

Truth

Magazine

*Taking His hand,
helping each other home.*




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OUTREACH



Truth Magazine

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Job was not the first (nor will he be the last), to cry out, “Why me? Why mine?” when facing calamity and crisis. Let us strive to help such individuals move past anger to acceptance, and from frustration to faith.

He Did Not Leave Himself Without Witness

by Mark Mayberry

We eagerly anticipate the 2022 Truth Lectures, “I Believe in Jesus,” (An Apologetic Defense for Faith), which will be held July 11-14 at Athens Bible School in Athens, AL. This special issue focuses on the corollary topic of “Outreach.”

Introduction

What is a witness? In English, a “witness” refers to (1) “a person who sees an event, typically a crime or accident, take place,” or (2) “evidence, proof” (Oxford’s English Dictionary). In a court of law, an eyewitness offers testimony that serves as evidence. Assuming the testimony is credible, it helps prove the innocence or guilt of one who is on trial.

The Greek word *martus*, translated “witness” (12x) or “witnesses” (23x), carries a similar meaning. It refers to “(1) one who testifies in legal matters; (2) one who affirms or attests (a) of God (or the exalted Christ) as witness; (b) of humans: witnessing by eye and ear; (c) of witnesses who bear a divine message; (3) one who witnesses at cost of life, martyr” (BDAG, 619-620).

What evidence do we have for God’s existence and the authenticity of His word? What testimony does He offer of His existence, goodness, and grace?

When a financial institution considers a credit card or loan application, it looks at the past performance of the applicant. Is he trustworthy? Does he fulfill his commitments? Does he pay his bills, or does the repo man regularly come calling?

We learn to trust God in the same way that we come to trust others, or others come to trust us. What is His track record? Does He have the character/integrity that engenders trust? Does He keep His word? Does He have the resources to carry out His commitments? The answer is a resounding, “Yes!”

The Witness of the World

In preaching to the pagans at Lystra, Paul urged them to turn from idolatry to serve the living God who made heaven and earth. While permitting the nations to go their own way, He did not leave Himself without witness. Rather, God did good—providing rain and fruitful seasons, satisfying our hearts with food and gladness (Acts 14:8-18).

Paul presented a similar message to the Greek philosophers while standing on the Areopagus in Athens, emphasizing God’s power, provision, and purpose (Acts 17:22-31).

The opening chapter of Romans offers a similar summary: The physical creation reveals God’s eternal attributes: namely, His eternal power and divine nature. However, pride, perversity and perversion blind men and women to such self-evident truths (Rom. 1:18-25).

The Witness of the Word

Careful obedience to God’s revealed word is the key to a happy and productive life (Deut. 32:44-47). The benefits of faith become clear through practice: “O taste and see that the LORD is good; how blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!” (Ps. 34:8-18). The word of God cuts through all forms of pretense and posturing, revealing our need, challenging us to act with purpose. To help us achieve the land of promised rest, God has provided a perfect High Priest who graciously guides us toward the goal (Heb. 4:1-16, esp. vv. 12-13).

The Evidence of the Apostles

What evidence do we have that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God? Is there reason to believe in His deity and resurrection?

Peter’s sermon on Pentecost serves as a summation of the gospel’s life-saving message: (1) the evidence of miracles; (2) the evidence of prophecy; and (3) the evidence of credible eyewitness testimony.

When the apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit, three miracles occurred, offering audible, visible, and intellectual confirmation that God’s hand was involved in the unfolding events. Those who were present heard the noise of a violent rushing wind. They saw tongues of fire upon each of the apostles, who began speaking in a multitude of languages known to those pilgrims who had come from foreign lands. In like manner, Peter also declared that “Jesus the Nazarene (was) a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know” (v. 22).

The evidence of prophecy came from Joel, who foreshadowed the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (vv. 14-21), and David, who spoke of Christ’s resurrection (vv. 22-31) and subsequent ascension (vv. 34-35).

The evidence of eye-witnesses came from Peter and the other apostles: “This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. Therefore, having been exalted to the right hand of God,

and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear” (vv. 32-33).

Near the end of his life, Peter reemphasized the reliability of the gospel message, saying, “For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty—citing the miracles that occurred on the mount of transfiguration, and stressing the powerful witness of the prophetic word (2 Pet. 1:16-21).

A Call to Action

In the Old Testament, God pleaded with Israel, saying, “Come now, and let us reason together. . .” (Isa. 1:18-20). Arguing against the validity of idols, the Lord said, “Present your case. Bring forward your strong arguments. . .” (Isa. 41:21-29).

In the New Testament, Paul’s pattern for evangelism involved reasoning in the synagogue and the marketplace, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks that Jesus was the Christ (Acts 17:16-17; 18:1-4, 18-19; 19:8-10). The Greek word *dialegomai*, translated “reasoning” in the aforementioned verses, means “to discuss, address, preach” (Thomas, 1256). Arndt defines it as (1) to engage in speech interchange; (2) to instruct about something” (BDAG, 232). While it can refer to an argument or dispute (Mark 9:34; Acts 24:12; Jude 9; etc.), it also means to “make a speech” or engage in a discussion or “reasonable discourse” (Acts 17:2, 17; 18:4, 19; 19:8, 9; 20:7, 9; 24:25; Heb. 12:5; etc.) (Swanson, 1363).

The apostle Paul did not harangue his audience. He did not rant or rave. He did not employ invectives or insults. Rather, he sought to convince and convert his hearers. Standing before King Agrippa, he said, “I would wish to God, that

whether in a short or long time, not only you but also all who hear me this day, might become such as I am, except for these chains” (Acts 26:24-29, esp. v. 29). Writing to the Romans, Paul said, “I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh. . . My heart’s desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation” (Rom. 9:1-5; 10:1).

Old Testament prophets were commanded to speak, and not be afraid or ashamed. Moreover, they were directly and divinely empowered (Jer. 26:1-6, 7-11, 12-16). New Testament apostles were commanded to be ready to speak, and not be afraid or ashamed. They also were directly and divinely empowered (Matt. 10:16-20; Luke 21:12-15; cf. Acts 4:5-12).

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Answering Don K. Preston

by Kyle Pope

Kyle Pope has done a two-hour video responding to a twenty-one-video review of his book on the AD 70 Doctrine. This article summarizes the material and directs the reader to resources for further study.

Introduction

The AD 70 Doctrine, also known as realized eschatology, or full preterism, teaches that everything prophesied about end times has already happened. I wrote a book in 2019 entitled *Thinking about AD 70: Challenging Realized Eschatology*. In 2021, one of the most prominent spokesmen for this view, Don K. Preston, devoted twenty-one videos to a review and attempted refutation of my book. I have produced a two-hour video answering his ten hours of videos that is posted on our church website. In this article, I would like to address some highlights. To study this further, please see the resources at the end of this essay.

The Passing of the Old Law

For the AD 70 Doctrine to be true, its proponents must argue that Mosaic law did not end at the cross, but when Jerusalem was destroyed in AD 70. Preston makes the argument that, if the Law of Moses ended at the cross, then nothing it prophesied could have awaited fulfillment. This is a seriously flawed argument. Genesis 49:10, which was revealed before Mosaic law, prophesied “the obedience of the people” under Jesus. Does that mean patriarchal law is still in force, since this is still being fulfilled? Of course not! When one law supersedes another, it becomes what defines sin and righteousness. The Old Testament continued to have value after the cross “for our learning” (Rom. 15:4), but it was no longer the standard that determined sinful and righteous behavior (Rom. 10:4;

Heb. 10:9b; 1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:16; Rom. 9:6; 2:28-29; Gal. 3:7, 28-29).

The Strength of Sin

A skewed interpretation of 1 Corinthians 15:56 leads full preterists to argue that Mosaic Law would continue until Jesus’s coming and the resurrection (which they argue took place in AD 70). This text comes in a chapter on resurrection, and in a section that describes resurrection, as a time when the righteous have “put on” incorruption and immortality when death has been “swallowed up” (1 Cor. 15:54-57). If this has already happened, then death has already been “destroyed” (15:26)—yet people still die physically and spiritually. I challenge Preston to recognize that, with his rationale, logically he must accept: (1) universalism, and say all are saved; (2) “Once saved, always saved,” a core tenet of the false doctrine of Calvinism, or (3) minimize the force of what Paul says. The AD 70 Doctrine minimizes or rationalizes away many clear promises of Scripture.

Their argument from 15:56 is that, if death was conquered in AD 70, and the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is “the law,” it must mean “the law” ended in AD 70. So, Preston throws out a common full preterist charge: “Mr. Pope believes the gospel is the strength of sin!” That inflammatory accusation misses many things. First, it assumes that “the end” (15:24) is AD 70, which cannot be proven from the context. Second, it minimizes the force of putting on “incorruption” and “immortality.” Third,

it assumes the phrase “the law” refers specifically to Mosaic Law (or the Law of Christ) rather than the principle that God’s law generally sets forth a *sin-to-death* consequence. Yes, the gospel of Christ now defines sin (John 12:47-48; Acts 17:30-31; 2 Thess. 1:8), but it also offers the means ultimately to overcome the *sin-to-death* principle by the blood of Christ—something to which Mosaic Law could only look forward.

Illegitimate Totality Transfer

Throughout the videos Preston accused me of committing a linguistic fallacy called the *illegitimate totality transfer fallacy* (ITTF), defined extensively by Old Testament Scholar James Barr. This practice assumes that all possible meanings of a word must apply any time it is used. He raised this charge many times whenever I called upon the reader to consider the broad conceptual basis of words upon which full preterists have imposed narrow and subjective meanings. Ironically, Preston misapplies the definition of this fallacy, ignores instances in which he is far closer to committing it than I am, and seems blind to the fact that the AD 70 Doctrine itself relies upon a method of taking words and phrases from remote and distinct contexts and demanding they mean the same thing in every use in Scripture.

Melting of the Elements

A blatant example of this is in Preston’s teaching on the Greek word *stoicheia*. In the book, I consider the many instances of its use in Scripture and demonstrate



how the context shows that it means different things in different contexts. For the AD 70 Doctrine to be true, Preston must argue that Peter's promise of heaven and earth being "burned up" cannot apply to the material universe, but to the melting of the "elements (*stoicheia*)" (2 Pet. 3:10, 12) of the Jewish system. I show that, in the context, Peter begins with a reference to God's creation of heaven and earth "standing out of water and in the water" (3:5), the world of the flood that perished "with water" (3:6), and the present heavens and earth being "reserved for fire" (3:7). In each case, it is the material universe that is being discussed. Only three verses later, it is the "elements" of this same material universe that Peter says will be burned up. Despite this, Preston argues every use of *stoicheia* in the NT refers to the elements of the Jewish system. This interpretation ignores context and is far closer to committing ITTF than any of my arguments.

Method More Than Mercy

This tendency to dismiss context and distinctive wording characterizes Preston's approach to Scripture. He argues that Genesis 8:21b-22 is a promise never to destroy the earth in any way. We have just noticed Peter's contrast of the flood's destruction "with water" (2 Pet. 3:6), and the future destruction that is "reserved for fire" (2 Pet. 3:7). That explains the Lord's qualification in Genesis 8:21b, that He would not destroy it "as I have done." Preston mocks this distinction and says it makes God more concerned with "method than mercy." That is a subjective appeal to emotionalism, not an exegesis of the text. If 2 Peter is consistently talking about the material creation, it is inescapably promising destruction by fire of that same material creation. Appeals to an emotional response to that reality do not change what it says.

Embracing Heretical Concepts

The AD 70 Doctrine leads people to become so convinced they have unlocked a hidden key to knowledge that has eluded lesser minds that they accept concepts which are radically heretical with little hesitation. For example, Preston argues that Isaiah 27:9 (despite a context that points to 587 BC rather than AD 70) teaches that the Roman destruction of Jerusalem accomplished atonement for sin! The NT teaches that, on this side of the cross, Christ's blood is the only atonement for sin (Heb. 10:12, 26; 1 John 2:2).

Another example is seen in Preston's teaching on the death which Jesus died on our behalf. In addressing points that I made in the book about 1 Corinthians 15:20, Preston denied that describing Jesus as "the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Cor. 15:20) shows a correlation between His bodily resurrection and the future bodily resurrection of the righteous. He argued

that this means Jesus was “the first to be raised from the death of Adam,” going on to argue that Jesus spiritually died! Preston likely does not realize that with such arguments he embraces the Calvinistic false doctrine of imputation. If Christ died spiritually (i.e., He was separated from God) in any literal sense, He either stopped being God or there were two Gods for a time. If He literally became guilty of sin, He would not be a “lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pet. 1:10).

“Since There Was a Nation”

To argue that Daniel 12:2 (one of the most explicit descriptions of resurrection in the OT) happened in AD 70, Preston tries to equate Daniel 12:1b and Jesus’s promise of tribulation in Matthew 24:21 and Mark 13:19. Once again, he ignores the context and also dismisses the distinctive wording in the two texts. While the context is talking about the persecution of the Jews under the Greeks, he argues that persecution was not the worst “since there was a nation.” In my video, and in my article in last month’s *Truth Magazine*, I refute this by considering the scope of this horrible attempt to exterminate Jewish faith (“Since There Was a Nation” 66.3 [Mar. 2022]: 6-7).

“How Is This Possible?”

Preston makes an odd argument that appeals to false doctrines in the NT to argue that they demonstrate the nature of sound doctrine. In addressing points I have made about 2 Timothy 2:17-18 and 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2, he argues: if the resurrection and Christ’s coming is to be an “earth burning, time-ending event” and “a personal, literal, visible, bodily coming,” how would it be possible for anyone to believe or convince others it had already occurred? This is like saying, “if baptism really was immersion, how could anyone ever come to believe that it was sprinkling or pouring?” The nature of false doctrine proves nothing about sound doctrine. I urge him to consider,

instead, how these false doctrines parallel exactly the skewed teachings of modern-day full preterism.

Apocalyptic Language

For realized eschatology to be true, all cosmological apocalyptic language must apply only to the event with which it was first associated. It can have no dual meaning or literal application to any future events. They argue that it is only figurative “exaggeration.” On the other hand, they apply very subjective and narrow interpretations to time statements, which they arbitrarily restrict to fulfillments within the generation to which they were first spoken.

Does God exaggerate? In Numbers 23:19 the Holy Spirit reveals: “God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?” If apocalyptic language foreshadows ultimate literal fulfillments, God is honest—a figurative fulfillment anticipates *making good* what He has spoken. If it is all just “exaggeration,” God has lied. How, then, can we trust anything that He has said?

Preston argues that this exaggeration is just the manner of speech of the prophets and this is how it would have been understood by first-century Jews and Christians. When evidence is offered showing that Jews and Christians expected a literal fulfillment, he then says, yes, but they were wrong. He even asserts that the “biblical principle” is always that the literal comes first, and then the figurative. That is not true of Joseph and Pharaoh’s dreams (Gen. 37:5-10; 41:1-8) and it is not true simply because man calls something a “biblical principle.”

