

# BIBLICAL INSIGHTS

*Spiritual Truths for Everyday Living*

*July Special Issue*

*Attitudes and Consequences  
of the Reckless Restorers*



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## **Editorial**

**I**t's hard to know when and how—*when* to take a stand and exactly *how* to do it. And while I have no intention of using BIBLICAL INSIGHTS to tell anyone they have to follow my conscience about anything, I do plan on using any medium available to teach biblical truth when and where I see the need.

*I am concerned about young people.* I am concerned that some, at the most impressionable age of life, are taken in by those feeding on a natural youthful disdain for authority—and segway that into an environment of disrespect for *biblical* authority—from instrumental music ("swallowing camels") to abuses with the Supper ("they eat bread, drink a bit, eat more bread, drink a bit more..."), to very loose blogs about drinking ("only drinking in excess is forbidden" *in Scripture*).

Over the past few months I have read blog after blog on *pleonast* (an Internet blog site for young Christians) and have been amazed at the lack of respect for God's authority. And that's what it's all about. Do we do things out of man-tradition ("c of C tradition") or out of respect for biblical teaching?

Some things are man-traditional. Just because a group does something different does not make it wrong. Much of what occurs when God's people assemble involves human judgment and tradition. Let us not be so bound by man-tradition that we fail to see it for what it is. On the other hand, it is imperative that we recognize and respect God's tradition ("patternism"—as one blog writer described it sarcastically). When Paul wrote the Thessalonians he reminded them of the necessity of adhering to Heaven's "patternism"—"Brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions

which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us" (2 Thess. 2:15). The admonition to respect apostolic authority is binding on every church that is of Christ.

The argument that "we just do a few things differently" is a smoke-screen. It's not about things done differently (from man's tradition) but a disrespectful attitude for apostolic teaching.

For example, when women address the assembled church at the Lord's Supper, I believe that is sinful. To argue that it is the same as a Bible class is a misnomer. *First*, the Supper is to be taken when the church has come together (1 Cor. 11:20, 33–34). *Second*, when the church is together, the women are not to speak (lead the assembly). Paul was plain. The idea of dividing into groups and discussing the Memorial and then appointing spokesman/woman to address the church mimics the meanderings of John Mark Hicks (*Come to the Table*) more than anything else.

It centers on one thing: *respect for authority*. The disdain expressed by some toward CENI (command, example, necessary inference) is amazing. I have asked for an alternative to understanding biblical authority, but none has been forthcoming. Nor will it be. If CENI is to be rejected, how do you determine the following practices are wrong: 1) praying to Mary, 2) sprinkling for baptism, 3) dancing in the assembly, 4) pizza on the Lord's Table, etc.? If there is a better way to determine what God wants us to do, what is it?

I've asked these writers to help us see what the *real* problems are. They have done their work well. Please read carefully and with an open mind. *Thanks...*

*Wilson*

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# CENI—Command, Example, Necessary Inference

by Edwin Crozier

AS CHILDREN WE LEARNED THE most fundamental picture of wisdom in the song based on Matthew 7:24–27. Wise men don't just build houses. They first dig foundations. Wouldn't it be silly for a builder to walk onto a plot of grass and start erecting studs, hanging rafters and attaching sheetrock? Yet, too often, this is how we conduct spiritual discussions, arguing about the house's frame, exterior and décor without looking at its foundation. The house is appealing, attractive and aesthetically pleasing. The problem is it simply won't last.

I have had many discussions regarding the Lord's Supper, clapping in the assembly, instrumental music as worship, churches owning buildings, etc. It took me a long time to realize we were often discussing the wrong thing. Most of the time, we were building on different foundations. No wonder our houses looked so different.

As we examine "new" and "different" teachings that arise every few years we must not be satisfied if we agree that a particular action is lawful. We need to also ask *why* these actions are being taken. When I ask this question, I often hear things like, "All that matters is loving God..." "How can it be wrong if I am expressing what is in my heart..." "If it flows from my love for God, that's all that counts..." These feeling-based foundations are deadly (Prov. 14:12). I am concerned some are comforted when they shouldn't be, because they don't look past the décor to the foundation. Even though the frame of the house may "feel" right, if the foundation is off, the frame will eventually crumble.

## Checking Our Foundation

Sadly, many who have upheld proper principles of biblical authority are quick to condemn "those radical change agents," pointing the accusing finger of heresy without considering how we may have paved the way for some of their dissonance. Ben Stein, in his recent documentary *Expelled*, said, "Questions not answered well will not go away." Too often, we have not answered questions well. Offering a curt and disapproving, "That's not authorized," those questioning learn to keep their mouths shut in Bible class. Their questions, however, do not go away and eventually, they begin to think we must not have solid answers. If we do not answer the questions of thinking brethren well, we can expect disagreement to grow.

Some brethren have seen us bicker in the name of biblical authority over things without biblical authority. Consider the specific dress codes some churches have developed for the assembly—as if such is a Biblical injunction. James 2 clearly states such posturing over dress can actually demonstrate partiality. If we are going to fight tooth and toenail in defense of biblical authority on specifics about which God has not expressed Himself, we might as well expect brethren not to listen to us on the issues about which He clearly has.

Some brethren have seen what appears to be inconsistency. For instance, some have heard a blanket rebuke against a brother for lifting holy hands in prayer as Paul said men should do (1 Tim. 2:8). If done respectfully, this prayer posture can be a reverent expres-

sion of petition. While I am not completely comfortable with this posture (as others are not comfortable praying publicly while kneeling), I must admit Paul's direct statement of approval authorizes it. To rebuke a brother for heeding a Direct Statement will cause logically thinking brethren to conclude our foundation is faulty.

Finally, some have seen principles of Biblical authority used to discuss matters of congregational importance while ignoring those affecting our personal lives. When Paul said we must do all things in Jesus' name (Col. 3:17), he wasn't referring directly to the church's work but to how we live individually. Thus, if we argue vehemently about the authorized works of the church, but do so in a way that ignores the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22–26), we can expect brethren to discount what we teach on the basis of our own fruit (Matt. 7:15–20).

It's easy to point fingers at others. Before doing so, we need to make sure our own house is properly founded and that we live by the principles we teach—and not just by "doing what we've always done." Whatever we do or teach, it must square from Jesus our cornerstone and rest on the Spirit's revelation through the apostles and prophets (Eph. 2:20).

## Building on Our Cornerstone

In John 8:28, Jesus said, "I do nothing on My own authority, but speak just as the Father taught Me." In John 5:30, He said, "I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will

but the will of him who sent me.” Jesus demanded authority from God before He acted. What makes us think we can take any other course? We must not act as if we are our own authority.

In John 12:49, our Cornerstone said, “For I have not spoken on My own authority, but the Father who sent Me has himself given Me a commandment—what to say and what to speak.” When our foundation was trying to figure out if it had authority to baptize Gentiles in Acts 15, James appealed to a Direct Statement in Amos 9:11–12. Our foundation and Cornerstone refused to do anything unless they had authority from Heaven. In these cases, they had authority because of a Command or Direct Statement of authorization. If we will build on them, we will do the same.

In John 5:19, our Cornerstone said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of His own accord, but only what He sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.” In Acts 15:12, Paul appealed to the Holy Spirit-approved examples of baptized Gentiles to show authorization for Gentile baptism. Our foundation and Cornerstone refused to do anything unless they had authority from God. In these cases, they found authority through Approved Examples. If we will build on them, we will do the same.

In Matthew 12:9–13, Jesus was asked about authority to heal on the Sabbath. He did not demonstrate a Direct Statement nor did

He appeal to an Approved Example. Rather, He noted a Necessary Inference (conclusion) based upon Exod. 23:4–5 and Deut. 22:4, which both commanded the Israelites to save a brother’s fallen animal. Jesus

authority and passed them on as the “Church of Christ” way to read the Bible. That is not true. Alexander Campbell did not develop this doctrine, Christ did. Barton W. Stone did not found this formula,

## If we argue in a way . . . that ignores the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22–26), we can expect brethren to discount what we teach.

*inferred* that command applied on the Sabbath as well as any other day. Further, He *inferred* that if He was authorized to rescue an ox on the Sabbath, He was necessarily authorized to rescue a man. In Acts 15:7–11, Peter recognized authority to baptize Gentiles with water by *inferring* if they could be baptized in the Holy Spirit, they had authority to be baptized in water. Our foundation and Cornerstone refused to do anything unless they had authority from God. In these cases, they found authority through Logical and Necessary Inferences. If we will build on them, we will do the same.

