School)
6229 S Tyler Street
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M.
(253) 242-3098
tacomachurch@gmail.com
www.tacomachurch.com

WEST VIRGINIA

CHARLESTON

Oakwood Road church of Christ
873 Oakwood Road
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:50 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
oakwoodrdcoc@suddenlinkmail.com
www.orcoc.org • (304) 342-5637

CLARKSBURG

Westside church of Christ
Davisson Run Road
Sunday Morning 9:30 A.M.
(304) 622-5433
www.westsidechurchofchristwv.net

FAIRMONT

Eastside church of Christ
1929 Morgantown Avenue
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(304) 363-8696 or (304)844-2437

GLADESVILLE

Gladesville church of Christ
2906 Gladesville Rd., Independence, WV 26374
Sunday Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.
Sunday 7 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(304) 864-3078

MOUNDVILLE

Moundville church of Christ
210 Cedar Street
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6:30 P.M., Mid-week 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Tony Huntsman (304) 845-4940

PARKERSBURG

Marrtown church of Christ
825 Marrtown Road
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(304) 422-7458 or 893-5227

WYOMING

RANCHESTER

Ranchester church of Christ
Hwy. 14 West, Ranch Mart Mall
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 6:30 P.M.
Contact: Bob Reich (307) 655-2563

CANADA

CALGARY, AB

Northside church of Christ
803 20A Avenue NE
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday Bible Study 7 P.M.
+1 (403) 452-5116
www.churchofchristcalgary.com

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