“There Is about to Be”

With little or no explanation, Preston often quotes passages that are usually translated “will be” and renders them “is about to be.” He does this because of his preferred definition of the Greek word

mellō, which can mean “about to be” but most frequently means simply “shall, should, would, will.” Preston imposes this narrow meaning in passages like Acts 24:15 to make Paul say, “there is about to be [*mellō*] a resurrection of the just and the unjust” (YLT). I challenge him to consider its use in Acts 26:22-23. Will he apply this narrow meaning to that text, where Paul says “the prophets and Moses” said Christ was “about to [*mellō*] come” and “about to [*mellō*] proclaim light” (YLT)? If it can apply to something that would not happen for centuries in Acts 26:22-23, why can’t it apply to centuries in Acts 24:15?

The Book of Revelation

When Preston did his videos, he was in the midst of a written debate on the date of Revelation, so he offered only a few comments. Appealing to the Song of Moses, Preston argued that its reference to avenging “the blood of His servants” (Deut. 32:43) is a specific prophecy fulfilled in Revelation 19:2, which also speaks of avenging “the blood of His servants.” I make the argument that the Song of Moses was a general “witness” to Israel throughout its history, not a specific prophecy pointing to AD 70 (Deut. 31:19). I point out that 2 Kings 9:7 echoes the wording of the Song of Moses just as closely (if not closer) than Revelation 19:2, but Preston does not treat it as specific fulfillment. Why not? Preston appeared to disagree with evidence that Domitian, the emperor most believe to be reigning when Revelation was written, insisted on being worshipped as a God. If he is, he is disagreeing with ancient writers. Both Suetonius and Dio Cassius claim that he did (Suetonius, *Domitian* 13.2; Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 67.4.7). Preston criticized me for offering evidence in the book that Rome, and not Jerusalem, was known as a city set on seven hills (cf. Rev. 17:9). He asserted that, “no preterists believe that this was Jerusalem!” While he certainly knows more about full preterism than do I, he is wrong about this. I have personally heard full preterists make this argument.

Finally, he tries to equate the “great city” spiritually called “Sodom and Egypt” (Rev. 11:8) with “Babylon the Great” (Rev. 17:5; 18:2), concluding that it is physical Jerusalem since the first is called the place “where our Lord was crucified” (11:8). This argument presumes the Holy Spirit is talking about the same place—a view I reject. It also assumes the temple (11:1-2) refers to the physical temple rather than the spiritual temple of God’s people (cf. Rev. 3:12)—which is an odd view for a doctrine that spiritualizes virtually everything!

Ezekiel Appendix

I was honored that Preston found my material worth devoting so much time to it, but I wish he had been more careful in his reading of it. For example, I included an appendix in the book from a lecture I did for a preacher’s study on eschatology in Ezekiel. In his reviews, Preston falsely claimed that I teach that Ezekiel 32 was about final judgment. In the book, I consider what the chapter teaches about Sheol as a conscious state awaiting final judgment. He falsely claimed that I teach that the valley of dry bones vision in Ezekiel 37 describes the final judgment. In the book, I explicitly state that it does not—even listing it in a section entitled “Spiritual Resurrections.” To assume I believe things I do not, then argue against his own assumptions, is not productive.

Fulfillment of the Law

While addressing points I discussed in the book about Christ’s fulfillment of the Law, Preston made more false claims about my views, then argued against things I have never taught. In discussing Matthew 5:17, I offered “at least two ways” that Christ fulfilled the Law: (1) He fulfilled what was spoken about Him, and (2) He “established” or empowered the Law to accomplish its purpose. Preston ignored my explanations and falsely claimed that I teach that Jesus only brought “some moral fulfillment,” or the “spirit of the OT.” That is not true, as careful readers

can verify. After disagreeing with my teaching in virtually every video that the Law ended at the cross, in addressing my treatment of Matthew 5:18, Preston made the ludicrous charge that I teach that the OT remains in place until the end of the material universe. His view assumes “heaven and earth” refers to the Jewish OT system, ignores that its parallel in Luke 16:17 describes the enduring nature of God’s word, and refuses to consider any sense in which the phrase, “the law,” envisions the fulfillment and establishment of the perfect law in the Law of Christ.

Conclusion

I tried in the video to be as kind and objective as possible. Since Preston was formerly associated with churches of Christ, I appealed to him as an erring brother to reevaluate his faulty conclusions and turn, in truth, to what the gospel teaches (2 Thess. 3:15). This doctrine has a history of many who once embraced it later coming to recognize its erroneous teaching and rejecting it. I pray that Preston, and any who have been ensnared by its flawed and heretical doctrines, will do the same. **T**

Resources

Preston’s series may be viewed on YouTube: MrDonPreston, playlist: *Responding to Kyle Pope: Review and Response to Kyle Pope’s Book-Thinking About AD 70-#1* - YouTube: (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J8z_GvsU3Co&list=PLhTk2RamI8ttUee6fChPJod0vrugdAfb).

There are twenty-one posted videos, but only twenty actual reviews. Number ten was recorded twice with no difference in content. My video response and written material can be accessed here: *Answering Don K. Preston*: (<https://www.olsenpark.com/SpecialStudies/answering-don-k-preston.html>) or on the Facebook page of the Olsen Park church of Christ.

For those unfamiliar with this strange doctrine, a summary is offered at the beginning of my video and in the written material. My book, *Thinking about AD 70: Challenging Realized Eschatology*.^{*} (Athens, AL: Truth Publications, Inc., 2019), although not exhaustive, addresses it in greater detail.

In 2020, Olsen Park church of Christ hosted a debate on this issue. The videos are available online: *2020 Debate on the AD 70 Doctrine*: (<https://olsenpark.com/Debate.html>) and a transcription of the debate has been published (*Will Jesus Really Come Again?: Reeves-Neubauer Debate on the AD 70 Doctrine*, Athens, AL: Truth Publications, Inc., 2021).

Before the debate, I preached a four-part series on the AD 70 Doctrine available here: *Series on the AD 70 Doctrine*: (<https://olsenpark.com/SpecialStudies/AD70.html>).

To read more about the *illegitimate totality transfer fallacy* (ITTF) see James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961 and Daniel B. Wallace, “Lexical Fallacies by Linguists” *danielbwallace.com* (Dec. 2014): (<https://danielbwallace.com/tag/diachronic/>).



Kyle Pope

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Grant Me Peace and Hope

by Sherelyn Mayberry

Sherelyn contemplates a song written by her sister, Anne Stevens. Sacred Scripture has much to say about the overlapping themes of our yearning for peace and hope.

The song, *Grant Me Peace and Hope* (PHSS #381), is a plea to God for deliverance, comfort, and salvation. Do you find yourself in despair, being lost in sin? Where will you go for deliverance? Are you sorry for your transgressions and seeking to find relief from your guilt? Do earthly trials weigh heavily on your shoulders? Go to the Lord and seek His solace. You can find peace and hope in Him. “The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; those who live in a dark land, the light will shine on them” (Isa. 9:2).

Those walking in sin are lost in darkness and need to find their way. Since we all stumble and fall, we need someone to guide our feet and help us out of the pit. The Lord is the Light who can direct our path. He shines on those sitting in the shadow of death and guides their feet in the way of peace (Micah 7:8-9; Luke 1:79). For those seeking to walk uprightly, He is a light arising from the darkness, showing graciousness, compassion, and righteousness (Ps. 112:4). Being lost in the darkness of spiritual prison, we yearn for liberty, i.e., to be set free (Isa. 42:7). The Israelites were admonished in the deep darkness of sin. They had no peace, having faltered, since they would not listen to the warnings (Jer. 13:16). Their feet stumbled, their hearts having turned to gloom. On the other hand, God is good to the pure in heart. He will take hold of our hand and guide us to glory (Ps. 73:1-2, 23-24).

After stumbling, Israel returned to the Lord, asking God to take away their sin, which He graciously did (Hos. 14:1-2). We can be like Israel, enjoying renewed peace, if we approach God with penitent hearts. Ask God to pardon your iniquity (Ps. 25:11). Christ bore our infirmities on the cross. He was pierced for our transgressions. The punishment for our wrongs was upon Him (Isa. 53:4-5).



Therefore, when we have doubts, we can look to Him to strengthen our faith and give us hope. Thomas doubted until he saw and felt the prints of Jesus's piercings and said, “My Lord and my God.” *Do not doubt!* Look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Iniquities are a heavy burden (Ps. 38:4). The Lord daily bears our burden, so cast your cares on the Lord and He will sustain you. He will not allow the righteous to be moved (Ps. 68:19; 55:22).

We also face earthly trials which weigh us down. Sickness may rob our peace. Yet, the prayer of faith restores the one who is ill. “The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much” (Jas. 5:15-16). Fleshly weakness may lead us into temptation, so let us be on guard and pray that your faith does not falter (Matt. 26:41). The loss of loved ones may

leave us broken-hearted. Remember that the Lord is always near. He loves and comforts us in our crushed state (Ps. 34:18). We, like Job, should seek God, for He uplifts those who mourn. Be the faithful friend for the despairing one, so that through your kindness, he will not forsake the Lord (Job 5:8, 11; 6:14). When your righteous life is ending, be glad, for your reward is great (Luke 6:23). If you are faithful through trials, your eternal home will be in heaven with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:1, 8).

Plead for the Lord's peace and hope. “The Lord will give strength to His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace” (Ps. 29:11). So, love God's law, keep it, and have comfort, so you will not stumble (Ps. 119:165, 167). If we set our mind on the Spirit, which reveals God's word and offers salvation, we have life and peace (Rom 8:6). Therefore, let us be anxious in nothing. Pray and be thankful, and the peace of God will guard your heart in Christ (Phil. 4:6-7). The God of hope, who fills our heart with peace in believing, causes our hope of everlasting life to abound (Rom. 15:13). So, do not be troubled. Long for the place that Christ has prepared for us so that we might be with Him for eternity (John 14:1-3). ■



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The Sovereign Love of God

by Bruce Reeves

Coming to see God's faithful love, divine glory, and saving grace is life-changing and transforming.

Introduction

Coming to see God's faithful love, divine glory, and saving grace is life-changing and transforming (Rom. 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 3:17-18). Nevertheless, there are human doctrines that speak of God's "sovereignty," "grace," "glory," and "love," which yet undermine the mercy and faithfulness of the Lord. Reformed Theology, commonly known as Calvinism, has saturated the denominational world and influenced our brethren in a variety of ways.

Is Calvinistic Theology a Threat Today?

Some have termed Reformed Theology as Augustinian-Calvinism because, although John Calvin systematized what is known as the TULIP theory, many of his ideas were expressed a thousand years earlier by Augustine. Someone may ask, "Isn't this a really old doctrine?" Yes, it is! Augustine of Hippo lived from 354 to 430, and John Calvin lived from 1509 to 1564, but it continues to influence many religious people today. Time Magazine addressed the "10 Ideas Changing the World Right Now." In that issue, David Van Biema described what is called the "New Calvinism" as the third most influential idea in our world today. He writes,

Calvinism is back and not just musically, "Evangelicalism's latest success story, complete with an utterly sovereign and micromanaging deity, sinful and puny humanity, and the combination's logical consequence, predestination: the belief that before

time's dawn, God decided whom He would save (or not), unaffected by any subsequent human action or decision."

New Calvinism is just the old Calvinism with new worship styles and popular preachers such as John Piper, Tim Keller, and Matt Chandler. It really is the same systematic doctrine which must be identified as error. Although the reading of diverse religious materials can be profitable, it is disconcerting when those preaching the gospel are hypercritical of the writings of faithful brethren from the past. Also, they promote the verbiage, concepts, and substance of Calvinistic writings concerning fundamental issues regarding salvation.

It is vital for us to recognize that there are various forms of Calvinism. There is what has been rightly described as "Classic Calvinism," or "Hard Calvinism," while other forms may be expressed as "neo-Calvinism" or "soft Calvinism." Classic Calvinism involves what has often been described as the TULIP theory, which includes all five points of Reformed Theology: Total inherited depravity (i.e., human inability to believe), Unconditional election, Limited atonement, Irresistible grace, and the Perseverance of the saints (i.e., the impossibility of apostasy).

While even proponents of *Classic Calvinism* have their differences, these tenets remain the same. It is important for us to realize that one can be guilty of teaching shades of Calvinism without subscribing to all these points. Just because someone cannot explain or

does not fully embrace the complete system of Calvinism, does not mean that they have not accepted the doctrine in some measure. Having said that, let us recognize that Calvinism is a tightly constructed system. Much like dominos, once one domino falls, all logically tumble, and the entire system collapses. On the other hand, if the Calvinistic view of sovereignty and freewill are accepted, the rest will naturally follow. Therefore, men like John MacArthur, John Piper, R.C. Sproul, and James White have been quick to point out the inconsistencies of those who attempt to offer soft-Calvinism (James White, *The Potter's Freedom*).

What Is the Heart of Reformed Theology?

Yes, the doctrines of unconditional election, total inherent depravity/human inability, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and the perseverance of the saints are all essential tenets of Classic Calvinism. Yet, it is a misunderstanding of God's sovereignty that serves as the foundation of Reformed Theology. It is here that we must begin our consideration of the true meaning of *The Sovereign Love of God*.

The overarching principle of Calvinistic thinking sees the tension between the concepts of divine sovereignty and human freedom as having its chief emphasis on God's absolute, meticulous, and micro-managing control over every detail of the process. Adherents begin their theological journey with the premise that God knows all things, because He

predetermined or decreed all things to happen. As a result, Reformed Theology constantly refers to *sovereignty* terminology, such as, “sovereign control,” “sovereign purpose,” “sovereign will,” “sovereign decrees,” “sovereign determinations,” “sovereign counsel,” “sovereign foreordination,” etc. Yet, an honest examination of biblical teaching regarding God’s true sovereignty, authority, reign, grace, faith, and human freedom unravels and refutes the false teaching of this doctrinal system. Calvinistic advocates have attempted to redefine biblical concepts in an unbiblical way, asserting that if non-Calvinists do not accept their views of divine sovereignty and election, then they deny God’s sovereignty, grace, and glory. To those who are wedded to this idea, clearly this kind of warped thinking has become the center of their theological universe. A. W. Pink wrote:

The doctrine of God’s sovereignty . . . is the center of gravity in the system of Christian truth—the sun around which all lesser orbs are grouped. It is the golden milestone to which every highway of knowledge leads and from which they all radiate. It is the cord upon which all other doctrines are strung like so many pearls, holding them in place and giving them unity. It is the plumb line by which every creed needs to be measured, the balance in which every human dogma must be weighed (Pink, 139).