### If Living Like Jesus Matters, So Does This

Sadly, I get the feeling some disgruntled Christians believe a Restorationist somewhere developed these principles of biblical

the Spirit did. When we let Jesus be our cornerstone and His apostles and prophets our foundation, we will build the house based on what God has authorized through Commands or Direct Statements, Approved Examples and Necessary Inferences. Like Jesus in John 14:10, we must refuse to speak or act on our own authority. Instead, we must allow Him to dwell in us and work through us. This is not outdated “Church of Christ tradition.” It is living like Jesus.

Let us never be so busy arguing over the house that we forget to examine the foundation. If we get the foundation wrong, the house will fall...every time. If we get the foundation right, the house will follow...every time.

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# The Faith of Toleration

by Todd Chandler

**RIGHT AND WRONG...LESS AND** less people like to think in those terms, or listen to those who do. The business of drawing lines is risky and a quick way to get labeled judgmental, self-righteous, or hateful. So, a more peaceful option becomes popular. The faith of right and wrong becomes the faith of toleration—don't do it, but don't condemn it.

In a culture in love with tolerance, Christians had best make a periodic evaluation of their own faith. This test can begin with two foundation questions: 1) Do I know what is right? 2) Am I willing to stand against things that are not right?

Can we know right and wrong? "And you shall do what is right in the sight of the LORD" (Deut. 6:18). "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken" (John 12:48). "You shall know the truth" (8:32a). It is God who dictates right and wrong, period. And God clearly believes His revelation is sufficient for us to know His will. This article assumes the answer to, "Can we understand God's will?" is a firm, "Absolutely!" My personal discernment of right, then, is not a question of what is possible to know, but of my personal knowledge of God's truth; "those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:14).

Am I willing to stand for God's truth? Now, that is an entirely different question. There only is one option: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them" (Eph. 5:11). God requires more than a refrain from sin; He requires

that we expose it. And exposure demands a clear identification of wrong things as wrong. If I claim to stand for truth, I must expose what is wrong. God leaves no alternative.

Often we have the bad habit of referring to sin as "weakness," "poor judgment," or "a mistake." Those qualities may be involved, but works of darkness are more; they are *sin*. And sin carries the horrific consequence of death (Isa. 59:2; Rom. 6:23). When it comes to sin we must call it what it is, and speak with enough volume that others hear the message (Ezek. 3:18–19). We know what God thinks of those who refuse to stand against sin (Rev. 2:13–14, 20–21).

It is wise to consider that exposing sin does not justify boorish arrogance. Truth is abrasive enough without putting my own bad attitude or personality into the mix. Too often, sinful words have been justified by claiming to stand for truth. Paul instructed Timothy to be, "gentle to all...patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition" (2 Tim. 2:24–25). And, there are such things as foolish disputes to avoid (2 Tim. 2:23). It is the mature, wise Christian who can balance these two principles without compromising a firm stand for truth.

Knowing the effects of sin, why ever would we fail to expose it? First, we know other people do not want us to say things are wrong. Our culture is more tolerant of evil every week, and less accepting of censure. The effect within the church is predictable, especially among younger Christians. They have been fed a diet of toleration from Sesame Street through col-

lege. They have heard often that truth is elusive and individual, rather than objective and knowable (John 8:32), and to tell them a worship practice is wrong is almost unthinkable. So, leaders cower and take the peaceful path to destruction; they may refuse to do it, but they will not condemn it. It only is a matter of time until that church or home accepts the sin.

Second, we fail to expose sin because we simply do not know what is right or wrong in the first place. Years of neglectful Bible study make frail weaklings who get pushed around by every new idea that comes through an Internet post, book or fad. The Holy Spirit describes such people as, "unskilled in the word...a babe." (Heb. 5:13). When Christians are too infantile to recognize sin, churches and homes are in great danger indeed.

So sin runs amuck. Maybe not in the grotesque, offensive ways of a brothel or pagan temple, but in its polite progression sin seeps into churches and homes. Failure to identify sin as sin leaves God's kingdom undefended, and both the watchmen and the citizens will be consumed (Ezek. 33:6). *Before long, Christians not only refuse to condemn sin, they begin to condemn those who do oppose sin.* Christians will fall, souls will perish, the light of the world will dim, families will be broken, churches will depart the faith, God will be forsaken...all because someone fell for Satan's great compromise, "You don't have to do it, but don't tell others they are wrong." Enough!

If God has a will, and if God has made that will knowable, and if things opposed to His will are

rightly called sin, we must say so. Let us refuse to sin, and then expose it for what it is! Remember what is at stake and,

- \* “Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, great and awesome, and fight for your brethren, your sons, your

daughters, your wives, and your houses” (Neh. 4:14).

- \* Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong (1 Cor. 16:13).
- \* “Be strong for our people and for the cities of our God” (2 Sam 10:12).

- \* Stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God (Col. 4:12).
- \* Stand firm and hold to the traditions you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us (2 Thess. 2:15).

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*Who is Swallowing the Camel?*

## Instrumental Music—Swallowing Camels?

by Bill Robinson

FAITHFUL DISCIPLES IN EVERY generation are on a quest for continuity with their heritage. It is not a heritage to be discovered in tracing their faith through our physical descendants (or family traditions), much less the “rattling of a chain through the ages” to prove its right to exist. To the contrary, much in every way, it is a spiritual continuity that they seek. They seek only to identify faithfully with the teaching and practice of the inspired apostles of the first century.

For us today, removed only by time and geography, our quest is identical to those in the second century. They stood in that noble tradition of seeking a continuity for their faith and practice with the “new creation” established in Christ Jesus and revealed by the Holy Spirit through the apostles. Those disciples in the second century who desired to be faithful to God did so only through careful study and application of the apostolic teaching contained in the primary source documents of the first century. Those have been

preserved for us today in the same New Testament.

### Have We Made Too Much of This?

The question about the use of mechanical instruments of music (MIM) in worship is a fair question for every person to ask. However, at the present, there is a resurgence of an old idea that we who oppose MIM in congregational worship as being sinful have made too much out of the issue—we have swallowed a camel. Rubel Shelley, claiming he is opposed to MIM in congregational worship, nonetheless, expresses the sentiment of the resurgence of this old attitude when he said in an interview with *The Christian Chronicle*, September 2003, “Instrumental music and atonement are not of the same status or consequence to the human soul and its eternal welfare.”

I don’t know of anything that is comparable in consequence for the human soul and its eternal welfare that even comes close to the significance of the atonement. Such a comparison seems disingenuous at

worst and proves nothing at best. It is this kind of false comparison that is at the very heart of sin and Satan himself as he tempts us with sin. We sin because we rationalize to ourselves “this isn’t as bad as doing that.” We act sometimes as if some sins are just some minor vehicle infraction (tail light out, turn signal indicator out, improper display of license plate, etc.). The ugly truth for the guilty is that all sin is disobedience to God’s Will and whatever form it takes it is an act of unbelief (1 John 3:4; Heb. 3:12). In our guilt, we have *all* tried to hide this ugly truth from ourselves and sometimes from others.

### Clear Historical Insight

From a biblical historical perspective, though space forbids a complete quotation of the text, a careful examination of 2 Chronicles 29 provides us with some key insight as to why we don’t use MIM in congregational worship today. Hezekiah, deeply devoted to

**continued on page 8**

God, like no other king before or after him (2 Kings 18:5), instituted reforms abolishing idol worship, cleansed the temple and restored true temple worship as proscribed by God which was to be carried out under the direction of the Priests and the Levites (2 Chron. 29:5–6). In verse 25 we read,

And he stationed the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with stringed instruments, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, of Gad the king's seer, and of Nathan the prophet; *for this was the commandment of the LORD by his prophets* (emphasis added).

Throughout all of Israel's history, their return to God from apostasy was only met with Divine approval when this simple restoration principle was employed from the heart; *i.e.*, when they went back to the revelation of God to learn God's will on the matter and then began to practice it (2 Kings 22:11ff; Neh. 8:8–18).

MIM were used in temple worship—there is no question about that. What is significant in Hezekiah's reform of temple worship, as per the commandment of God, was

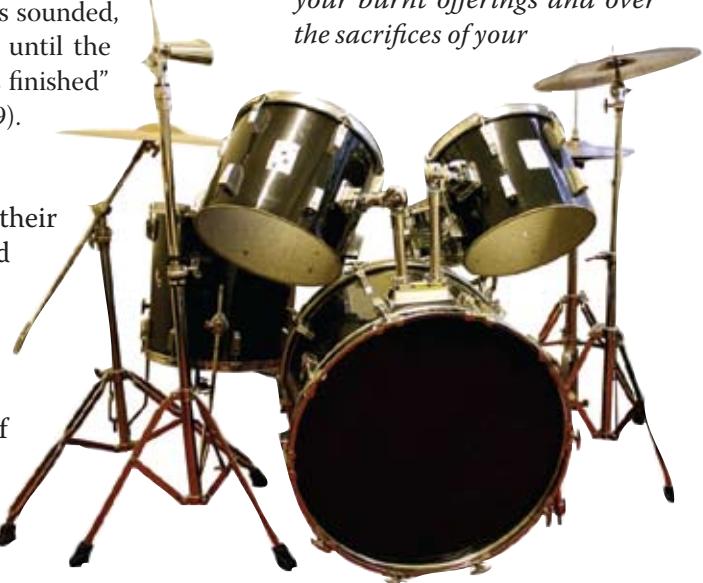
Then Hezekiah commanded them to offer the burnt offering on the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song of the LORD also began, with the trumpets and with the instruments of David king of Israel. So all the assembly worshiped, the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded, all this continued until the burnt offering was finished" (2 Chron. 29:28–29).