Such a view is a distorted overstatement, even if one were to assume that the doctrine itself was biblically correct. That is not a safe assumption to make! Consistent Calvinism has a deterministic view of sovereignty that sees the unconditioned will or decree of God as the only true cause of every event—without exception. The corollary to this is that the human will is not truly free. Although many Calvinists attempt to refute this, they must be inconsistent to do so. This inconsistency destroys their system. Calvinistic compatibilism (the view that we are only free to do what God has unalterably decreed) is contradictory, because it begins with a

false premise. Libertarian freewill (the view that God created humanity with the ability to choose good or evil without His foreordaining the decision) harmonizes with the permissive will of God as revealed in the Scriptures.

Who Is Denying God’s Sovereign Love?

Those who argue that non-Calvinists, by necessity, deny the sovereignty of God are misinformed or dishonest. They attach the logical conclusions of their view to those who do not accept their beliefs. When defenders of Calvinism are held accountable for the consequences of their theology, they frequently begin to speak of “misrepresentations,” “caricatures,” and “unfair evaluations” of their teaching. Yet, they continue to present views which demand that God is the “first cause of evil.” Our objection is not to the God of the Bible, but to the Calvinistic attack on His nature.

The Scriptural view of God’s sovereign authority differs greatly from that of Reformed Theology. God’s sovereignty necessarily means His complete freedom and authority (or right) to act in any way He wills that is in harmony with His nature and purpose (1 John 1:5). On this view, God certainly has the freedom and authority to *not* exercise meticulous control. For the non-Calvinist, if God chooses to not exercise meticulous control, that decision is itself a sovereign choice. To deny His right to do so is to deny His divine sovereignty and faithful love. The truth is that God has sovereignly decreed that humanity, as His creation, be able to make a freewill choice lovingly to serve the Lord or reject Him (Josh. 24:14-16; Matt. 23:37; 2 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9). He sovereignly decreed that the only way for mankind to be saved was through Jesus Christ (Acts 2:22-23). He sovereignly decreed that the gospel be preached to the whole world (Matt. 28:18-20). He sovereignly decreed the conditions of faith that sinners must meet to be forgiven of their past sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:35-39; 22:16; Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21). God’s sovereignty

promises to reward everyone according to his decision. Paul writes, “Do not be deceived. God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap life everlasting” (Gal. 6:7-8). Who is really denying God’s sovereign will?

Unfortunately, when one develops an erroneous view of the sovereignty of God, his interpretation of Scripture will be distorted and unbalanced. Reformed Theology’s view of God’s sovereignty contradicts His redemptive love for all persons. In contrast, the biblical view of divine sovereignty harmonizes beautifully with the Lord’s love for the world (John 3:16; 1 John 2:2). Calvinists are guilty of double talk. According to their doctrine, God condemns sinners to an eternal hell for sins He foreordained that they commit in the first place. We are told that God is the “first cause of evil,” but in the next breath that He is not “the author of sin.” Who can believe it?

Both evil and good come from God. . . So what happens when you emphasize the will of man, then evil becomes only associated, there is no sense in which God decrees evil, there is no sense in which God wills evil and so evil is only from the heart of man and from the heart of Satan. . . but we recognize as reformed Christians that those are secondary causes, that the first cause of evil is God, Himself. . . Man does not resist evil when he is fulfilling the decrees of God (Cook, 181).

The devil is God’s devil. He does what God allows him to do, he does what God commands him to do, no more and no less (Cook, 151).

Ironically, those who defend the sovereign love of God for the whole world are accused of being “unregenerated enemies of God’s grace and teachers of the doctrines of demons.” Frequently, teachers of error will accuse others of the very things of which they are guilty. Denials notwithstanding, Calvinism’s portrayal of God is of an unjust, sinful, dishonest, arbitrary, partial, and unloving

God. Somehow, we are to believe that these logical consequences of the god of Calvinism bring Him glory.

Understanding Different Aspects of God's Will

The Bible reveals different aspects of God's will. We observe His prescriptive, perceptive, permissive, and decretive will. God has prescribed or commanded all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30-31), and His desire is that all men would choose to obey Him and be saved by His grace (1 Tim. 2:3-4; 2 Pet. 3:9). Yet not all men will be saved because not all men are willing to repent (Matt. 7:13-14; Rom. 2:2-11). Thus, although God desires all men to repent, He also desires human freedom, therefore He permits the disobedient to reject Him (Rom. 10:1-3; 11:11-22). While God permits evil for His eternal purposes, He did not foreordain or prescribe such evil. The notion that He commanded and unchangeably foreordained every evil act, including Satan's decisions and influence, is blasphemous (John 8:44). The logical consequence of the Calvinistic view of sovereignty leads to the conclusion that every vile, wicked, and deviant act of abuse ever foisted upon a person or nation was the unalterable and predetermined will of God.

Who Is in Charge?

Our sovereign Creator reigns over all the earth and "upholds all things by the word of His power" (Job 42:9; Isa. 45:7-9; Acts 4:27-29; John 1:1-3; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 1:3). Before there was anything else, there was the Uncreated One, the Great I Am (Exod. 3:14; John 8:58). The psalmist said, "From everlasting to everlasting, you are God" (Ps. 90:2). There was never a time when God was not. In fact, He existed eternally before all things and is Creator (1 Cor. 8:6; Rev. 4:11). He is called "the First," "the Beginning," "and the Alpha" (Rev. 1:8, 17; 21:6). The Lord "framed the worlds," and He alone has eternal "immortality" and "dwells in unapproachable light" (1 Tim. 6:16; Heb.

11:3). Not only has He created all things and upholds all things, but He is above all things (Ps. 8:1; 57:5; Eph. 4:6). God has the power to do whatever is in harmony with His will and nature (Job 32:7; Isa. 46:10; Jer. 32:37; Luke 1:37). He rules and reigns as Creator, King, and Judge! Our Lord's divine reign and love are affirmed by His power, grace, and impartiality (Rom. 2:1-11).

Does God Limit His Power for the Sake of His Love?

It is not an issue of God having divine power, but rather the exercise of His power. Does the Lord not limit His power for the sake of His love, grace, holiness, and promises? Our Creator is not only all-powerful and all-wise but also has the attribute of relationality and seeks to have fellowship with all those who will come to Him (Gen. 1:26-28; Matt. 11:28-30; Rev. 22:16). Paul declared to the Athenians, "He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us. . ." (Acts 17:26-27). The Lord's omnipotence is always exercised in faithful love and steadfast truth. We read that He rested on the seventh day—after the creation (Gen. 2:1-3), that His eternal Son humbled Himself to become flesh (Matt. 1:23; John 1:14; 2 Cor. 8:9; Phil. 2:5-11) and promises to never destroy the world by a flood again, but rather by fire (2 Pet. 3:6-8). Likewise, God desires all men to be saved, but He does not save every person despite His desire to share a loving and holy relationship with all humanity. God limits His power to ensure that the saved freely surrender to His gospel, and His righteousness is preserved (2 Thess. 1:6-9; 2 Pet. 3:9-10). It is His long-suffering that has prevented Him from destroying the world already. Peter instructs believers to "regard the patience of our Lord as salvation" (2 Pet. 3:15).

Conclusion

Once we come to understand the nature of God's sovereignty and love in contrast to the false presentation of the god of Calvinism, then our eternal salvation comes into clear focus, and we see the full glory and beauty of Christ's amazing grace. Let us see the majesty and glory of the perfect harmony and unity of God's divine attributes. **TL**

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WED.	I Believe Jesus Performed Miracles	PHIL STUCKEY
THUR.	I Believe Jesus Cast out Demons	SPENCER BLACKWELDER
TUE.	I Believe Jesus Was the Son of Man	JOHN HUMPHRIES
WED.	I Believe Jesus is the Christ	MIKE WILLIS
THUR.	I Believe that Jesus Is the Son of God	SHAWN CHANCELLOR
TUE.	I Believe that Jesus is the Savior of the World	NATHAN WARD
WED.	I Believe the Church Demonstrates the Glory of Jesus	BARRY BRITNELL
THUR.	I Believe Jesus Is with Believers Always	KEVIN MAXEY
TUE.	MEN'S TRACK How do I help the skeptic come to faith?	RICK BILLINGSLEY
TUE.	WOMEN'S TRACK How do I help the skeptic come to faith?	REBEKAH DUTTON
WED.	MEN'S TRACK Answering the problem of suffering	BRUCE REEVES
WED.	WOMEN'S TRACK Answering the problem of suffering	KATE MITCHELL
THUR.	MEN'S TRACK Overcoming my own doubts	KEVIN HARRINGTON
THUR.	WOMEN'S TRACK Overcoming my own doubts	RACHEL REEVES

“I Just Can’t Limit the Holy Spirit”

by Shane Carrington

God, in His sovereign wisdom and might, calls us to Himself through the written word that was revealed by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 1:16-17; John 6:44-45; 20:30-31).

Introduction

Some say, “You think the Holy Spirit only comforts and guides us through the Bible, but I just can’t limit God like that.” The concept that God tugs on heartstrings and offers guidance in some manner other than through the pages of Scripture is common. Behind this view lies a belief in private nudging and other personal, secret messages of the Holy Spirit. Some testify, “You just don’t understand; I’ve experienced it.” Others confess, “I don’t believe we can understand the Bible or make godly decisions with just the Bible. We need the Holy Spirit to illuminate us and strengthen us in our hearts, and He does this apart from the word.” “I can’t squeeze God into a little box like the Bible as you do.” God, in Sacred Scripture, seems to say the opposite.

The Power of the Word

While God certainly works providentially in unseen ways behind the scenes, the manner in which He convicts, converts, strengthens, guides, and comforts us is through the written word of God. Consider these passages from John’s writings, which discuss the work of the Holy Spirit at length.

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life (John 6:63).

So Jesus said to the twelve, “You do not want to go away also, do you?” Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life” (John 6:67-68).

As He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him. So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free” (John 8:30-32).

And He (i.e., the Holy Spirit [v. 7]), when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment (John 16:8).

But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come (John 16:13).

Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth (John 17:17).

It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth (1 John 5:6b).

This becomes no less powerful when conveyed in written fashion:

Therefore, many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name (John 20:30-31).

... by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit (Eph. 3:3-5).

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for

correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

The book of Revelation elevates God’s written word:

Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it. . . (Rev. 1:3)

Write in a book what you see and send it to the seven churches. . . (Rev. 1:11)

The Apocalypse records seven sayings concerning God’s victory-giving written word like, “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God” (Rev. 2:7; cf. vv. 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22).

The written word continues to be magnified in Revelation: God said, “Write, for these words are faithful and true” (Rev. 21:5). An angel (Rev. 21:9) told John, “These words are faithful and true” (Rev. 22:6) and “blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book” (Rev. 22:7). When John prostrated himself to worship that angel (Rev. 22:8), the angel responded, “Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren, the prophets, and of those who heed the words of this book. Worship God” (Rev. 22:9).

The concluding admonition in the book of Revelation summarizes how God intends that His written word be treated.

I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written

in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book (Rev. 22:18-19; cf. Deut. 4:1,2; 12:32; Prov. 14:12; Gal. 1:6-9; 2 John 9).

Devaluing the power of the written word of God devalues the power and wisdom of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit who revealed it. He has spoken! Furthermore, He chose to do that for posterity—“once for all” (Jude 3)—in written form.

Kelly's Card Box

Kelly, my beautiful wife, has a rare form of cancer. During her 3.5 year journey—including three major surgeries, radiation, and many rounds of chemo—she has received many get-well cards. Long ago, she set a box aside in which to store them. With every card received, she knows:

Someone who loves me wrote this card.

Someone is pouring out their heart to me, expressing an earnest desire for my well-being.

Kelly would never think, “That’s just a piece of paper.” Rather, she views each message as the heart’s yearning of people expressed in thoughtful words of desire for her comfort and strength.

Similarly, the Bible is no dead letter. It is the living word that can infuse life in people who are willing to drink deeply its powerful message.


Someone responds: “I just can’t limit God in that way.” Yet, can God not limit the manner in which He expresses His power? Can He not choose to work through specific means to accomplish His will? God limited Himself by ceasing creation on the seventh day (Gen. 2:1-3). God limits Himself concerning the manner in which He will destroy the world (Gen. 9:11-15; 2 Pet. 3:6-7). God gave a greater measure of the Spirit to Jesus than to anyone else (John 3:34). God phased out miraculous gifts of the Spirit given to men when He completely revealed and confirmed the gospel message (1 Cor. 13:8-13). God limited

Himself to come in the flesh—and to die for our sins (Phil. 2:5-8). God limits Himself by His own word of promise (2 Pet. 3:7). God limits Himself whenever and in whatever manner He chooses. In reality, those who diminish the written word are limiting the power that God claims for His own word (Heb. 4:12).

Conclusion

We must take care to not limit God’s choice. He is sovereign! Nevertheless, in His sovereignty, God gave humans free will. While God wants “all to come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9), not everyone will choose God’s path (Matt. 7:13-14). God wants the good news of salvation proclaimed to all (Mark 16:15-16), but decrees that “he who has disbelieved shall be condemned” (Mark 16:16b). Thus, in His sovereign wisdom and might, God has chosen to call us to repentance and salvation through the written word.

The Holy Spirit guided the apostles “into all the truth” (John 16:13), God’s word (John 17:17). Through the apostolic message, delivered by inspiration and recorded for posterity (John 20:30-31; cf. Eph. 3:1-5), the Spirit convicts “the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment” (John 16:8).

Through the pages of holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit is crying out on behalf of the godhead: “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28); “Be saved from this perverse generation” (Acts 2:40). Never diminish the importance and power of the written word (Rom. 1:16; 10:17)! Indeed, “The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost” (Rev. 22:17). Will you? 



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By Bobby L. Graham



QUESTION.

What is the meaning of Hebrews 10:25?

ANSWER.

Question:

In the past, brethren have had divergent opinions on the meaning of Hebrews 10:25. What does the text actually teach?

Answer:

Sincere attempts to determine the meaning of any passage in the Scriptures are commendable. While some might arrive at different conclusions about its meaning, diligent study promotes reaching the correct meaning and applying it to our efforts to serve God.

Hebrews 10:25 is a passage which many have quoted and applied, some with an understanding of the context and some without such understanding. In my judgment, the Holy Spirit was appealing to the Hebrew Christians to rescue them from their drifting away from Christ (Heb. 2:1-4; 4:14-16; 5:9-11;

10:35-39; 12:1-2, 25-29; 13:22) in their disastrous return to the Law of Moses (10:19-25). One should get the point here: their assembling with each other, and the beneficial effects noted in verses 24 and 25, was one divine provision for their spiritual strength/stamina, so that they remain faithful to Christ. They needed such assemblies for their spiritual survival, just as the Lord knew all Christians need to remember His death for spiritual survival (1 Cor. 11:24-25, 27-32).

To assist them in their efforts to stay faithful to Jesus Christ, the Spirit reminded them of certain advantages believers enjoy in Christ: (1) confidence/boldness in serving Christ (v. 19), based upon (2) the blood of Jesus opening up the way to heaven (v. 20), where we have (3) a great high priest interceding for us (v. 21). In view of these blessings/advantages, he exhorted them: (1) to draw near (v. 22), (2) to hold fast (v. 23), and (3) to consider (v. 24).

The latter part of considering how to stir one another up to love and good works is the point where verse 25 connects. Such consideration of others in Christ demands that we meet together with them, not neglect our meeting together (v. 25). In meeting together, believers should exhort each other in the planned activities of worship (v. 25). Besides an individual disciple's effort to worship and praise God (i.e., maintain a vertical relation of fellowship with God), he also maintains a horizontal relationship and shares fellowship with other Christians with whom he meets. This relationship/fellowship requires spiritual maintenance so it might thrive, and not merely exist. Each child of God is responsible for building up other members of God's family (3:13). We supply such maintenance in the gatherings of the saints, according to Hebrews 10:24-25. When a Christian willingly refrains from gathering with the saints, whether once or many times, he ignores the pleading of the crucified Savior and the Holy Spirit. He also

neglects the sacred responsibility of considering others in Christ, which he should manifest in seeking to stir them up to love and good works. Let us never forget the dual functions of worshiping our God and edifying our brethren. These are to be carried out in our assembling. It is not an either/or situation, but a both/and situation!

It matters little to us which day the writer had in mind in verse 25. It could have been Jerusalem's destruction or the Lord's second coming (or some approaching day of doom), but the need for encouraging and edifying one another would be the same. Each one was then approaching for them, and the latter is certainly approaching in our case. They and we face a judgment, necessitating our concern for each other being shown in our gathering with each other. They needed the spiritual strength each could supply to the other. Whatever the approaching direful occasion might have been for them, we know what it is in our situation, don't we? Let us then use all such opportunities to promote the love and good works which will prepare us to meet the Lord when He comes again (2 Tim. 4:8). **II**



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Judean Pillar Figurines

by Trent and Rebekah Dutton

In this article, we offer an introduction to these artifacts from the period of Israel and Judah's divided monarchy.

In the coming months, we will have a few articles to introduce and discuss Judean Pillar Figurines (JPFs). These objects are small, terra-cotta (unglazed earthenware clay) figurines that depict a female form in the upper half of the figurine, while the lower half has no human form, but rather a “pillar base” shape. The base allows these figurines to stand on their own. Over 1000 of these figurines have been found in the Judean region of Iron Age II Israel. Most figurines in that time period date to the seventh and eighth centuries BC, correlating with Israel and Judah's divided monarchy period. While roughly half of the figurines known today have been found in Jerusalem (approx. 400), the rest have been unearthed at sites scattered throughout the region of Judah, with a few found outside of the area.

In decades past, these figurines had been thought of as fertility objects, but this assertion has been debated over the years. More nuanced classifications have been suggested by recent scholarship. Because of time frame and geographical proximity, JPFs have long been associated with the Iron Age Western Semitic goddess Asherah, who is frequently mentioned in the biblical text. Other suggestions for form and function of the JPFs range from votive representations to simple toys. Whatever their representation and function, JPFs are so numerous and found in such varied contexts, it suggests commoners and elites both possessed these small items. While the debate continues, more recent research examines explanations for the abundance of these figurines in

times of declining power in Israel, such as a culture seeking to define and retain an ethnic identity in the face of Assyrian imperialism.

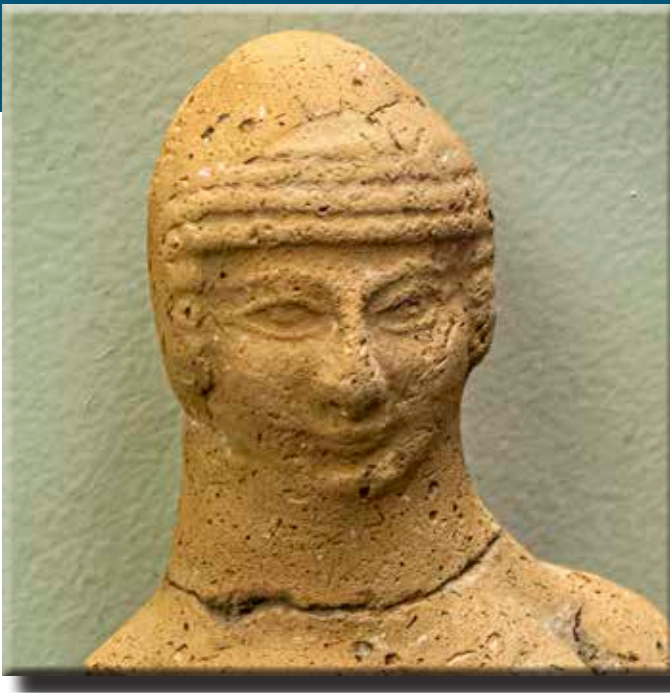
There are two major styles of JPFs. One is a “pinched” head style, and the other is a “molded” head style. These two styles usually have similar bases. With these different styles, patterns seem to emerge, particularly in Jerusalem, as to which was more popular. Numbers from both Shiloh's (an archaeologist, not the location) and Kenyon's excavations in Jerusalem show a general rise in popularity over time of the pinched heads over the molded heads. Later excavations in Jerusalem and other surrounding areas show that this trend continues. This observation will come into play in later articles, but for now, the point here is to note the differentiation of styles.

Another note on these artifacts is location. With a few noted exceptions, the JPF dataset almost entirely resides in the environs of Judah and not Israel. The greater concentration is certainly around Jerusalem, but other regions and cities around Judah, such as in the Shephelah (Lachish) and the Negev (Beer Sheba and Arad), also have decent numbers of these artifacts.

So, what about the questions already posed, and others, for these artifacts? Are they idols? Do they represent the Asherah? Why are so many in Judah? Is there any meaning or distinction between the pinched heads variety versus the molded ones? Are these artifacts and any of these associated questions useful in reading the Biblical text? There are

several questions that can go wide and deep, but we will try to offer a few useful observations in the articles to come. Other installments will discuss lessons that can be deduced from the objects, some things the objects do not tell us, and then how they compare with other artifacts from the same time period and cultural environment.

One challenge with a topic like this is the traditional and low context use in theological applications. For example, scholarship from decades ago with names such as Dever (in the 1970s and 2000s) and Kletter (mid-1990s), both attribute JPFs as being Asherah and/or other goddesses. This research has been available for years and permeates blog posts, books, and sermons or popular writings. How this is usually presented to the layperson audience is by a quick image flashed on the screen and explanation that JPFs equal Asherah. Is this true? Maybe. It is certainly a possibility for many of the ancient people who would have held these objects. However, these artifacts existed over a span of a few hundred years over a changing political and religious landscape. A more likely scenario is that, while commonalities may have followed the objects in purpose and meaning, they likely meant different things to individuals and were used in different ways over time. More recent scholarly research reflects nuances such as this being possible. Darby notes that their function may have been apotropaic, semi-religious, and iconographic in a way that the users may not have even fully grasped.



Judean pillar-based figurine Beth Shemesh Iron II 800-586 BCE
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ceramic_Judean_pillar-based_figurine_Beth_Shemesh_Iron_II_800-586_BCE_Penn_Museum_02.jpg



Molded head figurine from Rebekah's 2019 dig at Tel Burna
 © Trent and Rebekah Dutton

In the end, it may seem that approaching and trying to understand artifacts like the JPFs is fraught with pitfalls and rabbit holes from which one may never return. Those hazards exist, but with a specialty discipline such as this that intersects with the Biblical text, value exists in trying to understand these objects that ancient people were holding. When we look at a passage that mentions Asherah, or read of an idol crafted from leftover wood (cf. Isa. 44), there is no guesswork regarding how God felt about these idol images. However, what did these images look like? Do we have examples of them? These curiosity questions cannot help but come to the surface when artifacts like JPFs come out of the ground. With that, it is worth

examining the objects to understand what they can tell us, and often more importantly, what they cannot tell us. **IV**

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Pinched head Judean pillar figurines
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Judaean_female_figurines_-_Israel_Museum,_Jerusalem.jpg



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Reaching the Lost

by David Dann

Reaching the lost is about helping people hear, believe, and obey the gospel of Christ so that they came to be freed from their sins.

Introduction

Most people are lost. “Few” are headed in the right direction, in contrast to the “many” who are bound for destruction (Matt. 7:13-14, NKJV). They are “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1) and are “alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (v. 18). Separated from God in sin, most people are destined for eternal misery in hell.

We should be moved with compassion and a sense of urgency, as we recognize that most of those around us are lost and destined for destruction. If you were lost, wouldn't you want someone to help you correct your course? It is up to those who are already faithful servants of the Lord

to help the lost turn from their sins and obey Him (cf. Matt. 7:12; 2 Tim. 2:24-26).

To know this is not enough. We must take action to reach the lost and bring them to salvation. However, a great deal of confusion exists over how to reach the lost. For much of the religious world, “outreach” to the lost involves offering people opportunities for entertainment, recreation, and social activities, hoping they will enjoy themselves so much that they might eventually see the benefits of joining a particular church. As a result, many people remain lost in sin, but are now part of some religious community. In order to reach the lost effectively, we must help people hear, believe, and obey the gospel of Christ so that they will be freed from their sins (cf. Acts 18:8). How can we go about reaching the lost today?

Seek the Lost

Jesus is the perfect example for us to imitate in reaching the lost: “for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). Rather than waiting for the lost to find their own way to salvation, the Lord actively sought those who needed spiritual help and direction. The first step to take in reaching the lost is actively to seek those around us who are separated from God in sin so that we can show them the way of salvation. Interact with them, talk with them, engage them in a discussion of spiritual matters, and invite them to learn about the Lord. Let us imitate the Master by seeking the lost in order to lead them to salvation.



Jesus said, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest” (Matt. 9:37-38). While we may complain that no one seems to be interested in the gospel anymore, there are opportunities all around us. Who are the lost? Our neighbors, co-workers, fellow students, people with whom we do business, those we interact with each week, and perhaps even members of our own families. Some of them are living immoral lives, some are viewed as being good people, some are even religious, while others are atheists or agnostics, and many are just confused. It is up to us to invite them to investigate the message of the cross. We need to imitate the Savior by seeking those who are lost in sin in order to lead them to repentance and salvation (Mark 2:17).

Find a Common Foundation with the Lost

All lost people need the gospel, but they are not all prepared to start at the same place. Philip could preach Jesus to the Ethiopian “beginning at this Scripture” (Acts 8:35) because the Ethiopian already worshiped the true God and believed the Scriptures. At the synagogue, Paul “reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead” (17:2-3) because they shared a common foundation in the prophets who foretold the coming of Jesus. On the other hand, when encountering pagans, Paul had to begin with, “God, who made the world and everything in it” (17:24) in an effort to establish common ground—i.e., a starting point. Paul challenged Felix with the reality of “judgment to come” (24:25) as a foundation from which to work. However, when dealing with Agrippa, the same apostle found more of a common religious foundation from which to begin, saying, “King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe” (26:27). The New Testament serves as an instruction manual for finding a common foundation from which to teach the lost.

The goal is to take this lost person from where he is to where he needs to be by leading him to believe and obey the gospel so that he will be saved. As Paul puts it, “I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some” (1 Cor. 9:22). If you are trying to reach someone who already believes in God, believes that Jesus is the Son of God, and believes the Bible is the word of God, then you have a very solid foundation to work with as you show what the Bible teaches one must do to be saved. If you are trying to reach someone who isn’t convinced that the Bible is God’s word, then you’ll have to establish that fact before moving on to what the Bible says one must do to be saved. Find out what this individual believes, spend time in prayer, and use wisdom and good judgment in working to bring this lost soul from where he is to where he needs to be in understanding and obeying the gospel. The inspired wise man points out that “he who wins souls is wise” (Prov. 11:30). We need to put forth the effort to start from a common foundation in order to be as effective as possible in reaching the lost.

Present God’s Plan to the Lost

Paul writes, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek” (Rom. 1:16). The message of the loving Savior who laid down His life at the cross in order to redeem humanity from sin is the power that God uses to convert the soul. Reaching the lost is not about catering to man’s physical or social desires, nor is it about helping people experience earthly success so they can live a better, more enjoyable life. Instead, the focus is on presenting a message of salvation from sin to those who are desperately in need of reconciliation with God. For those who are truly seeking, the gospel message is the sword of the Spirit that pricks the heart of the sinner so that he is turned to the Lord. Place your confidence in the gospel to accomplish its work.

To reach the lost and bring them to salvation, God’s plan must be presented in a simple manner so that people are led to understand, believe, and obey it. The lost should be shown from Scripture how sin entered the world in the garden of Eden and how God carried out a plan to save man from sin through the sacrifice of His Son. They need to be shown what the Bible teaches about sin, salvation, the church, the two covenants, Bible authority, and man’s eternal destiny. It is our job to help them understand that, in order to benefit from the sacrifice of Christ, they must repent and be baptized into Christ (Acts 2:38). The souls of sinners are purified “in obeying the truth” (1 Pet. 1:22). We need to present the plan of God to the lost so that they will be convicted to comply with the conditions He has set in order to receive salvation.

Conclusion

Jesus said, “Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents” (Luke 15:10). No work in this world is greater and more urgent than reaching the lost with the saving message of Christ. Seek them out, find a common foundation from which to begin, and present God’s plan in all of its power and simplicity. Will you join in the work? **11**



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Reaching the Churched

by Chris Eppler

While it is a challenge to help the “churched” see the need for change, there are some simple ways we can alter our approach to be more effective.

Introduction

We are charged with preaching the gospel to the lost (Mark 16:15-16). The New Testament certainly equips us to do such as it does for any command that the Lord has given us to perform (2 Tim. 3:16-17). While this is certainly true, flexibility through generic command has been built into the New Testament, so we can take that same gospel message to the ever-evolving cultures that saints in different times and places encounter. The culture that we work with today is radically different from the culture of the New Testament in nearly every imaginable way, yet the same gospel has the power to bring all humanity into Christ, regardless of culture or point in time.

One tragic way that culture is different today is the religious division that has multiplied over the centuries amongst those that name the name of Christ. Sadly, many will be lost because of this division. Thus, we find ourselves in the position of trying to reach those that already know of Christ, but have been trained in ways that are foreign to His word and will likely lead to their being eternally lost.

What are some considerations that will help us more effectively reach these “churched” individuals?

Do Not Despair

It is easy to despair in such situations. We have friends and family who are in this precarious position and it is very difficult to help a spiritual person see the problems with what they are doing. Yet we must not despair. The “churched” can

be reached by the gospel of Jesus Christ, just as with any other individual.