MIM were used in temple worship but their use began and ended with the sacrificing of the burnt offerings!

There can be no doubt that the use of MIM throughout Israel's history, from its earliest beginnings, bore a direct connection to the sacrificial system. In Numbers the tenth chapter, the Lord spoke through Moses giving the charge to make two trumpets out of silver (vv. 1–2). He then gave instructions how they were to be used by the Levites, "for calling the congre-

going to war against their enemies. (v. 9). Of particular interest to the use of MIM is verse 10:

"Also, in the day of your gladness, in your appointed feasts, and at the beginning of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your



peace offerings; and they shall be a memorial for you before your God, I am the LORD your God" (emphasis added).

A further note in connection with Hezekiah (2 Chron. 29) is to observe what occurred after they had sacrificed their burnt offerings for sin and the MIM ended (v. 28). We read,

And when they had finished offering, the king and all who were present with him bowed and worshipped. Moreover King Hezekiah and the leaders commanded the Levites to sing praise to the LORD with the words of David and of Asaph the seer. So they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped (vv. 29–30).

## *The use of mechanical instruments of music (MIM) in worship is no longer warranted.*

how the MIM were used in their worship. After stationing the Levites and their MIM in the temple read carefully the following verses:

gation and for directing the movement of the camps." (vv. 2–3, 4–8). He also commanded that they be used to sound an alarm when

## On Our Website ...

Thus, after they made atonement for sin and MIM ended, *they sang praise with gladness and worshiped*. Clearly, MIM were a part of the sacrificial system under the Old Testament. However, they were only played over the sacrifices in the temple. Once the sacrifice for their sins was made the MIM ceased and *they sang praises and worshiped God*. Specifically, they sang praises of thanksgiving with the words of David and Asaph.

The New Testament makes it clear that Christ was our sin offering—the atonement for our sins (Heb. 9:26; 10:11–18; 1 Pet. 2:24). As the perfect sacrifice, the sin offering for the world, He brought to an end forever the sacrificial system of animals (Heb. 10:1–4, 8–10). Can there be any doubt that Christ has “once for all” made atonement for our sins?

In Hebrews 13, the writer discusses the sacrificial system for sin under the Levitical priesthood (v. 11), and assures his readers that Jesus’ blood sanctifies God’s people today as the final atoning sacrifice for sin. With that in mind he then gives the exhortation, “Therefore let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name” (v. 15).

### Our Response to His Atoning Work

Again we are reminded that there remains no more sacrifice for sins (Heb. 10:26); Christ’s atoning sacrifice was “once and for all.” Thus, the use of MIM in worship is no longer warranted. If we are going to trust in Christ, as our atoning sacrifice, then the only appropriate sacrifice of praise to

God we *can* offer is with the fruit of our lips. Nowhere in all of scriptures is thanksgiving with the fruit of our lips more clearly defined for us than in praying and singing:

...but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns making melody in your hearts to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 5:18–20; Col. 3:16–17).

If God could express Himself well enough in the Old Testament for Hezekiah to understand that MIM were commanded, are we to suppose that God finds it more difficult to express Himself in the New Testament? Where is the New Testament example or command of MIM being used in worship? Just who is swallowing the camel? Perhaps, swallowing the camel has more to do with treating the silence of God in our hubris with indifference or as a license to do what *we* want to do rather than what God has commanded (Matt. 15:9). Rubel Shelley, as quoted above, ironically says more than he realized about the connection between the atonement and MIM as we have pointed out in this article. Namely, to use MIM in worship today, whether intended or not, is tantamount to rejecting the atoning sacrifice of Christ.

Finally, it is the keen wit of Chesterton who reminds us, “It is not bigotry to be certain we are right; but it is bigotry to be unable to imagine how we might possibly have gone wrong.”

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# Profaning the Lord's Supper

by Ron Mosby

WHEN DOES THE HOLY BECOME profane and the clean become unclean? When does the Memorial Supper degenerate into just a common ordinary meal? Why did God take no pleasure in burnt offerings and sacrifices and what did He do to replace them?

One of the surest indications of degeneracy among God's people is their failure to distinguish between the clean and the unclean and between the holy and the profane. A thing is holy or sacred because it comes from God; a thing is profane if it originates from some common, ordinary, or human source. Ezekiel vividly describes this condition of God's people when he wrote: "Her priests have done violence to My law and have profaned My holy things; they have made no distinction between the holy and the profane, and they have not taught the difference between the unclean and the clean; and they hide their eyes from My sabbaths, and I am profaned among them" (Ezek. 22:26). It was toward the end of the captivity before the people finally got it right again (44:23).

The word "profane" means: "To treat holy things with contempt or disregard; to put to wrong or unworthy use; to show contempt or disregard for God or holy things." The Greek word is *bebēlos*. Vine states: "Accordingly, *bebēlos* is that which lacks all relationship or affinity to God. ... primarily, to cross the threshold" (p. 490).

## A Radical Restoration (?)

One of the more recent examples of failing to make a distinction between the holy and profane is the attempt by our brother, LaGard Smith, to portray the Lord's Sup-

per as a robust family type meal (including children), eaten with the bread of a common meal, while alleging that any evidence for using unleavened bread is "wafer thin" (*Radical Restoration*, pp. 279–282). Smith also uses such speculative phrases as: "It is possible... may have... it may well be... apparently... you can almost see," etc. He further states: "The clincher, really, is the fact that the Sanhedrin would never have met during the Passover night to put Jesus on trial." Yet, the evidence shows that the Sanhedrin *did* convene in the house of Caiaphas, the high priest, on the first day of Unleavened Bread, on the eve of the Passover (Matt. 26:3, 57, 59).

This same tendency is also found in some of the recent house groups where both men and women have turned the Lord's Supper into a time when they give their personal testimonies about how they feel. Is this not disruptive for those who are trying to observe the Supper in a worthy manner so as not to be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord? Some also give their small children a piece of the bread and tell them to think about God. *Children* cannot even share in the body and blood of Christ since they have not been baptized into Him (1 Cor. 10:16). *Is this not a profaning of the Lord's Supper?*

## The Passover and the Lord's Supper

What then is the relationship between the ancient Passover feast and the Lord's Supper? There is a beautiful type and anti-type correlation between the Passover feast and the Supper, but there are also vast differences. God Himself

instituted the Passover feast the night He passed over Egypt and destroyed the firstborn in every house that did not have the blood of the Passover lamb sprinkled on the lintels and door posts (Exod. 12:21–28). The blood of the Passover lamb became a commemorative symbol of deliverance from Egyptian bondage about which parents were encouraged to teach their children (12:26–27). Yet, God could see the end of the Passover feast in His great scheme of things.

## God Prepared a Body

God no longer could take pleasure in the Passover feast after the fullness of time had come. Since judicial wrath demanded that the punishment must be equal to the crime; and since no earthly sacrifice could atone for a sin against heaven; God prepared a heavenly body to answer these demands (Heb. 10:4–6; Ps. 40:6–8). But, make no mistake, dear reader, this was not just a fleshly body. The angel made it clear to Joseph when he said, "Do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 1:20). Also, Christ did not give up the *form* of God when He came to earth (as some affirm), but with the *form* of God He took on the *form* of a bond-servant, and was made in the likeness of men (Phil. 2:6–7; John 1:14). The body God made was both God and man. Christ was God incarnate!

## God Established Three Commemorative Memorials

So that man would not forget the body He had prepared, God established three memorials to

commemorate the death, burial, and resurrection of that body. First, God changed the day of worship from the Sabbath day to the first day of the week. Hence, every first day of the week now is a memorial day when Christians universally celebrate the victory of that body over death after God raised Christ from the dead. Secondly, God established baptism as a memorial *form* we must obey in order to enter into the death of that body where we contact the precious blood of Christ (Rom. 6:3–4, 17–18). Thirdly, God established

tinue that remembrance until He comes again (1 Cor. 11:26).