We never want to exhibit a lack of faith in the word of God. As God pointed out to Isaiah, His word will not return to Him empty, but will accomplish exactly what He desires (Isa. 55:11). We must simply persist in teaching as long as an individual will listen and leave the increase up to the Lord. “Churched” individuals are being won the world over every single day.

Meet People Where They Are

The conversion accounts in the book of Acts are clear that the message was tailored to what the audience needed. In Acts 2, Peter is addressing a large group of Jews that were familiar with the Law and the Prophets. Therefore, when he addresses them, he does so through prophecies with which they would be familiar, and then calls upon them to repent and be baptized. In one sense, faith was hardly a consideration for these individuals. They already believed in the one true God. They simply needed it demonstrated to them that Jesus was the fulfillment of the prophecies given by the Father. They needed to believe and obey Jesus Christ.

In Acts 17, Paul addresses the individuals in Athens, and he does so in a completely different way. The entirety of the written word and the story of the cross were entirely foreign to them. To them, he was a “proclaimer of strange deities.” When Paul addresses these philosophers, he does so through several means. He speaks to them using

a starting point of one of their own idols. He then points out the inability of an idol to do anything, a truth that is self-evident, especially by these wise men to whom he speaks. He even alludes to words from their own poets to help them understand. Finally, he calls them to repentance. His method is very different on this occasion, but it was tailored to those to whom he was speaking.

Many times we talk past people. Either we do not truly consider where they presently are spiritually, or where they are coming from, or we simply address them based on pre-suppositions about what they believe. We need to take the time to figure out where the “churched” individual really is. While we may have a general understanding of the teachings of various religious groups, there is significant variation amongst such groups, even those that wear the same name. Therefore, we should never take for granted that we know where a “churched” prospect is.

Approach an Individual from a Place of Respect

When we are talking to a “churched” individual, we are speaking with a person who loves the Lord. We are speaking with a seeker. We are speaking with someone that through the Lord’s providence is now sitting in front of us to learn from us. Whatever this person has done in their life up to this point, physically and spiritually, has brought them to this moment. That is an honorable thing, and it is a great responsibility of stewardship entrusted to us by the Lord!



It is far too easy to lose sight of this. It is far too easy to approach the person with superiority. It is far too easy to turn the person off because of our attitude. We must have a genuine respect for the individual and what has led them to this point. As was the case of Aquila and Priscilla of old, we are simply teaching them the way more perfectly (Acts 18). Sometimes it is a matter of the “churched” individual simply not having all the information, such as with Apollos. Sometimes it is a matter of teaching truths that are in opposition to what someone knows and believes, whether acquired from his religious affiliation or through errant personal study. Regardless, we must patiently approach our task of teaching, manifesting genuine respect for the individual, recognizing where his spiritual efforts have brought him, and encouraging his willingness to study further.

Stick to What Needs to Be Taught

When we are sitting down with someone who is “churched” but in error, we are talking with someone that needs to hear the saving message of Jesus Christ. Of first importance is that Jesus

came to this earth, God in the flesh, lived the life of a bondservant, was crucified by His own people, rose on the third day, ascended on high, and left baptism for us as the way to come into contact with this work of His and begin life anew. How tragic to squander the opportunity to share this life-saving message (that very well may be the first time they have fully heard it) by speaking about things that, though important, are not the most important in the moment.

Too often we get bogged down in trying to talk someone out of various positions when what needs to be done is simply to preach the simple gospel and how to respond to it. We get derailed by random thoughts of the individual and chase proverbial rabbit trails. Before we know it, we have lost their attention, lost the opportunity, or even worse, angered them over something that would have best been addressed in a later study after their initial response. It is clear from previously mentioned passages in Acts that the Spirit, through men like Peter and Paul, approached people with a plan in mind for what was fitting in the moment. We need to approach

“churched” individuals with a tailored teaching plan and stick with it.

Conclusion

There is certainly hope for the “churched.” If we will simply trust in the word’s effectiveness, evaluate and meet people where they are, approach them from a place of respect, and then stick to what needs to be taught in the moment, we will find much greater success in helping the “churched” to see the way. May the Lord give us open doors and may we take advantage of them to the fullest (Col. 4:2-4)! 🙏



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Reaching the Unchurched

by Benjamin Lee

It's possible to reach the unchurched through casual contact, being different from the world, making worship a priority, and interacting with visitors in the right way.

Introduction

In 2017, while preaching in Southeast Texas, I was reminded about the great love and generosity of God's people! Our congregation had been hit hard by Hurricane Harvey. At least thirty members lost their homes. Despite the devastation, all was not lost. God's people reached out from all around the country to assist. Money was given from individuals and churches. Christians travelled from around the country to help us rebuild. Brethren at our congregation sacrificed time, energy, and money to help the saints. Sometimes people ask, "Why do I need to be a part of a local congregation? Why can't I just do Christianity by myself?" What I witnessed in 2017 was a powerful reminder of why! Christians need one another. Many Christians were hurt because of the storm—not physically, but emotionally and mentally. Members were weary and discouraged. The church became a place of comfort and encouragement for them. We sang, prayed, cried, and rebuilt houses together. That's how it's supposed to be. Brethren helped those who were weak and fainthearted (1 Thess. 5:14). Our elders tended to the flock both physically and spiritually.

In Acts 2, we see when and where the church was established. We also see what the church actually is. The church isn't brick and mortar, it's not a fancy auditorium, but people who have been called out of darkness into God's marvelous light through obedience to the gospel (1 Pet. 2:9; Acts 2:38). The church



that Jesus established is not to be an afterthought (Matt. 16:18). Those in the body of Christ serve Christ as King! It's hard to imagine what 2017 would have been like without the church.

When we say "unchurched," we are referring to those who do not generally attend or are part of a congregation. These individuals have little interest in being a part of a local congregation. In a 2014 article, the Barna Group said this concerning the unchurched:

Today's unchurched are much less likely to come from a church background than ever before. Furthermore, unchurched people today have different expectations of church involvement from those of previous decades. These changes are the result of shifting personal attitudes as well as significant

changes in the broader cultural landscape. In other words, in spite of our "Christian" self-descriptions, more than one-third of America's adults are essentially secular in belief and practice. If nothing else, this helps explain why America has experienced a surge in unchurched people—and presages a continuing rise in this population.

Reaching the unchurched is not rocket science! The Bible gives us the answers. Let us consider the importance of. . .

Casual Contact

In the book "The Patient Ferment of the Early Church," author Alan Kreider spoke about how the church grew after the first century. He said, "How then did the church grow? Scholars have seen the church's growth as coming about in

innumerable ways through the translocal networks of family and profession in which most people participated. Masters interacted with slaves; residents met neighbors; and above all, believers networked with relatives and work colleagues. In all these relationships, 'affective bonds' were formed."

Someone may read this and ask, "Is it really that simple? Yes, it really is that simple! Consider the stories of Lydia and the Philippian jailer (Acts 16:13, 25-34). In the first century, many families came to Christ through casual contact with believers. My son is taking Jiu Jitsu. A man from out of town recently visited the gym to sign up for classes. We had a casual conversation. Eventually, he shared with me how he's been struggling with alcoholism for several years. I shared some Bible passages with him. We exchanged numbers and we're looking to study the Bible together. This is the idea of casual contact. Similar opportunities arise every day and everywhere. So, what are we to do when such casual contact opportunities arise?

First, we must care enough to see them. Sometimes Christians care more about politics and a person's political party affiliation instead of his soul. Second, we must open our eyes daily to see such doors of opportunities (John 4:35). Third, we must open our mouths. This is what Philip did in Acts 8. He asked the eunuch a question, "Do you understand what you are reading?" The Eunuch responded positively. He would later be converted. It's not shocking to see statistics showing the most effective way of reaching the unchurched is by personally inviting people to attend worship services. A simple invitation will go a long way. Remember how Philip replied to Nathanael: "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see" (John 1:46). So, what can we say when opportunities arise through casual contact? Here are a few suggestions:

"I would love for you to come with me to worship this Sunday. Are you interested?"

"My congregation is having a special study on strengthening our marriages. Do you have any interest in studying with us?"

"How can I pray for you today?"

"Our congregation has been such a blessing to us with the support and love we've received." Do you worship anywhere?

Paul opened his eyes and mouth while in Athens (Acts 17). Some sneered. Others said they would hear him again. A few joined him and believed. This is what will happen today. Some will mock when we share with them the gospel. Others will say maybe. Some will say, "I must obey." How will we know unless we open our mouths?

Fourth, we must open our Bibles (Rom. 10:17). We must teach people God's word. They need to learn the gospel. Most people have a misunderstanding about Christ and His church. Therefore, we must show them what Christ has to say about His church. People need to learn that the church is not made up of perfect people, but people who are saved by the blood of Jesus striving to grow in the faith (Eph. 4:11-16). People need to understand how the church in the first century was one heart and one soul (Acts 2:42-47; 4:32). People need to see how the body of Christ is designed to help build up and to correct when necessary (Gal. 6:1-2; 1 Cor. 5:5), all for the purpose of giving glory to God and for His people to be with Him in heaven.

Be Different

In the book, "The Patient Ferment of the Early Church," author Alan Kreider says: "The most reliable means of communicating the attractiveness of the faith to others and enticing them to investigate things further was the Christians' character, bearing, and behavior. The habitus of the individual Christian was crucial." We know this to be true from God's word (1 Thess. 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:11-14). There's no room for us to be *Christian-ish*. By that I mean saying

we follow Jesus and yet live like everyone else. That's not submitting to our King. We are to be holy because God is holy (1 Pet. 1:16).

Make Worship a Priority

Chick-Fil-A and Hobby Lobby stand out because they are closed on Sundays. Are we standing out to others by worshiping with the saints on Sundays (Heb. 10:25)? When our children's coaches, family members, friends, neighbors, and colleagues see us making worship a priority, it will make them curious.

Make Visitors Comfortable

When visitors arrive, we must welcome and assist them. It may be their first and last visit. Simple things like acknowledging them, informing them of what the worship services will look like, sitting with them, making sure they have a Bible, and showing them around the building will go a long way.

Conclusion

Can we reach the "unchurched"? Yes! With prayer, patience, and being persistent. The gospel still has the power to save souls. **TL**

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Reaching Those Who Are in Doubt

by Ken Craig

Confronting and correcting misconceptions is an important part of evangelism, but our essential task is to share the story of redemption, which centers upon the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Introduction

Several years ago, I was on a West Coast business trip. There was a dinner that evening at the home of the man hosting the business meetings. Afterward, I discussed spiritual things with an agnostic and the evangelical couple hosting the dinner. The conversation wandered all over the place until around midnight, when I asked if they could give me thirty to forty minutes to explain how our topics blended. They then asked if their sixteen-year-old son could join us! After awakening him, I explained how the Bible “fits together.” When I finished, the agnostic stated that he had never heard that before and it made a great deal of sense. I then asked him if it changed how he felt about Jesus Christ. He thought for a minute and said that he now believed, and he would like to be baptized and have his sins removed! Before I could react, the sixteen-year-old asked if he, too, could be baptized! Then the evangelical couple stated that they, too, needed to be baptized! So at one in the morning, we went to their swimming pool and baptized the four of them.

I had never had a similar experience! If you had asked me prior to this, what would you say to an agnostic, I would have proposed discussing modern “free thinker” objections to the historicity and deity of Christ and philosophical objections such as the problem of evil. What would I have proposed discussing with evangelicals? Probably Bible authority, along with the work and worship of the church. What would I have proposed for teenagers?—Probably,

their place in the universe and the purpose of following the will of God.

In forty minutes, I delivered a very simple lesson to which an agnostic, a teenager, and evangelicals had all responded. Rather than arguing with them about the response of baptism, they were appealing to be baptized! My mind was screaming, what did I just say to these people that demonstrated such power? As I contemplated this on the flight home, I deconstructed my message, and soon realized that I had simply encountered the simplicity and power of the gospel.

As I taught this message to others, I soon realized how powerful this message was. In Romans 1:16, Paul affirms “*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*” I came to realize that His statement to the Corinthians was no hyperbole: “When I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For *I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified*” (1 Cor. 2:1-2)

Furthermore, the parable of the sower resonated. Our aim is to *sow the seed*, not to “help” the seed by becoming a soil inspector. The sower sowed everywhere. Our duty is to sow the seed and not try to predetermine the quality of the soil (heart) into which it lands. Our job is to teach God’s word and let Him worry about the hearts! I now understand that *every time we sow the seed, we are successful*, regardless of whether a conversion results. Please consider the

following observations about sharing the gospel message.

The Gospel Doesn’t Need Our Help

Every time we think we can improve the gospel by our wisdom, our techniques, or methods, we are, in fact, diminishing the power of the gospel and God’s glory and purpose. Those that try to “improve” on the gospel inevitably think that we can get more converts by our methods and that God is well-pleased. How did that work out for the Galatian Christians when they decided that adding circumcision would help in their efforts to convert the lost? Let’s recognize that the gospel needs nothing added to make it more appealing to people. When people are converted by this simple but powerful message, God receives *all* the glory. His message accomplishes His desired effect.

I visit congregations all over the world, and most are very small. They are often concerned about their small size. I tell them that if they do things the way God wants them to, they will be just as big as God wants them to be. Size doesn’t matter. Consider God’s whittling down of Gideon’s army so that the victory could be attributed to nothing less than His purpose and power.

The Gospel Is Empowering

As noted earlier, Paul encouraged the Corinthians by reminding them that he did not use superior speech or wisdom, but *only* the knowledge of Jesus Christ

and Him crucified. This is powerful! On this basis, Christians are expected to “sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence” (1 Pet. 3:15). The hope that is within us is the gospel (Col. 1:23). If we became Christians by the attraction of the gospel, we should all be able to explain that truth to anyone—no special wisdom or skill required!

Lead with the Gospel

If we understand that our objective is for people to hear the gospel, and that is where the actual power of salvation resides, I suggest we dogmatically lead with the gospel, and try to let nothing deter us from that. When Paul was on Mars Hill among all the philosophers and theologians, notice that he led with the message of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. When he finished, many wrote him off as crazy, but others responded by wanting to hear more. It was *then* that he engaged in the discussion about false gods.

A Pentecostal lawyer was trying to convert one of our lawyer members, and he invited him to church. He showed up at services, approached me, and stated that he had “Thirty questions about the Church of Christ” that he wanted to discuss (and was armed with a three-ring binder labeled “Church of Christ!”). I replied, “I’m your man!” However, I went further and told him that if we started discussing his thirty questions, we would just start arguing because we did not see the Bible the same way, and would he give me forty minutes to explain how I see the Bible. “Of course,” he replied. I’m sure he thought, “What could I do in forty minutes!” Yet, forty minutes later, he and his wife wanted to be baptized. *After* I baptized him, we had an extended Bible study to address his questions. Having the gospel as a foundation made answering the questions much less arduous. By the way, he is now a gospel preacher.

The Gospel is a Positive Message

For much of my life, I was a “soil inspector” looking for people that were believers so that I could attempt to straighten out their errors in work and worship. It was a negative approach, and most of the time, I was so tied up in debating and arguing that they never heard the gospel at all. However, the gospel message of salvation presents a very positive (though bloody) message that elegantly shows the unity of the Bible and how Christ fulfills this through His love of the Father and His eternal sacrificial purpose.

Make the Gospel a Presentation

Remember, the aim is for them to hear the gospel, not to amaze them with our command of Bible knowledge or ability to answer every question. In fact, I always tell people I will defer questions (unless it is something they don’t understand) until after the message is presented. I am often interrupted during the presentation by someone wanting to discuss some point of doctrine. I politely defer the question until after the presentation. Most of the time, their questions melt away from the gospel message itself. If we “chase the rabbits” of every imaginable question, they may never hear the gospel!

They Will Know the Gospel Is True

I cannot remember once getting into an argument with anyone after presenting the gospel. It seems to resonate with everyone to whom I present it, whether a believer, Muslim, agnostic, or atheist. I pressure no one. Sometimes they need to go away and count the cost. I have had many situations where someone has called me hours, days, months, and even years later, to respond. The gospel has a supernatural ring of truth that will work on good hearts—sometimes fast, sometimes slowly.

Conclusion

I have been able to convert several atheists and agnostics by first sharing the gospel and then following up with further study. I then ask them to read *The Case for Christ* by Lee Strobel. It is a good story of his journey from atheist to believer by a systematic investigation of Christ using his professional skills as an investigative journalist, which he employed with the Chicago Herald Tribune. Following that, the discussion can go in many distinct lines of inquiry, from the philosophical to the scientific. There are many good general books on evidences that address a broad range of topics. I recommend a book by Rob van de Weghe, a Dutch scientist by education, with whom I shared the gospel. Formerly an atheist, Rob became a Christian after two years of discussion, and eventually wrote *Prepared to Answer*. It takes a systematic approach to apologetics and even has a chapter included on the plan of redemption. The references cited can lead you to drill down further on any of various topics, be they philosophical or scientific.

I present lectures all over the world and domestically on “The Big Picture of the Bible” to train preachers and Christians in sharing the gospel. These lectures are reflected in my little book by the same title.

My prayer is that the gospel will create within us a passion to teach about God’s justice and the mercy that He extends through His sacrificial system. May we willingly explain to others the life-changing truth that John announced with the sublime statement, “Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.” May we help them understand the significance of His sinless life, His sacrifice on the cross, and His subsequent resurrection! 🙏



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Reaching Those Who Are Suffering

by Steve Niemeier

In Acts 3-4, a normal day turned into a life-changing day for a man who was born blind, and those who responded to the gospel in faith.

Introduction

For the lame man, it was just another day. He would be taken to the temple and be laid by the gate that was called Beautiful and do his normal begging in order to make his way through life. For Peter and John, it was also just another day to do what the Lord had trained them to do—teach the gospel to all, whether it be one person at a time or a large group. As they enter the temple, the lame man does what he does—asking alms of passersby. Having been lame from his mother's womb, he was simply striving to survive. Pleading from Peter and John, he hopes to receive something from them. He didn't single them out, but was begging from all entering the gate. The response he received from the apostles was not what he was expecting. The gift he received was greater than he could have comprehended.

The Biblical Account

This story is found in Acts 3. How many times have we read this text and quickly passed over these aforementioned events? I know I have. However, when reading and studying Acts 3-4, especially as it relates to the lame man, I realized that, while many were converted because of the miracle, the underlying story is about carrying the gospel to those that are suffering. Doing so can yield unexpected results.

The answer that the lame man received from Peter and John was wholly unexpected: "Silver and gold, I do not have, but what I do have, I will give you."



Can you imagine the thoughts that must have flashed through the lame man's mind? "If this man has no silver or gold, what does he have to give?" Peter does not waste any time! Stating that the blessing that he will give is offered "in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth," he said, "Rise up and walk." The lame man received more than he asked for—he leaped, stood, walked, and entered the temple! This day was far from normal. It was an extraordinary day when the gospel of Jesus Christ touched a suffering lost soul!

This is where I would usually stop the story. However, it continues, and the significance of this miracle is reflected in the following text. Because of the great gift that had been given to the lame

man—leaping, standing, and walking—a gift that could only come from our almighty and wonderful God, others were amazed!

The formerly lame man went around praising God. All the people who were present witnessed this great miracle. Here is where we find another door of opportunity opening for Peter and John. The people were amazed, and as they gathered on Solomon's portico, Peter began to speak. He starts with a question that would send cold chills up the spines of all who were assembled, believers and unbelievers alike: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this?" A lame man from birth has been healed, and Peter asked why they were marveling at this event? Peter continued with another question: "Why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?" The apostles took no credit for this amazing event.

Peter then continued with this answer to his own question: "The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go." He preached the gospel of Jesus Christ to these people, instructing them to repent and be converted. Many of those who heard the word believed, and the number of those who obeyed grew to about five thousand. Now, *that* is an amazing story!

At the end of this beautiful and enlightening story, Peter and John are brought before the Sanhedrin. Jewish authorities order them to speak no more

in the name of Jesus Christ. However, the apostles will not be silenced. Hear the answer given by the apostles: “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.” Their accusers had no choice but to threaten them and send them on their way. Acts 4:21 states, “So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way of punishing them, because of the people, since they *all* glorified God for what had been done.” What a powerful account of carrying the gospel to one that was suffering, and how that one event led to many hearing and obeying the gospel of Jesus!

Not long before this event, Peter himself had denied Christ. When Jesus was crucified, all the apostles had gone into hiding. After being filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, they better understood the life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. Instead of cowardice, they manifested courage. How can we have the same confidence? We have passages, such as 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, that confirm what Peter and John had seen! That is our basis for courage!

Making Application

Peter and John were concerned for the lost, and recognized the opportunity to help a suffering soul to know about Jesus Christ, the Great Physician. No matter the physical condition of individuals, their spiritual condition must also be addressed. When we are in a right spiritual condition, then physical issues become a little easier to bear. While we may still suffer physically, believers are filled with the powerful tool of prayer because of their obedience to God through Jesus. If others do not obey the gospel message, at least we have fulfilled our responsibility in teaching the truth, which is the responsibility of every New Testament Christian. May we all develop a greater concern for those who are lost in sin, regardless of what their physical condition may be.

The apostles did not hesitate to tell the lame man they had no silver or gold to share. Many times, we may dig into our pockets to give financial aid to someone who is suffering without considering that the best gift we have to give them is the gospel of Jesus Christ. The reason we do this is maybe we fear being rejected. Remember, if one does not obey the gospel as a result of our teaching, we have not failed. God’s word always accomplishes the purpose for which it was sent. He gives the increase—we are the sowers!

Around the world, many are suffering because of political conflicts and war, financial difficulties, the continuing Covid crisis, serious and terminal health issues, emotional depression, mourning over the loss of loved ones—as well as those struggling to figure out issues about God and what is the truth of His Word. These souls need help from those of us who are New Testament Christians. Let’s manifest a genuine concern for these souls—recognizing their need, taking advantage of opportunities to teach them. Be not afraid, but have compassion for them by sitting down with them and helping them understand the word of God. The Great Physician can bring spiritual healing to those who are suffering!

Conclusion

Will today be just a normal day for the suffering soul with whom you come in contact, or will you make it a very special day—as Peter and John did for the lame man and the 5000 men who obeyed the gospel? Will this be a day of self-absorption or will you go about with a concern for lost souls who are suffering and take advantage of opportunities that



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Reaching Those Who Are Angry

by Art Adams

Job was not the first (nor will he be the last), to cry out, “Why me? Why mine?” when facing calamity and crisis. Let us strive to help such individuals move past anger to acceptance, and from frustration to faith.



Introduction

We are in a war zone—Satan and God are battling it out here below. Though we only get a brief glimpse into the spiritual world, the clearest knowledge of this struggle is in the first two chapters of Job, where God and Satan have a dialog; Satan is granted permission to reach out and afflict Job. Other references include Jesus’ statement to Peter: “Satan has asked to have you that he might sift you as wheat” (Luke 22:31); Paul’s thorn in the flesh, identified as “a messenger of Satan,” which indirectly served the positive purpose of helping him remain humble (2 Cor. 12:7-10); the woman with an issue of blood whom “Satan hath bound” (Luke 13:16); and Satan being referenced as “the god of this world” (2 Cor. 4:4).

A common belief, whether through lack of study or being misled, is that God’s will is the only will. Yet, from the examples above, we learn that God has

a will, Satan has a will, and humanity has a will. The question (in times of tragedy, grief, and loss) is, “Whose will shall prevail?”

Others may have a distorted concept of God and humanity’s relationship

with Him. Being free to make our own choices, we can decide our allegiance. Although God is over everything, we must not dare to blame everything on God. When attempting to reach an outsider who is angry with God, our goal is to find the root causes of that anger and address where the blame belongs.

When tragedy occurs, a first reaction of many is angrily to ask, “Why?!” If a loved one is brutalized, a child is abused, a natural disaster occurs, a family dies in a terrible accident, a marriage breaks apart, or disease grips someone—it is easy for people quickly to blame God. Blaming God is a common response when life doesn’t go as we think it should. “*Since God is supposedly in control of everything,*” the thinking goes, “*He could have stopped what happened or made it happen differently.*” While this may (in a sense) be true (Isa. 45:7), He does not always intervene. Because we live

in a world where God has granted man freedom of will, we also live in a world under the curse of sin and death.

People often play the blame game when they can’t see a better solution to their problem. This may come as second nature to people who live with a victim mentality, or with those who have distorted views of God and how He works. Our task is to help such individuals get their thinking back on track.

What Is Blame?

Blame is the assigning of responsibility for a fault/wrong. It leads to unhelpful emotions like resentment, anger, hatred. We blame others for our thoughts/feelings that are negative. The word “blame” then means “to find fault with.” Whose fault? With whom shall I be angry? Psychology talks about the “self-serving bias,” i.e., taking credit for ourselves if things go good in life, but lay blame on circumstance when things go bad. Studies have found that blaming others is actually contagious. Accepting blame, or just accepting the circumstances over which we had no control, is difficult. Acceptance means that, once events occur, we cannot rewrite history. We can accept it, seek forgiveness when we sin, learn from the experience, and move on. Sitting in blame only consumes us—making us bitter and resentful.

Why Do We Blame Others?

Blame and anger provide a quick escape from feeling out of control and/or dealing with guilt. They may become a self-serving excuse for continuing self-destructive and sinful behavior and unloading repressed feelings. *“Things must go my way, or I’ll lash out.”* Some never give God a second thought, but suddenly become deeply religious when disaster strikes. Not knowing God, they operate on their limited/faulty knowledge of deity and draw false conclusions. Seeking to divert attention from our own guilt, we lash out at God, as did Adam, when trying to avoid consequences for his own transgression (Gen. 3:8-12).

To avoid blaming God, we must first understand why heartache and pain are a part of our lives. Sin is at the root of every harsh and evil act. God did not design the human body or soul to live in a sinful world. Although we were created perfectly to dwell in a perfect world (Gen. 1-2), the sin of Adam and Eve brought disorder, devastation, and disaster into God’s perfect world, so all natural disasters exist because of sin (Gen. 3:17-19).

Because We Live on This Planet, Natural Laws Govern the Universe and Affect Us All.

Natural law means things are predictable (cause and effect). One natural law is that two things cannot occupy the same space at the same time. Whether a person is good, or evil, does not change that law. So if we are in our car and a semi-truck hits us at a high speed, death or severe injury will probably occur. Why? Because we sinned? Not necessarily, but because a law of nature was broken, and physical consequences resulted. Here, humans die—either from age, illness, or tragedy. Death is part of our life cycle, because humanity no longer has access to the “tree of life” (Gen. 3:22; Rev. 22:14-19). That is the nature of life on this planet.

Evil People Do Evil Things and Innocents May Suffer Because of Their Choices.

Leaders may make evil decisions that bring hardship to others; an innocent child may be raised in a violent environment and be abused, neglected, or die. These things happen not because those suffering did wrong, but because an evil person did an evil thing.

Some Things That Happen Are from God.

Consider the ten plagues in Egypt (Exo. 7:14-8:35), poisonous serpents in the camp in the days of Moses (Num. 21:6-9); and the locust invasion in the days of Joel. These are clearly attributed to God in His attempts to have His will done. However, we do not always know the source.

God Hears and Answers Prayer.

His ears are open to the prayers of the righteous (1 Pet. 3:12). What are others asking God? Some prayers are requests for opposites: For instance, two people/nations are at war, and both pray for victory; or a sick person prays for death, while their family prays for healing. Whose prayer receives a “Yes” answer? This is a time to remember that He may or may not take away the pain or calamity, but gives grace to bear it (2 Cor. 12:9-11).

Conclusion

Our attitude in suffering (whether our own or the helping of someone else) is “discipleship” being steady in our course; happiness and healing are not the goal of recovery from grief and tragedy. . . being steady on the course is the goal. Yet, with someone we are teaching, sometimes we are guilty of indirectly casting blame on God by saying things like: *“It was God’s will,” “Everything happens for a reason,” “It was meant to be,”* or *“It was their time.”* When working with those who blame God or are angry with Him, recognize

that this is a common human failing—even among people of faith (Moses, David, and Habakkuk come to mind). Let’s take the time to let them talk, listen actively, and let them think it through. However, to give an answer for our hope, we must first have contemplated and come to peace with our answer; then, we can communicate a proper and helpful response.

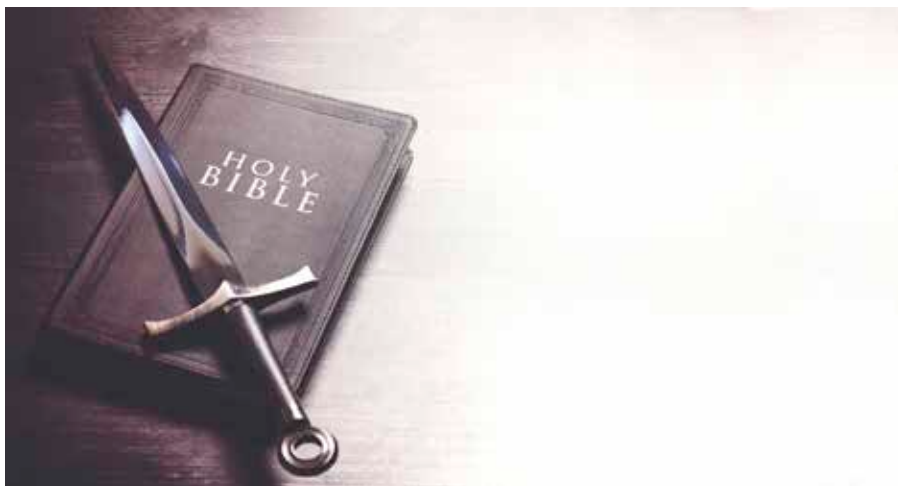
Blaming and being angry with God comes at a cost: it keeps us from wanting to talk with Him. Instead of seeing God as benevolent and loving, we may view Him as a vindictive ogre. Blaming builds resentment, makes one bitter, and stymies personal growth, hardening us against people and life itself. It can destroy healthy relationships with brethren, friends, and family. Instead of having a positive influence on others, we spew negativity and venom. No wonder this truism rings out: *“Hurt people hurt people.”* The blame game can destroy us if we don’t let God deal with things in His way and in His time.