### Unleavened Bread

One of the characteristics of the Passover feast was the removal of all leaven from the house (Exod. 12:14–21). Hence, that would be part of the preparation when Jesus sent Peter and John ahead to prepare the Passover so He could eat it together with His disciples (Luke 22:8). Leaven, in the New Testament, (except in the parable of Jesus) takes on the meaning of evil influences. It is in the context

of 1 Corinthians 5:6–8 that Christ is called our Passover.

Here Paul

uses the term, “old leaven,” to indicate the removal of the man from among them who was living with his father’s wife. The arrogant boasting of the Corinthians was not good and thus it became necessary to remove the evil influence from among them that they might become a new lump.

Another example is in the upper room, where Jesus, before He instituted the Memorial Supper, removed the evil influence of betrayal from the room when He invited Judas to leave. After giving Judas the morsel, Jesus said to him, “What you do, do quickly” (John 13:26–27). John indicates that Judas was dismissed from the gathering when they had finished eating the Passover meal (13:30).

**Note:** This is a good lesson for us all. While undergoing self-examination to discern properly the Lord’s body, we must clear out all the old leaven and every possible evil influence from our hearts so we may indeed worship God in

spirit and truth as a new lump that we may be pleasing to Him. Paul said: “But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup” (1 Cor. 11:28).

### It Was After Supper

There should be no argument that the last meal Jesus ate with the disciples before His crucifixion was the Passover Feast. But, it was after they had finished the Passover meal that Jesus instituted the Memorial Feast which is called the Lord’s Supper in 1 Corinthians 11:20. Jesus made no connection between the Passover meal and the institution of the Memorial Supper. Both Luke and Paul confirm this “after they had eaten” (Luke 22:20) and “after supper” (1 Cor. 11:25).

Profaning the Memorial Supper is a “radical” action for sure, but in the wrong direction! It is *not* a “radical restoration” in the direction of the gospel of Jesus Christ, but a radical movement toward the social gospel. Let us remember the words of Paul when he wrote to Timothy: “O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings” (1 Tim. 6:20–21).

Brethren, to eat the Lord’s Supper in any way as a common meal is to cross the threshold—it is to transgress the doctrine of Christ. The next stop is eternity and then it will be too late if we persist in profaning the Memorial Supper and God’s holy things. Let’s get back to the Scriptures and to a “Thus saith the Lord!” Let us exalt the only true and living God and quit profaning Him in the presence of His own people.

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## Let's get back to the Scriptures and to a "Thus saith the Lord!"

the Memorial Supper by which we show forth the Lord’s death until He comes again. Jesus said, “This do in remembrance of Me.”

### The Passover Pointed To Christ

The Passover itself, which recalled to the Jewish mind their national deliverance from Egyptian bondage, pointed forward to the greater deliverance of man from the spiritual bondage of sin, which deliverance was effected by the death of Christ. Now, the Lord’s Supper points backward to the great redemption Christ achieved by His atoning death on the cross as the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world. This was the way John the Baptist first introduced Christ to the world (John 1:29). The Lord’s Supper also points to the future, to the fuller redemption which Christ will accomplish at His second coming. This is why Christians show forth the death of Christ while eating the Memorial Supper and will con-

# Has the Second Coming of Jesus Already Occurred?

by Tony Mauck

2008 IS ALREADY HALF OVER AND “all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation” (2 Pet. 3:4). From the mere standpoint of human observation, “A generation goes and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever” (Eccl. 1:4). Day after day, it’s the same thing over and again. The sun rises. The sun sets. The people walking this globe come and go. But do not be fooled! This seemingly endless cycle will not continue indefinitely.

## Your Inevitable Appointment

God has appointed a final day of judgment. The resurrection of Jesus confirms that such a day will occur (Acts 17:31). Because many years have passed since that announcement, Peter said some questioned God’s promise (2 Pet. 3:3ff). Perhaps for the same reason, others wrongly believe now that God has already fulfilled that promise. Both extremes scoff at Scripture.

While more time has passed since the initial calls unto readiness for first century disciples, you must “...not let one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (3:8). Why would such a statement be recorded unless the “promise of His coming” could potentially be down the road in time?

God has no more forgotten this promise than any other that He has ever made. The working out of the promise to Abraham did not happen in a short period of time, but what an amazing fulfillment unfolded! Because of His marvelous doings throughout hundreds of years, we can now exclaim, “This is the day which the Lord has made;

let us rejoice and be glad in it” (Ps. 118:23–24). *A final great day comes as well!*

Every man faces an inevitable appointment with God (Heb. 9:27). Just as man dies once, Jesus’ sacrifice for sin was a one-time offering coinciding with his *first* appearance (9:28). Yet, He “...shall appear a *second time* for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.”

## Temporal Judgment Comings Verses the Final Coming

The Hebrew writer addresses a first and unique coming of our Lord, a most obvious reference to the incarnation of Jesus. While in one sense, the Lord came or visited many times in the Old Testament for the blessing of His people and judgment upon His enemies (*cf.* Zephaniah 1:4, 7, 14, 15), only once did God become flesh and walk among men (John 1:14, 18).

We should not confuse the “great day of the Lord” in Zephaniah with the second coming of Hebrews 9:28. Neither should we confuse the “the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory” (Mark 13:26) or its “great trumpet” (Matt. 24:31) with the unique and final coming signaled by “the last trumpet” (1 Cor. 15:52). While the Lord has come many times in temporal judgments upon the ungodly (1 Pet. 4:17), we must not confuse those events with the final and irrevocable end of everything material (2 Pet. 3:10–11).

Biblical evidence confirms that we should not equate His coming in Matthew 24:30 with His second appearance in Hebrews 9:28. And we should not equate either of those with His proposed comings

in Revelation 2:5, 16, and 3:5, 11. How would the destruction of Jerusalem or the end described in 2 Peter 3 relate to those comings of the Lord? A majority of the comings of the Lord described in Scripture involved a limited geographical area such as a single nation and a limited number of people. *What the Hebrew writer describes is universal in scope!*

## The Climax of History

Perhaps part of the misunderstanding about the portrait of the Jerusalem destruction in A.D. 70 stems from the nature of the catastrophic figures used to describe it. But such figures are not new. Similar imagery, world-shaking judgment (Isa. 24), is found amidst the writings of Old Testament prophets. And all of these intermediate judgments point forward to a much larger and ultimate fulfillment. When the climax of all history comes, when the final judgment comes—all men will be included, the Lord will be literally visible in the sky and the dead in Christ will literally be raised.

While various visible signs preceded the day of the Lord in Matthew 24, the Lord’s final coming will approach in stealth “as a thief” (1 Thess. 5:2–3).

*The Bible clearly describes future events that did not occur in A.D. 70 and have yet to occur...*

\* We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed... for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed (1 Cor. 15:51–52).

\* For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and

with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:16–17).

- \* The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven...when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day (2 Thess. 1:7–10).
- \* When He appears, we shall be

like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is (1 John 3:2).

Stay ready for *that day!*

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*Worship—It's Not About Me*

## Emotional Religion—"If It Feels Good, Do It!"

by Jason Longstreth

*In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes.*

—Judges 17:6

IT IS A RECOGNIZABLE PASSAGE and long used to describe a society in which there is no absolute standard of right and wrong—a society in which the individual has become the ultimate authority and choice has become a god. I imagine there is not a single reader of this article who cannot identify the similarities between Israel as described in the book of Judges and the modern world in which we live. There are also none who can deny that this philosophy has long influenced the religious world of today.

As a young boy, I remember seeing advertisements that encouraged individuals to "Attend the church of your choice!" And I did. As an infant, I was "baptized" (sprinkled) in the Methodist Church. As I grew older, I attended the services of an "Evangelical Free" Church. Finally, I was taught the Gospel and became a Christian. When I was finally exposed to the Lord's church, I noticed a remarkable difference between the churches of men and the church of

God. Instead of doing whatever *people* wanted to do, the emphasis was placed on doing what *God* wanted us to do. Instead of the services being focused on the parishioners, they were directed toward God. It was refreshing to find individuals who were more concerned about God's instructions than they were their own enjoyment. But as I have grown older, it seems this longing to serve rather than be served has grown far too rare.

*"But I want to get more out of worship!"*

Today, even among those who claim to be New Testament Christians, there appears to be a growing desire to "get more" out of worship. There are calls by preachers and authors to make worship more relevant, to revitalize it, to modernize it, and to make it more effective. In an effort to get more out of worship, they are putting more into it. In fact, some are now suggesting that everything we do is

worship (that certainly would allow you to put the most into worship—and get the most out of it).