We desire God’s will for our lives, prioritizing it over our will and the will of Satan. God wastes nothing. What Satan means for evil, God turns into something useful as a skilled craftsman (Gen. 50:20). No suffering, heartache, loss, or pain is wasted in the lives of God’s own people. He transforms our grief and loss into a platform for future growth. He uses difficulties to strengthen us as disciples, giving us greater opportunities to store up treasure in heaven than we would have had without the pain (Matt. 6:20). Instead of blaming God, we *“give thanks in everything”* (Eph. 5:20; 1 Thess. 5:18). While God can intervene in any situation—if He doesn’t, and tragedy ensues—let us stop short of blaming Him for wrongdoing (Job 1:22; 13:15). ■



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Unlike the prophets and apostles, we do not enjoy the gift of inspired utterance (1 Cor. 13:8-13). Instead, we are empowered through knowing and obeying the perfect law of liberty (Jas. 1:19-25). Absent the gift of personal guidance, how do we fulfill the divine command, “Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person” (Col. 4:6)? By serious study and personal preparation.

Paul commanded Timothy, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:14-26, esp. v. 15). The Greek word *orthotomeō*, rendered “rightly dividing” (KJV), or “accurately handling” (NASB) literally means “to cut straight” (Thomas, 3718). Arndt says it is “found elsewhere independently of the NT only in Proverbs 3:6; 11:5, where it is used with *hodos* (road) and plainly means ‘cut a path in a straight direction’ or ‘cut a road across country (that is forested or otherwise difficult to pass through) in a straight direction,’ so that the traveler may go directly to his destination” (BDAG, 722).

In a similar manner, Peter admonished believers to “sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence” (1 Pet. 3:13-16, esp. v. 15). The

Greek word *apologia*, rendered “make a defense” (NASB) or “give an answer” (NIV84), refers to “a speech in defense” of someone or something (Thomas, 627). Occurring eight times in the NT, it is used of Paul’s defense of the gospel (Acts 22:1; 25:16; 1 Cor. 9:3; Phil. 1:7, 16; 2 Tim 4:16), and the Corinthians’ vindication of themselves by repentance (2 Cor. 7:11). Arndt says it is used as a legal term and refers to “(1) a speech of defense” or “(2) the act of making a defense, (a) in court, or (2) generally of eagerness to defend oneself (2 Cor. 7:11), or of defending the gospel (Phil. 1:7, 16) (BDAG, 117). Brannan offers a detailed definition of “defense.” In a legal sense, it refers to “the speech act of attempting to prove some act or belief to be reasonable, necessary, or right— especially occurring in a court of law” (Acts 22:1; Phil. 1:7, 16; 1 Pet. 3:15). In a content sense, it refers to “a statement (either spoken or written) that is made to reply to an accusation— especially in a court of law” (1 Cor. 9:3). It can also refer to a defense hearing, i.e., “formal attendance at a judicial proceeding for a defendant to respond to the charges against him” (2 Tim. 4:16) (*Lexham Research Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*).

Conclusion

The witness of the world and the witness of the word are combined in Psalm 19. We have reliable reasons for faith. Is our faith growing or failing? Are we becoming stronger or weaker? Are we preparing ourselves to teach others, or do we need to be re-educated in the foundational principles of faith?

We need a strong faith. We need to teach others. To fulfil God’s expectation, we need conviction, courage, clarity of mind, and a charitable disposition (John 8:31-32; 2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Pet. 3:15). If we will do our part (by studying, standing, and speaking), He will do His part (Isa. 55:10-11). If we stand with God, He will stand with us (Phil. 2:12-13). ■

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ALABAMA

ATHENS

Jones Road Church of Christ

17312 Jones Rd, Athens, AL 35613
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Sun. Worship: 10:20 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
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Evangelist: David A. Cox | 256-232-1525 | marketstreet-church.com

BIRMINGHAM

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Evangelists: Zack Lee | 205-822-0018

Elkmont

Sandlin Rd Church of Christ

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Evangelist: Lance R. Taylor | 256-777-0990 | sandlinroadchurch.com

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2323 South 46th St.
Sun. Bible Study 9:45 am | Worship 10:30 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: John Hagenbuch | Bldg: 479-782-0588 | churchofchristfortsmith.com

HARRISON

Capps Rd. Church of Christ

407 Bella Vista Dr.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:15 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Norman E. Sewell | 870-741-9104 or 870-741-5151 | cappsroad.org

JONESBORO

StoneRidge Church of Christ

514 Airport Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Dick Blackford | 870-933-9134

PINE BLUFF

Hwy 79 S Church of Christ

4341 S Camden Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 9:45 am | Worship 10:45 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Clarence W. Sell | 870-879-2097

ARIZONA

TUCSON

Church of Christ

145 N. Country Club Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Brenden Ashby | 520-326-3634 | churchofchristtucson.org

CALIFORNIA

BELLFLOWER

Rose Ave. Church of Christ

17903 Ibbetson Ave.
Sun. Bible Study 9:45 am | Worship 10:50 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
562-866-5615 | roseavenue.org

LONG BEACH

Church of Christ

3433 Studebaker Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 9:50 am | Worship 10:45 am & 5:30 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
JP Flores | 562-420-2363 or Mark Reeves | 562-377-1674 | justchristians.org

SAN DIMAS

San Dimas Church of Christ

449 W. Allen Ave., Suite 120, San Dimas, CA 91773
Sun. Bible study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm & 4:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
909-788-9978 | sandimaschurchofchrist.com

COLORADO

FORT COLLINS

Poudre Valley Church of Christ

126 West Harvard St. | Suite 6
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am
Evangelist: Richie Thetford | poudrevalleychurchofchrist.org

MONTROSE

San Juan Church of Christ

1414 Hawk Parkway, Unit C
Sun. Worship 11:00 pm | Bible Study 2 pm & 1:30 pm
970-249-8116 | sanjuanchurchofchrist.org

FLORIDA

DESTIN

South Walton Church of Christ

64 Casting Lake Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
850-622-3817 | southwaltonchurchofchrist.com | Location change coming in 2022: 497 Church St Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459

GENEVA

Church of Christ

Ave. C & 2nd St.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:45 am | 407-349-9998

MARY ESTHER

Church of Christ

6 Ln. Dr.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Joey Rankin 850-244-9222

ORLANDO

Church of Christ at S. Bumby

3940 S. Bumby Ave.
Sun. Communion: 9:30 am | Bible Study 10:00 am | Praise & Preaching: 10:55 am (No pm Service) | Wed 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Ken Chapman
Office: 407-851-8031 | bumby.org | Note: Please call for current worship and Bible study times.

PANAMA CITY BEACH

Beach Church of Christ

8910 Front Beach Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
850-234-2521

SEFFNER

Church of Christ

621 E. Wheeler Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 10:50 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
Evangelist: Bobby Witherington | 813-684-1297 | seffnercoc.org

GEORGIA

PINE MTN. VALLEY

Church of Christ

Route 116 (near Callaway Gardens)
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
Evangelist: Tommy W. Thomas | 706-628-5117 or 628-5229 | pmvchurch.com

IDAHO

BLACKFOOT

Church of Christ

370 N. Shilling | P.O. Box 158-83221
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
208-785-6168 or 681-1552

IOWA

DES MOINES

Church of Christ

1310 N.E. 54th Ave.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:40 am | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
515-262-6799

ILLINOIS

DOWNERS GROVE

Church of Christ

1236 63rd St. (Dir: 1.5 miles E of I355)
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 9:55
am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
Evangelist: Steve Wolfgang | 630-968-
0760 | dgcoc.org

GLEN ELLYN

Glen Ellyn Church of Christ

796 Prairie Ave.
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Sun. Worship
10:30 am & 5:00 pm
Evangelist: Keith E. Brown | 630-858-
2290 & 630-377-3990

MATTOON

Southside Church of Christ

1100 S. 17th St.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30
am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
217-234-3702

SOUTH HOLLAND

Southeast Church of Christ

16224 S Vincennes Ave.
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00
am & 4 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Donald Hawkins | 708-339-
1008 | southeastchurchofchrist.com

WASHINGTON

Tazewell County Church of Christ

Meeting @ Sleep Inn Suites and Motel |
1101 North Cummings Lane, Washington,
IL 61571
Sun. Worship: 11:30 am | Bible Study:
12:30 pm | Wed. Bible Study 6:30 pm @
home of Tim Sundlie, call for address
Evangelist: Tim Sundlie | 608-796-9028
| sunbeads1@gmail.com | tazewellcococ.
org

INDIANA

CLARKSVILLE

Clarksville Church of Christ

407 W. Lewis & Clark Parkway, 47129
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30
am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
Evangelist: Brian Anderson | 812-944-
2305 or 812-948-9917 | clarksvillechur-
chofchrist.org

JAMESTOWN

Church of Christ

Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:25
am & 4 pm | Wed. 7:00 pm
765-676-6404 | jamestowncoc.com

NOBLESVILLE

Stony Creek Church of Christ

15530 Herriman Blvd, 46060
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship
11:00 am | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: John Smith | preacher-
john54@att.net | 317-501-8035 or
317-501-0249 or 317-701-1204

OOLITIC

Church of Christ

400 Lafayette Ave. | P.O. Box 34
Sun. Bible Study 9:45 am | Worship 10:30
am & 6:00 pm | Wed. 7:00 pm
812-279-4332

PEKIN

Church of Christ

(First St. & Karnes Ct.)
Sun. Bible Study 9:45 am | Worship 10:30
am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Jeremy Goen | 812-967-3437
or 967-3520 | pekinchurchofchrist.com

KANSAS

TOPEKA

17th Street Church of Christ

5600 SW 17th St, Topeka, KS 66604
Sun. Bible Study 9:15 am | Sun. Worship
10:30 am | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
785-235-8687 or 785-273-7977 |
17thstreetchurchofchrist.org

KENTUCKY

BEAVER DAM

Church of Christ

1235 Williams St.
Sun. Worship 10:00 am | Bible Study After
am Worship & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study
7:00 pm
Evangelist: Jerid Gunter | 270-274-4451

BENTON

Fairdealing Church of Christ

8081 US Hwy 68-East, Benton, KY 42025
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00
am | Wed. Bible Study 6:00 pm
270-354-9451 | fairdealingmarc@gmail.
com | churchofchristatfairdealing.com |
Conveniently located near Kenlake State
Resort Park on the western shore of
Kentucky Lake.

BRANDENBURG

Brandenburg Church of Christ

612 Broadway
Sun. Bible Study 9:45 am | Worship 10:30
am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 6:30 pm
Evangelist: Charles J. White | 270-422-
3878

CAMPBELLSVILLE

Sunny Hill Dr. Church of Christ

107 Sunny Hill Dr.
Worship 9:30 am & 11:30 am | Bible
Study 10:30 am | Wed. Bible Study 7:00
pm
Evangelist: Steve Lee | 270-789-1651 |
sunnyhillcoc.com

CANEYVILLE

Caneyville Church of Christ

103 N. Main St. | P.O. Box 233
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship
10:45 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study
7:00 pm
Evangelist: Jarrod Jacobs | 270-589-4167
or 270-274-3065

DANVILLE

Church of Christ

385 E. Lexington Ave.
Sun. Worship 10:00 am | Bible Study
11:15 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study
7:00 pm
Evangelist: B.J. Sipe | 859-236-4204

FLORENCE

Northern Kentucky Church of Christ

18 Scott Drive, Florence, KY 41042
Sun. Worship 9:30 am & 5:30 pm | Sun.
Bible Study 10:30 am | Wed. Bible Study
7:00 pm
859-371-2095 | nkcofc.com

FRANKLIN

31-W North Church of Christ

1733 Bowling Green Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00
am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Steve Monts | 270-776-9393 |
31wchurchofchrist.com

LEITCHFIELD

Mill St. Church of Christ

733 Mill St. Hwy 62 E.
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship
10:55 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study
7:00 pm
Evangelist: Dan McMahan | 270-971-
1492 | millstreetchurchofchrist.org

LOUISVILLE

Valley Station Church of Christ

1803 Dixie Garden Dr.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30
am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Michael Hardin | michaelhar-
din1123@att.net | 502-937 2822

SHEPHERDSVILLE

Hebron Lane Church of Christ

3221 East Hebron Lane
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00
am & 5 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
Evangelist: Ron Halbrook & Connie W.
Adams | 502-957-5115 or 502-955-1748 |
hebronlanechurchofchrist.com

LOUISIANA

GONZALES

Southside Church of Christ

405 Orice Roth Rd. | 70737 (Baton Rouge
area)
Sun. Bible Class 9:30 am | Worship 10:30
am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: R.J. Evans | rjevans@eateel.net
| 225-622-4587

MANY

Lakeside Church of Christ

12095 Texas Hwy. (Hwy. 6 W.)
12 miles west of Many
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship
11:00 pm & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study
7:00 pm
318-256-9396

MAINE

PORTLAND

Church of Christ

856 Brighton Ave. (Breakwater School) |
Leave Maine Turnpike at Exit 48
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship
11:00 pm w/ second service immediately
following am worship | Mid-week Bible
Study (please call for times & places)
207-839-3075 or 839-8409

MICHIGAN

KENTWOOD

W. Michigan Church of Christ

3084 Creek Drive SE, #1-C, Kentwood, MI
49512 | P.O. Box 8446, Kentwood, Mich.
49508 (Grand Rapids area)
Sun. Worship 11:00 am | Sun. Bible Study
12:30 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Joseph Gladwell | cedar-
springs98@gmail.com

ROSCOMMON

N. Michigan Church of Christ

414 South Main Street
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship
11:00 am | Wed. Bible Study 6:00 pm
Evangelist: Ryan Thomas | 810-837-1302
or 989-389-3226 | northernmichigan-
churchofchrist.com

MISSISSIPPI

CLINTON

McRaven Rd. Church of Christ

301 McRaven Rd. (I20, exit 36)
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Leonard White | 601-925-9757 or 924-2645

MERIDIAN

7th St. Church of Christ

2914 7th St.
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00 am

Grandview Church of Christ

2820 Grandview Ave.
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Sun. Worship 11:00 pm | Wed. 6:30 pm
Ron Cooper: 601-934-3675 | roncooper@bellsouth.net
Ricky Ethridge: 601-737-5778 | rickymarsha@bellsouth.net

SOUTH HAVEN

Church of Christ

2110 E State Line Rd. (Exit I-55) (Memphis area)
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: James A. Brown | Bldg: 662-342-1132

MARYLAND

SEVERN

Southwest Church of Christ

805 Meadow Rd, Severn, MD 21144
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Sun. Worship 11:00 pm & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
Evangelist: Brandon Trout | 410-969-1420 or 410-551-6549 | swcofchrist.com

MISSOURI

BLODGETT

Blodgett Church of Christ

422 N Linton St., Blodgett, MO 63824
Sun. Worship 10:00 am | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Russell Rice | 573-475-0417

BLUE SPRINGS

Southside Church of Christ

4000 SW Christiansen
Sun. Worship 9:00 pm | Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Brett Hogland | 816-228-9262

BRANSON

Eagle Rock Rd. Church of Christ

432 Eagle Rock Rd.
Sun. Worship 9:30 am | Bible Study 10:30 am | Sun. Evening Worship 2 pm | Wed. Bible Study 6:00 pm
Evangelist: Philip North | 417-239-1036 | primrosenor@suddenink.net | eaglerock-roadchurchofchrist.org

CAPE GIRARDEAU

Cape County Church of Christ

2912 Bloomfield Rd
Sun. Bible Study 9:15 am | Worship 10:00 am | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Seth McDonald & Jerry Lee Westbrook | 573-837-1001 | capecountycoc@gmail.com | capecountycoc.com

FAIR GROVE

Church of Christ

217 N. Orchard Blvd.
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am & 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Walter Myers | 417-830-8972 or 417-736-2663

KENNETT

Church of Christ

703 Harrison St.
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Nolan Glover | 573-888-6778 or 870-650-1648 | westsidechurchofchrist.us

SAINT JAMES

Church of Christ

685 Sidney St.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:15 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Lynn Huggins | 573-265-8628

SAINT JOSEPH

County Line Church of Christ

2727 County Line Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 9:50 am | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
816-279-4737 | countylinechurchofchrist.com

NEBRASKA

BEATRICE

Church of Christ at 7th & Bell

Bell St & S 7th St. Beatrice, NE 68310
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00 am & 6:30 pm
402-233-4102 or 402-228-3827 | churchofchrist7bell.org

NORTH CAROLINA

CHARLOTTE

Charlotte Church of Christ

5327 S. Tryon Street
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Sun. Worship 10:30 am | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
704-525-5655 | charlottechurchofchrist.org

LINCOLN

Lincoln Church of Christ

3781 East Highway 27, Iron Station, NC 28080
Sun. Bible Study: 10:00 am | Sun. Worship 11:00 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Stan Adams | 704-748-9777 (Bldg) & 704-748-3747 (Jerry) | lincolnnc-church@gmail.com | lincolncoc.com

OHIO

BEAVERCREEK

Knollwood Church of Christ

1031 Welford Dr, Beavercreek, OH 45434 (located a few miles E of Dayton)
Sun. Short Worship: 9:30 am | Bible Study 10:05 am | Sun. Worship 11:00 am | Wed. Bible Study Adults: 1:00 pm & All ages: 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Heath Rogers | 937-426-1422 | knollwoodchurch.org

DAYTON

West Carrollton Church of Christ

28 W. Main St., 45449
Sun. Worship 9:00 pm | Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:25 am | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelists: Michael Grushon 937-866-5162 or Alan Beck 937-469-3311 | wc.coc.org

FRANKLIN

Franklin Church of Christ

6417 Franklin-Lebanon Rd. 45005
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 10:45 am | Tues. Bible Study 6:30 pm
Evangelist: Josh Lee | 937-789-8055 or 937-746-1249 | franklin-church.org

MANSFIELD

Southside Church of Christ

687 Mansfield-Lucas Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 10:45 am | Wed. Bible Study 4:30 pm
James Bond: 419-564-3878 | Mr. Kim Walton: 419-651-3488 | Bldg: 419-522-8982 | northsidecoc.us

NEW LEBANON

New Lebanon Church of Christ

1973 W Main St.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am, & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Bruce Hastings | 937-687-7150 or 937-478-0367

MARIETTA-RENO

Marietta-Reno Church of Christ

80 Sandhill Rd. Reno, OH 45773
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 6:30 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Mark Childers | 304-615-1091 | 740-374-9827 | mariettarenochurchofchrist.org

NORTHWOOD

Frey Rd. Church of Christ

4110 Frey Rd. (Toledo Area)
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Donald Jarabek | 419-893-3566 & 567-694-5062

OKLAHOMA

MCALESTER

North A St. Church of Christ

2120 No. A St.
Sun. Bible Study 9:45 am | Worship 10:45 am & 5:30 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Rob Lungstrum | 918-931-1362 or 918-423-3445

OREGON

SWEET HOME

Church of Christ

3702 E. Long St.
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm & 7:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
Bldg: 541-367-1599

PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA

Mt. Airy Church of Christ

7222 Germantown Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19119
Sun. Bible Study 10:15 am | Sun. Worship: 11:15 am | Tues. Bible Study: 7:00 pm
Evangelist: James H. Baker, Jr. | 215-248-2026 | mtairychurchofchrist.org

ChurchDirectory

SOUTH CAROLINA

SUMTER

Woodland Church of Christ

3370 Broad St. Extension
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 5:30 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: A.A. Granke, Jr. | 803-499-6023

WEST COLUMBIA

Airport Church of Christ

4013 Edmund Hwy. (Hwy. 302)
Note: See our web site for current assembly schedule.
Evangelist: Terry W. Benton | 803-834-6978 | airport-church-of-christ.com

TENNESSEE

COLUMBIA

Mooresville Pike Church of Christ

417 Mooresville Pike | (Located .8 mi. N. of Hwy. 50/Jas. Campbell)
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 3:30 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
931-388-5828 or 931-381-7898 | mooresvillepikecoc.com

COSBY

Cosby Church of Christ

4894 Hooper Hwy. | 37722 | (Located 15 mi. E. of Gatlinburg on Hwy. 321)
Sun. Bible Study 10am | Worship 11:00 pm & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 6:00 pm
Evangelist: Olie Williamson | 423-487-5540 or 423-748-0844

KINGSTON SPRINGS

Kingston Springs Church of Christ

350 North Main St.
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Steve Walker | kscoc.com

MOUNT PLEASANT

Locust St. Church of Christ

108 Locust St.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Daniel H. King, Sr. | 931-379-3704 or 931-964-3924 | lscoc.com

MURFREESBORO

Cason Ln. Church of Christ

1110 Cason Lane
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Bldg: 615-896-0090 | casonlanchurch.org

Northfield Blvd. Church of Christ

2091 Pitts Ln, Murfreesboro, TN 37130
(located at the corner of Northfield Blvd and Pitts Lane)
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Sun. Worship 10:30 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: David Bunting | 615-893-1200 | GodsRedeemed.org

NASHVILLE

Hillview Church of Christ

7471 Charlotte Pike
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Lee Wildman | 615-952-5458 or 615-356-7318

Perry Heights Church of Christ

423 Donelson Pike
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 9:55 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Johnny Felker | 615-883-3118 | perryheights.faithweb.com

TEXAS

ALLEN

Twin Creeks Church of Christ

1414 W. Exchange Pkwy
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Jerry King 214-504-0443 or 972-727-5355 | twincreekscoc.com

ALVARADO

I-35 Church of Christ

E. Service Rd. off I-35, N. of Alvarado
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
817-295-7277 or 790-7253

ALVIN

Adoue St. Church of Christ

605 E. Adoue St., Alvin, TX 77511
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
Evangelist: Mark Mayberry | mark@ascoc.org | ascoc.org

BAYTOWN

Church of Christ at Pruett & Lobit

701 North Pruett St.
Sun. Bible Study 9:45 am | Worship 10:40 am & 6:30 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Bldg: 281-422-5926 | Weldon: 713-818-1321 | biblework.com

BEAUMONT

Dowlen Rd. Church of Christ

3060 Dowlen Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Max Dawson | 409-866-1996 | dowlenroad.com

DICKINSON

Dickinson Church of Christ

2919 Main St/FM 517 E., Dickinson, TX 77539
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Sunday Worship 11:00 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
713-298-6673

EDNA

Church of Christ

301 Robison St.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Phillip Stuckey | 361-782-5506 or 361-782-2844 | ednachurchof-christ.org

EL PASO

Eastridge Church of Christ

3277 Pendleton Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
915-855-1524

GALVESTON (BACLIFF)

Bacliff Church of Christ

4303 18th St, Bacliff, TX 77518
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Sun. Worship 10:00 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Richard Lay | bacliffchurchof-christ.org

FORT WORTH

West Side Church of Christ

6110 White Settlement Rd. 76114
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
817-738-7269

GRANBURY

Old Granbury Rd Church of Christ
4313 Old Granbury Rd, Granbury, TX 76049
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Sun. Worship 10:30 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Chip Foster | 817-913-4209 or 817-279-3351 | oldgranburyrdchurch.org

HOUSTON

Fry Rd. Church of Christ

2510 Fry Rd. (77084)
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:20 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
Evangelist: Mark White | fryroad.org

IRVING

Westside Church of Christ

2320 Imperial Dr. (Located close to DFW Airport)
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 9:50 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
Evangelist: Mark Roberts | 972-986-9131 | justchristians.com

LUBBOCK

Indiana Avenue Church of Christ

6111 Indiana Ave, Lubbock, TX 79413
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Sun. Worship 9:00 am & 11:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
806-795-3377 | lubbockchurch.com

MANSFIELD

Northside Church of Christ

1820 Mansfield Webb Rd, Mansfield, TX 76063
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Sun. Worship: 10:20 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 5:30 pm.
Evangelist: Tom Roberts | 817-996-3926 | northsidecoc.us

NACOGDOCHES

Shawnee Church of Christ

612 S Shawnee St, Nacogdoches, TX 75961
Sun. Bible Study 9:45 am | Worship 10:30 am & 6:00 | Wed. Bible Study 6:00 pm
Minister: Van Dennis | 936-615-2950

Stallings Dr. Church of Christ

3831 N.E. Stallings Dr.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:20 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelists: Randy Harshbarger & Jay Taylor

SAN ANTONIO

Pecan Valley Church of Christ

268 Utopia Ave. (Dir: I-37 S.E. Exit Pecan Valley)
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Jesse Garcia | 210-660 0409 | pecanvalleychurchofchrist.org

SHERMAN

Westwood Village Church of Christ

314 N. Tolbert
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship
10:30 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study
7:00 pm
Evangelist: Ronald Stringer

TEMPLE

Leon Valley Church of Christ

4404 Twin City Blvd.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship
10:30 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study
7:30 pm
Evangelist: Jason Garcia (yourfriend-
jgar@gmail.com) or (leonvalleychurch@
gmail.com) | 254-939-0682 | leonval-
leychurch.org

TEXARKANA

Franklin Dr. Church of Christ

2301 Franklin Dr.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship
10:15 am | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Bryan Garlock | 870-772-
0746 | txkchurch.com

WACO

Sun Valley Church of Christ

340 E Warren St. (in Hewitt, a suburb
of Waco)
Sun. Bible Class 9:30 am | Worship
10:30 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study
7:00 pm
Evangelist: Marc Smith | 254-292-2482
or 652-7698

VERMONT

MONTPELIER

Montpelier Church of Christ

Meeting in the Capital City Grange Hall,
6612 Route 12 Berlin, VT 05602
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10
am | Tues. Evening in Homes
Evangelist: Open | montpelierchurchof-
christ.com | P.O. Box 70, Williamstown,
VT 05679 | For questions or directions:
Wade Holt 802-485-4311

VIRGINIA

CHESAPEAKE

Tidewater Church of Christ

217 Taxus St.
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship
11:00 pm & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study
7:00 pm
Evangelist: Steven Matthews | 757-436-
6900 | tidewaterchurchofchrist.com

RICHMOND

Courthouse Church of Christ

8330 Doublecreek Court, Chesterfield,
VA 23832 (Located in teh Metro Area;
Courthouse Rd. at Double Creek Ct. 2.2
miles S of Rt. 288)
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship
10:30 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study
7:00 pm
Evangelist: Nathan L. Morrison | 804-
778-4717 | courthousechurchofchrist.
com

Forest Hill Church of Christ

1208 W. 41st St.
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship
11:00 pm & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study
7:00 pm
Evangelist: Jack Bise, Jr. | 804-233-5959

RIDGEWAY

Church of Christ

2970 Old Leaksville Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship
11:00 pm & 5:30 pm | Wed. Bible Study
7:00 pm
276-956-6049 | churchofchristatridge-
way.com

ROANOKE

Blue Ridge Church of Christ

929 Indiana Ave. N.E. (5 min. from
Roanoke Convention Center)
Sun. 1st Lesson 9:15 am | Bible Study
10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm | Wed.
Bible Study 7:30 pm
Evangelist: Brent Paschall | 540-344-
2755 | blueridgecoc.org

VIRGINIA BEACH

Southside Church of Christ

5652 Haden Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship
11:00 pm
Robert Mallard | 757-464-4574

WASHINGTON

BELLINGHAM

Mt. Baker Church of Christ

1860 Mt. Baker Hwy.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship
10:30 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study
7:00 pm
Evangelist: Joe Price | 360-752-2692
or 360-920-6965 | bibleanswer.com/
mtbaker

TACOMA

Manitou Park Church of Christ

Meeting at Gray Middle School, 6229 S.
Tyler St., Tacoma, WA 98409
Note: Please see webpage for updated
meeting location and times.
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship
11:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
(Online)
253-242-3098 | tacomachurch@gmail.
com | tacomachurch.com

WEST VIRGINIA

CLARKSBURG

Westside Church of Christ

7 Old Davission Run Rd
Sun. Worship 9:30 am
304-622-5433 | westsidechurchof-
christwv.net

FAIRMONT

Eastside Church of Christ

1929 Morgantown Ave.
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship
10:45 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study
7:00 pm
304-363-8696 or 304-844-2437

MOUNDSVILLE

Moundsville Church of Christ

210 Cedar Ave, Moundsville, WV 26041
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Sun. Worship
10:30 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study
7:00 pm
Evangelist: Tony Huntsman | 304-845-
4940 | cedarsower.com

CANADA

CALGARY, AB

Northside Church of Christ

803 20A Ave NE, Calgary AB T2E 1S1
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Sun. Wor-
ship 11:00 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible
Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Eric Castillo | +1-403-619-
1249 | churchofchristcalgary.com

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