*What gets overlooked in these pursuits is the fact that worship is not designed for the worshiper.* By definition, worship is a way for the worshiper to show reverence or pay homage to the One being worshiped. It is not about getting something out of it! Can you imagine any Old Testament Jew returning home from offering worship to God and commenting on how much they got out of their sacrifice? Or how encouraging it was when they burned an animal carcass on the altar? Simply stated, their service was directed toward God, not man.

However, those who want to get more out of worship have turned their attention toward anything that can generate greater emotion. They have become disappointed with "traditional" worship and seek to spice it up. They are not unlike those in Malachi's day who complained, "How tiresome it is!" (Mal. 1:13). The problem with worship in the prophet's day was not that it had lost its energy or appeal; but it had lost its meaning. They no longer cared about serving God.

I fear that we are closer to that situation than many want to admit.

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## *Worshiping the Creator or the Created?*

Paul warns us about those who “exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator” (Rom. 1:25). When we attempt to design everything we do in a way that will be pleasurable or enjoyable for ourselves, how are we any different? Could it be that some are worshiping *worship* instead of the One who deserves it? They are more concerned about how they *feel* at the end of the assembly than they are about whether or not God has been glorified. In fact, the assumption is made that the better they feel, the more God is pleased.

This is similar reasoning to what has been used for years to defend all sorts of activities in the name of religion or worship. Among the pagan religions, worshipers engaged in gluttony, drunkenness, drug abuse, and even temple prostitution—all in the name of their gods. They epitomized the “if it feels good, do it” approach to religion and believed their gods were honored by this behavior.

But Jehovah is not served in such a way. In fact, the Israelites had to be taught that lesson the hard way at Sinai (Exod. 32; 1 Cor. 10). Remember, these things happened as an example and were written for our instruction (1 Cor. 10:11). Let’s learn from them.

## *They Have It Backwards*

In truth, there is a relationship between emotion (feelings) and worship. However, this relationship is the opposite of what many think. Instead of worship causing us to have certain feelings or emotions, worship is an activity in which we engage ourselves because of our emotions. In other words, emotion is the motivation behind worship, not the result of worship. We worship God because of what He has done for us. We love God because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). As a result of this love, we seek to worship and serve Him. Whether or not we enjoy the particular acts of service or worship is irrelevant.

Consider an example. I love my family. Because I love my family, I try to provide a nice home for them. As a result, I may end up

doing chores around the house that I may not particularly enjoy. However, those chores are not a burden to me because of my love (*cf.* Gen. 29:20).

Thankfully, the commandments that God has given to us are not burdensome and the worship He has described for us is not tiresome. I’m glad I don’t live under the old covenant, where the worship of God involved animal sacrifice. I enjoy singing songs of praise to my Creator. I am encouraged and strengthened by the time we spend together remembering our Lord, praying to the Father and studying His word. I appreciate the opportunity to show my thankfulness to God for all He has given me by giving back a small portion of those blessings. But, having said all this, I do not engage in these activities *because* I enjoy them. If that were the case, I would only be serving self. True worship is directed toward God and is directed by God. And it is motivated by our love for Him.

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## *Revisioning the Supper or Changing It?*

# Feminism at the Table— Can Women Lead the Assembly?

by David Lanphear

*If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.*

—1 Corinthians 14:33–35

*A woman should learn in quietness and full submission.*

*I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent.*

—1 Timothy 2:11–12

**A**s in all the congregations of the saints, women should keep silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says.

FOR CENTURIES, CHRISTIANS HAVE collectively understood these passages as clear, unequivocal prohibitions against women leading any part of our worship assemblies. How, after all, can we disagree over words so straightforward and direct? Who questions that it is God's prerogative to set the order of authority in the universe? (1 Cor. 11:3)? New Testament Christians have long agreed that if we wish to be the same church that Jesus established in the first century, we will learn and follow the principles and precepts that guided its practice.

Despite history's long record of division in the religious world, there has typically been little disagreement over the application of these passages to our worship assemblies. Nonetheless, in the relatively recent past—in the last century, and even more recently, during our lifetimes—we have seen some of our religious friends abandon these age-old directives with the "enlightenment" of feminism, gender neutrality, gender equality and new age freedom. As a result, it is not uncommon now to see women take prominent roles as preachers and even elders in some religious circles. Fortunately, the church has resisted the trend—until now.

### Current Trends

Eyewitnesses have described to me that they have observed some Christians not only permit, but encourage, women to speak to the assembly as they take the Lord's Supper! The church gathers around several tables and each table discusses a Bible theme as they consume a quantity of bread and grape juice. At the conclusion, someone—including a woman—from each table may address the entire group (the church) to briefly

describe the discussion at his/her respective table. Regardless of where their idea for such "worship" originated, just such an observance is encouraged and promoted by Lipscomb University's John Mark Hicks in his book entitled *Come to the Table: Revisioning the Lord's Supper* (Abilene, TX: Leafwood Publishers, 2002). Others may do so, as well.

What's wrong with this picture? How can Christians defend women addressing the assembly? Surprisingly, they suggest that it is no different than a woman speaking in Bible class. Is that so? Respectfully, the answer is no.

### The Lord's Supper is Observed During Worship, When the Church is Assembled

In 1 Cor. 11:17–34, Paul discusses details about the Supper that are unmatched in any other collection of scripture, save the Gospel accounts of the original event. Five times in eighteen verses (17, 18, 20, 33 and 34), Paul identifies that it occurs *during the assembly*, using various forms of the Greek word *sunerchomai*, which the NKJV translates "you come together" or "when you come together." Verse 18 even says, "when you come together as a church (*ekklēsia*)."

Christians were not to observe the Supper in some informal setting, or at a time when only a few were present—not according to Paul in 1 Corinthians 11—but at a special time when all of the Christians came together as the church, assembled as His body. How can I call it or label it something less than that, like a Bible class? If I do, then it is my label, not God's.

### Women Must Be Silent

Moreover, Paul commands that in worship, in the assembly, women are not to speak. In 1 Corinthians 14:34–35, he emphatically reiterates "let the women keep silence in the churches (*ekklēsia*): for it is not permitted unto them to speak" and "for it is shameful for a woman to speak in the church (*ekklēsia*)."

Indeed, the entire context for the discussion is disclosed earlier in that chapter when Paul imposes certain restrictions on the use of spiritual gifts when "the

## Fortunately, the church has resisted the trend—until now.

whole church comes together in one place" (v. 23) and "whenever you come together" (v. 26). How can I lightly ignore what Paul seriously forbids?

The Apostle elaborates in 1 Timothy 2:11–12 when he writes,

Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.

If Paul's plain instruction does not prohibit a woman from taking a speaking role before the church, then what in the world does his letter to Timothy mean?

It is not my purpose or intention to insult or denigrate others' practice, but rather, to humbly and gently plead that we all—men and women alike—keep our minds open to consider what simple scripture says on

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this subject (2 Tim. 2:24–25). This is not a small matter.

Three thousand years ago, Uzzah reached out to steady the Ark of the Covenant as the oxen pulling its cart stumbled on the threshing floor of Kidron. Although his motive appears to have been good, God's anger burned against him when his hand touched the ark, and He struck him dead on the spot (1 Chron. 13:9–10). David became angry because of what happened to Uzzah, but as we know, it all happened because the Israelites were not carrying the ark on its poles as God had prescribed, and death was the penalty for touching the holy things (1 Chron. 13:11; Exod. 25:14; Num. 4:15).

Eventually, David came to his senses about what happened to

Uzzah, and in a way that we should imitate, he accepted personal

## It is not my purpose to denigrate or insult others' practice.

responsibility for obeying God's commands:

"It was because you, the Levites, did not bring it up the first time that the LORD our God broke out

in anger against us. We did not inquire of Him about how to do it in the prescribed way" (1 Chron. 15:13).

What an insightful declaration. How appropriate that I apply it in my life.

The Lord's Supper is not an informal Bible class event, nor is it an occasion of the assembly during which women may instruct or otherwise exercise any type of role over men. *Scripture nowhere describes it that way.* Instead, the Lord's Supper is worship in its highest form, and God's word has firmly fixed the role of women in worship. Let Him have the last word.

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# Can We Be That Dogmatic About Baptism?

by Dan Petty

IS BAPTISM ESSENTIAL FOR THE remission of sins? Is the line of demarcation between saved or unsaved drawn clearly at the point of one's baptism? Can we really be *that* dogmatic about it?

Sometimes there are those (even in the church) who are unable to give clear, certain answers to these questions. Several factors contribute to this mindset of uncertainty.

First, there is a sacramental concept of baptism that is fundamentally opposed to biblical teaching. A sacrament has been viewed historically as “an outward sign of an inward grace.” Roman Catholics have traditionally emphasized the *inward grace* aspect of this concept. On this view the benefits of the sacrament are applied to the recipient by the rite itself, apart from the person performing it, and even apart from the personal faith of the recipient. This doctrine led to the practice of infants receiving baptism as a sacrament, their faith being replaced by the faith of the Church or the parents. Protestants, on the other hand, have emphasized the *outward sign* aspect. On this view, baptism is only an outward sign of forgiveness that God gives to believers, and therefore is ultimately unnecessary.

Also, confusion over the relation of faith and works leads some to reason that if baptism is essential, then salvation is by works, rather than a gift received by faith. The issue to be confronted is whether an act of faith (such as baptism) can properly be viewed as a meritorious work that gives anyone reason to boast. This thinking supports the ecumenical spirit prevalent today. Some in the church have been influenced by a desire to

have a broader basis of unity with the larger religious community. So they seek ways to accept into fellowship more “believers” as saved people.

When we examine the conversions in Acts, we are impressed with the urgency with which believers submitted to baptism. In each case there is a consistent connection of baptism with the reception of the word of the Lord and the promise of salvation. The 3,000 on Pentecost (2:41), the Ethiopian (8:36–38), Saul of Tarsus (9:17–19), Cornelius (10:44–48), Lydia (16:14–15), or the jailor (16:31–33)—they all followed the same pattern. Why were these believers so urgent about being baptized? What did the early disciples teach and understand about the *significance* of baptism?

## Baptism in relation to faith in Christ and His authority

After the cross and resurrection Jesus gave the command to his disciples that included the teaching and administration of baptism: “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in

the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. . . .” (Matt. 28:18–20). The command to baptize rests on Jesus’ divine authority. It is given as a condition of being saved and is connected with faith in Christ (Mark 16:15–16).

So baptism is “in the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 2:38; 8:16). It is how one calls on the name of the Lord (Acts 22:16). It is an act of faith in Jesus. A believer confesses his faith, both with the mouth and in the act of baptism. Phillip told the Ethiopian that he could be baptized if he believed. His response—“I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (Acts 8:37).

## Baptism in relation to repentance and forgiveness of sins

Repentance is the decision to turn from sin and turn to God. Repentance and baptism were clearly associated in John’s baptism (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3; Acts 19:4) and that association continued after the cross. Those conscience-smitten people on Pentecost were instructed to “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins” (Acts 2:37–38). Baptism is both a result of repentance and an expression of it. Baptism outwardly expresses the believer’s decision to turn to God.

The result and purpose of repentance and baptism is “for the forgiveness of sins,” as Peter’s command in Acts 2:38 clearly shows. The object and purpose of baptism is the forgiveness of sins, as was the shedding of Jesus’ blood on the cross (Matt. 26:28). This teaching is consistently reinforced throughout the New Testament. Ananias

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There is a **richness**  
and **beauty** in  
**God's plan of redemption**  
that we cannot overlook.

directed Saul: "Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins" (Acts 22:16). Peter wrote:

Corresponding to that [Noah's deliverance], baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 3:21).

These passages make clear that the believer is saved by the power of the cross rather than the water or the act of washing itself. Baptism is a divinely appointed condition for salvation. God offers forgiveness to the sinner through the blood of the cross; the believer appropriates that forgiveness through baptism.

## Baptism in relation to our new life

Becoming a disciple is described as entering a new life. This new life is pictured by the image of rebirth, a change of status and relationship. God imparts this new life by causing us to be "born again to a living hope"—a new birth initiated by God through the preaching of "the living and enduring word of God"

(1 Pet. 1:3, 23). Jesus included a reference to baptism in his teaching on this new birth. "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:3–5). Paul captures the same idea with the phrase "washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:3–7). Each of these passages refers to the new spiritual life God imparts as a result of baptism.

Another image by which this new life is pictured is death and resurrection.

Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12).

In baptism there is both a likeness of and participation in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. His atonement becomes meaningful and operative for the believer only through baptism. This makes baptism a very meaningful, symbolic act. But do we have the right

to say it is *only* symbolic? No, because the meaning and symbolism are destroyed without the act. Anything but immersion takes away the symbolism; and likewise, if there is no act at all then there is no symbolism at all.

## Baptism in relation to the body of Christ

As a result of baptism, God adds a believer to His church; we were "baptized into one body" (1 Cor. 12:13). "For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ" (Gal. 3:27). Through baptism God incorporates believers into the body of Christ. It has a corporate, not just individual, significance. Through baptism a person becomes part of God's people.

There is a richness and beauty in God's plan of redemption that we cannot overlook. In our evangelism let us help people understand the *significance* and *urgency* of obedience to God's commands and how they fit into His plan.

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*Most of These Groups Begin the Same Way*

## Recognizing Reckless Restorers— There Is Usually a Pattern

by Greg Litmer

AS THE APOSTLE PAUL WAS BRINGING his second letter to Timothy to a close, he wrote, "I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom:

preach the word; be ready in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will

accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth" (2 Tim. 4:1–4).

From the early days of its existence and until the Lord returns, the church will face the danger

of false teachers. Paul certainly seems to indicate that some times will be worse than others, as more and more brethren chaff under what they perceive to be undue restraints found in sound, wholesome teaching concerning doctrine. As has always been the case, once a person steps outside of the doctrine of Christ it is easy to find those who will say and teach exactly what they wish to hear.

We are in the midst of such a time as the advocates of change speak of "Church of Christ" traditions and "Church of Christ" teachings in a derisive manner. This indicates at least two things. One is that such individuals have a misguided and erroneous view of the very nature of the Lord's church, and second, if you hear such "red flag" statements made by members of the congregation you attend, it is possible that you now have change agents or reckless restorers in your midst. There is usually a pattern in the work that they attempt to accomplish. This should come as no surprise, for the techniques that Satan uses to corrupt the pure teaching that characterizes the Lord's church have not changed.

These purveyors of a perverted gospel always appear, initially, as some of the friendliest brethren a person could ever meet. They shake every hand, engage every member in conversation and appear sympathetic and empathetic. This is how all Christians should be, but with the agents of change, their motives are often very different. They seek like-minded brethren who wouldn't mind a "little change." They are searching for brethren who can be swayed to their way of thinking—brethren who can be convinced that the worship needs to be more "spiritual" and better serve the

needs of the individual. This should come as no surprise, for Jesus said in Matthew 7:15, "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves."

No false teachers come in announcing that that is what they are. As Paul Earnhart wrote, "They are the sort of people who would move shallow-minded observers to ask how these good, earnest and knowledgeable teachers could be wrong" (*Invitation to a Spiritual Revolution*, p. 135). Like the wolf, they go after those who are weak and those lacking in knowledge and spiritual discernment. For these agents of change, a disgruntled member is like a lamb left all by itself, ripe for the picking.

Having identified those whom they believe they can influence, home Bible studies begin with these particular individuals invited and others excluded. The focus of these studies always seems to be "different ways of looking at worship" or "how to make the worship more spiritual and personally meaningful." On the surface this may appear to be a good thing, even admirable, until it is understood that the basis for these "different ways of looking at worship" and of making the worship "more spiritual and personally meaningful" is "their own desires" (2 Tim. 4:3), and not the revealed truth. Every action of worship will be called into question, and through their continued "study of the issues," it will be discovered that the primary reason the Lord's church engages in five acts of worship is because that is what has been "traditionally" done.

The basis for such a charge by the advocates of change is no different now than it was in the first century. Paul wrote,

Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. For such men are slaves, *not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites*; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting (Rom. 16:17–18, emphasis added).

The elders in every congregation must be constantly alert and vigilant. Generally the advocates of change will seek to create ill will toward the preacher who stands for the truth and the elders who stand solidly on the word of God. Failing to accomplish this, they will seek to find the most vulnerable link in the eldership and use that to promote their program, seeking to divide, conquer, and stymie the work of the eldership. This also should come as no surprise, for Paul told the Ephesians elders, "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them" (Acts 20:29–30).

If the change agents fail in their attempt to turn the entire congregation to their way of thinking, they will generally leave with their recruits and start a more "spiritually centered" church which they will proclaim to be much more like the church of the first century. No scriptural proof will be forthcoming to support such claims, but mere assertions of "we believe" or "it certainly seems reasonable" or "surely it must be."

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# Stale and Dead Churches— What's the Biblical Solution?

by Wilson Adams

IT'S NOT LIKE IT IS A NEW SUBJECT. One reason for the seven letters to the seven churches was to circulate and preserve a stern warning from Heaven that some congregations were dangerously close to losing their light. The Head of the Church communicated clearly to the Ephesians—

"I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else..."

Had they become content with the status quo of traditional mediocrity? It appears. Or consider the King's warning to Sardis—

"Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die..."

He challenges this local house of God to remember, repent, and return. He also notes that He has a few there who "have not soiled their garments" (3:4). In spite of the majority living in the past ("you have a name that you are alive, and you are dead..."), God finds a "few" unwilling to accept lukewarmness. And wasn't that His message to Laodicea, too? Here was a church whose diagnosis of their strengths did not square with that of the Great Physician. His rebuke was especially stern—"I will spit you out of my mouth."

These letters stand for all time as a mirror for every congregation. It is easy to measure ourselves by ourselves (and comforting, too). It is the precise measurement of the Word by which we must examine

ourselves—both individuals and congregations. It is absolutely imperative that each looks into God's mirror and confronts the changes that must be made. It takes effort and courage to change and...a humble heart to admit that I don't know everything.

## Are You Teachable?

If I learn anything from a study of The Book it is this: I have a lot to learn. I believe one of the greatest obstacles to spiritual growth is the illusion of all knowledge. Once you reach the place where you begin thinking that you have "arrived," you're done. Individuals and churches that believe they have arrived, end up settling for the *comfort zone* ("the way we've always done it") that only leads to the *coasting zone* ("I don't even try anymore"). They haven't the energy nor the faith to engage in Scripture examination and return again to the *challenge zone* of enthusiastic conviction with hearts afire for the things of God.

It's easier to coast. Just ask Ephesus, Sardis, and Laodicea.

## Criticism

Criticism is a great teacher. While it may not teach us everything, it will teach us some things. And those

who have been critical of some churches for being too rigid and rote, stuffy and stale—are exactly right! Brethren, as much as

we may resist criticism, it is time we looked at it long and hard. Criticism is not always without merit.

In the November 2007 issue of *BIBLICAL INSIGHTS*, I wrote about the House-Church Movement and made this observation about brethren on the opposite end of the spectrum,

Are some assemblies too man-traditional? Are some elders overbearing? Are some Christians rushing through the Lord's Supper with an attitude of "let's get it over with so we can go on to more important things" (*i.e.*, the sermon)? Are some songs and prayers more rote than from the heart? Are some more concerned about maintaining property (and saving money) than they are about saving souls? The answers are obvious.

Oddly enough, those critical of my criticism of going too far to the left of Scripture, seemed to miss the paragraph of admission of equality of wrong-doing. This controversy is not always a question of right and wrong, as in—"we are right and you are wrong." In fact, both extremes are wrong! Whether 1) one deserts the narrow path of Scriptural authority for the broad plains of

***He isn't the God of mediocrity  
but of excellence.***

ecumenicalism, or 2) one becomes smug in an attitude that "the way

we've always done it" (in areas of expediency and judgment) raises man-tradition to a higher elevation than biblical instruction—*both* are wrong and equally so.

It was Jesus who said, "Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves" (Matt. 7:15). Shall we look the other way when wolves are picking off sheep? No. "Beware." However, the *same* Jesus used the *same word* to expose those who would elevate tradition above the teachings of Heaven (Matt. 16:6). "Beware!"

"Throwing the baby out with the bath water" goes *both* ways. The Lord has no inclination of leniency in either direction. One is just as wrong as the other.

### God's Message to Lifeless Churches

"Repent and return!" "Wake up!" "Be zealous and repent!" His message in Revelation 2–3 is exactly the message needed by many churches today. It is often stale and lifeless worship that provides the fodder for discontent among the young. We seek to worship Him in spirit and truth—or at least the truth part. But 50% is not what the Lord seeks. He seeks my passionate involvement when I worship. "Come before Him with joyful singing...enter His gates with thanksgiving" (Ps. 100).

**About singing...** Some churches show little interest in improving. As R.J. Stevens said with a smile, "The best argument in favor of instrumental music is the poor singing in many places!" R.J. is not compromising truth with error; he *is* pointing out the fact and flaw with brethren that will not work to improve their singing. There is nothing quite like preach-

ing your heart out only to stand at the door and endure a closing rendition of "Abide With Me" that gets slower (and more off-key) with each passing verse. Or my favorite—"We're Crawling to Zion!" At least that's the way it is sung in some places.

We can do better and God expects it! He isn't the God of mediocrity but of excellence. And don't be afraid of learning/singing new songs. Some of the newer songs loved by the young are wonderful expressions of praise with words of deep meaning. Some aren't. But that's true of all spiritual songs. I recall the '60s and '70s when brethren wore out the Stamps-Baxter hymns and...wore out churches by singing them over and over. Many of the psalms refer to singing "new songs" (Pss. 40:3; 33:3a; 98:1).

Taste is different and generational and that has always been. And wise leaders seek a balance. And to Christians writing music—*keep writing!* Like the wife who doesn't like the same anniversary card year after year, so it is with our creative God who gives mankind the ability to compose new songs. By the way, they sing in heaven a "new" song (Rev. 5:9).

**About the Supper...** Yes, some have misappropriated the solemn memorial and have abandoned the teachings of Scripture. Other writers can deal with that. But since when is the Memorial of the Lord a footrace? It hurts no one to linger at the Table. When people fail to see solemn reverence for the death memorial, it provides fertile soil for man's reasoning to take over.

**About evangelism...** Are we keeping the main thing the main thing? Have we replaced a love for souls with a love for building/

maintaining property? I will argue that a church has a right to meet under a tree, in a home, rent a school, rent a storefront or buy a building. Authority for a building is inherent in the command to assemble. You cannot do it without a place! That said, some go overboard and focus more on the facility than on its purpose—facilitating gatherings for worship and study. Ask some shepherds what takes the most of their time—with some it's not souls but buildings. That has to change.

### The Solution

Employ much prayer, patience and wisdom. Do the first and God will give you the next two. There are many churches following the writings of John Mark (not John Mark Hicks) and Paul and Peter and the Lord Jesus and do so with much energy and enthusiasm. Churches can begin and flourish doing things God's way. We must not compromise with culture—whether it is feminism or emotionalism or anything else. Christians can work and worship together (young and old) and do so within the parameters of what God has divinely authorized. Some, however, have gone too far and abandoned Biblical instruction. That's tragic.

Getting excited and going too far or getting tired and stopping too short...One is just as wrong as the other. The letters to the seven churches prove that. Perhaps we should read their mail and heed their warning.

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# Is Mowing My Grass Worship?

by Jim Deason

WITHIN THE HEART OF EVERY Christian is a holy hunger for a closer relationship with God. Jesus pronounced His blessing on those who “hunger and thirst for righteousness” (Matt. 5:8) and that hunger stems from a deep desire to see God—to enter into His presence. Reading the throne scene of Revelation 4–5 is exciting. It is a worship scene and pictures the creatures of heaven bowing before God’s holy throne. What an honor to be literally in His presence and worshiping Him face to face! It is our desire to be a part of that throng one day that motivates us to worship and serve Him on this side of eternity.

Worship is of fundamental importance to you and me. Jesus said, “But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers” (John 4:23). God seeks worship and He seeks worshipers.

## What Does It Really Mean?

The word “worship” in the New Testament means “to make obeisance, do reverence to . . . is used of an act of homage or reverence to God” (W.E. Vine). Our English

word “worship” translates the Greek very well and means “reverence or devotion for a deity; religious homage or veneration.” Etymologically, it comes from an Old English term meaning “to show the worth of.”

Defining some of the terms within these definitions may be helpful. Homage is a public avowal of allegiance by a vassal to his lord; an act done or thing given to show the relationship between the lord or vassal; anything given or done to show reverence, honor, or respect. Veneration is a feeling of deep respect and reverence; an act of showing this. Obeisance is a gesture of respect or reverence, such as a bow. Worship, therefore, is a conscious act that begins with an attitude. It is from an attitude of reverence and respect that one acts (in doing or giving) to show honor, submission, and reverence to God.

John 4:20–24 is a banner passage on the subject. From it we learn three very important things. **One**, God is the focus of our worship. **Two**, our worship must be heart deep. **Three**, our worship must follow the pattern revealed in divine truth. This latter point, particularly in the context of this article, deserves amplification.

Paul wrote, “Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us” (Phil. 3:17). The Scriptures, therefore, serve as a pattern for us to follow in all things—including our worship.

How did the New Testament churches show their reverence and homage to God? How did they worship? Jesus instituted

His Supper (Matt. 26:26–29), to be taken by his disciples when they came together each first day of the week (Acts 20:7). In their assemblies, the disciples prayed together (Acts 2:42; 12:5, 12). When they came together, they sang praises to God and songs of admonition to one another (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 13:15). Teaching took place when they gathered (Acts 2:42; 20:7). Finally, Christians sacrificially gave into a common treasury to sustain their common work (1 Cor. 16:1–2). God expects local churches today to follow this same simple pattern of worship. To teach or practice the doctrines of men is to worship Him in vain (Matt. 15:9).

It also needs to be remembered that not all worship is public assembly worship. Christians can and should worship in other places and at other times (Acts 16:25; Heb. 13:15).

## A Change That Isn’t So Subtle

Some today, wanting to change the nature of our assemblies, are telling us that all of life is worship. Mike Root writes, “Worship is a life given in obedience to God. God told us to meet together to encourage, edify, and equip one another; so when we do that, God is obeyed and therefore worshiped, but no more than when we obey Him anywhere else at any other time. The Christian assembly is not *the* worship” (*Empty Baskets*, p. 25). In another book Root wrote,

Worship is a life given in obedience to God. It’s not a when or where proposition, but a what. It’s what we are. You can’t go to it or leave it, dress for it or from it, and you can’t start it or stop it. . . . It doesn’t open and close



# Lessons from John 4:20-24

1. God is the focus of our worship.
2. Our worship must be heart deep.
3. Our worship must follow the pattern revealed in divine truth.

with a prayer, and it doesn't have a human leader or a special day (*Unbroken Bread*, p. 115).

Root, and others like him, "hang their hat" on Romans 12:1—

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

The American Standard Version, more accurately, I think, renders the last part of this verse to read, "which is your spiritual service." The point being—that our lives are to be filled with acts of service to God, not that all of life is worship.

Paul warned Timothy; "No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier" (2 Tim. 2:4). There are "affairs of everyday life"—we must all engage in them—that are not acts of worship, e.g., earning a living, buying groceries, developing relationships, etc. The challenge to you and me is that we not become "entangled" in these affairs and forget who called us into service in the first place. The challenge of living in the world without the world living in us is an everyday struggle. So, while we must go about the affairs of everyday life, there is nothing about them that

inherently constitutes worship. Buying groceries is not worship.

## The Simple Truth About Worship

Worship is a conscious act which has a beginning and ending. After Abraham had been told to offer Isaac the text says that "Abraham said to his young men, 'Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go over there; and we will worship and return to you'" (Gen. 22:5). Abraham went, worshiped by offering the substitute sacrifice that God provided (22:13), and returned. His worship was a conscious act that had a beginning and an ending. John fell at the feet of an angel in a conscious act of worship (Rev. 19:10) and was halted. His act of worship had a beginning and an ending. Worship then, in order to be worship, must be a conscious act of homage to God.

Last Monday I mowed my lawn. I enjoy mowing. More than that, it is one of those affairs of everyday life that must be done. If I didn't mow, after a couple of weeks one of my neighbors would leave an anonymous note in my mailbox reminding me of my subdivision covenants. I reflect a lot on spiritual things as I mow—it's a good time for meditation—but mowing does not fit the Bible definition of worship.

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## Two More Articles...

Two additional theme articles could not be included in this month's issue of BIBLICAL INSIGHTS.

### Pitching the Tent Toward Sodom

Mark White

### Drinking and Dancing—That Big of a Deal?

Terry Francis

Look for them in the August issue of BIBLICAL INSIGHTS.

But you can read them now on our website—

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## Sow What?

by Bubba Garner

THE PROPHETS WERE SPECIAL spokesmen of God. They could see into the future and forecast things that were to come. Sometimes, their predictions were pleasant, as when they told of the coming Messiah, the Savior of the world. Other times, their prophecies warned of something more devastating that God would send from heaven.

Hosea was charged with the responsibility of telling God's people of His displeasure with them. He spoke for the Lord when he said, "They have transgressed My covenant and rebelled against My law" (Hos. 8:1). Israel had appointed her own rulers and princes without consulting the King in heaven. They had taken God's gifts of silver and gold and fashioned them into false idols for worship. Because of their sins, Hosea foretold the Lord's pending punishment and destruction upon them. In short, "they sow the wind, and they reap the whirlwind" (8:7).

It is a simple law of nature that when you place certain seed in the ground, there is only one kind of crop you will reap. You don't sow corn and look to harvest potatoes. You don't plant an acorn and wait for a palm tree to sprout up. You reap what you sow. Israel had sown the wind: vain, futile and worthless worship. They reaped the whirlwind: an agent of violence and desolation. They received back what they had planted.

Before we are too quick to complain about how far things have strayed in the religious world, we must see that much of it is the result of seeds we have sown in the ground. These choices, sometimes small and with good intentions, have grown and flourished and are

now bearing fruit. We can see the whirlwind; but oh, that we had first seen the wind.

**We have sown  
entertaining worship,  
We are reaping  
contemporary Christians.**

It is not uncommon to drive by a church building and see a sign advertising one assembly with "traditional worship" and one with "contemporary worship." I wonder which service the Lord attends? How can both be acceptable? This is nothing more than a dangerous sign that we are taking a man-centered approach to a God-centered activity. Worship must now give to me instead of me giving to God (Ps. 96:7–10).

Entertainment is chosen according to what fits my tastes and preferences. If one television show doesn't keep my interest, I'll keep pressing the button on the remote until I find another one that does. Once you *convert* a man with entertainment, you're going to have to keep him entertained with brighter lights and louder music. Otherwise, he'll just go a little further down the road until he finds a church that will. Israel was punished for worshiping idols. How shall we escape the sin of worshiping ourselves?

**We have sown casual dress,  
We are reaping an informal  
attitude toward God.**

It is amazing to me what people wear in public. They eat in restaurants sporting attire that leaves little to the imagination. They arrive to board an airplane looking

like they're still in their pajamas. Even some businesses that experimented with "casual Fridays" have abandoned the practice due to a noticeable decrease in employee productivity.

But that hasn't stopped us from *casual Sundays*. This "come as you are" philosophy can rob us of a reverent, dignified worship service. The person who argues otherwise would never dress down to go to a funeral. Why do so when commemorating the death of the Lord? God sees the heart; He is interested in what is on the inside (Matt. 15:8; 23:27). But when you make no distinction between worship clothes and casual clothes, you are less likely to address the importance of the Lord's Day over every other day of the week.

**We have sown  
lack of discipline,  
We are reaping  
irresponsibility.**

Many children are treated with kid gloves in our day. They are often found innocent in the parent-teacher conferences. If the preacher calls them down in services, *he* gets in trouble. And even when they are brought to justice, the judgment rendered is a mere slap on the wrist.

This has produced a generation who thinks they can do whatever they want to do. If they see something they'd like to have, they just take it. No one has stopped them before. If they know something is wrong, they do it anyway and wait for mom and dad to swoop down and rescue them—*again*. What they need are parents who love them enough to discipline

them. That is the purpose behind the spiritual correction from our heavenly Father (Heb. 12:4–11). He directs our paths away from the wind to avoid the destruction of the whirlwind. Let parents show

the same responsibility in this regard.

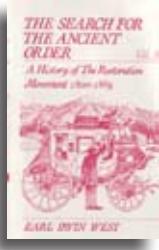
“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap” (Gal. 6:7). Harvest time is coming. Whatever

seed you put in the ground, you will have to face what comes up.

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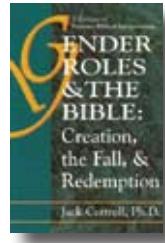


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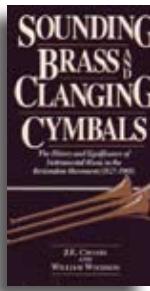


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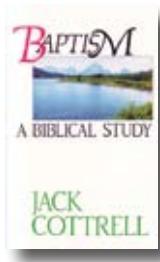


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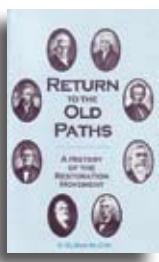


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**Preacher:** Jim Stauffer  
**Phone:** (913) 631-6519  
(913) 764-9170

## KENTUCKY

### Northern Kentucky

18 Scott Dr.  
Florence, KY 41042  
**Preacher:** Greg Litmer  
**Phone:** (859) 371-2095  
**Phone:** (859) 647-2342  
[nkcofc.com](http://nkcofc.com)

### Sycamore

16163 Forkland Rd.  
Gravel Switch, KY 40328  
**Phone:** (859) 236-5080

### Bearwallow

7030 S. Jackson Hwy.  
Horse Cave, KY 42749  
**Preacher:** Earl Robertson  
**Phone:** (270) 678-3508

### Lilac Road

1687 Lilac Rd.  
Leitchfield, KY 42754  
**Preacher:** Dale Robins  
**Phone:** (270) 287-0212

### Taylorsville Road

3741 Taylorsville Rd.  
Louisville, KY 40272  
**Contact:** John Humphries  
**Phone:** (502) 499-9942  
**Contact:** Paul Ayres  
**Phone:** (502) 261-9844

### Valley Station

1803 Dixie Garden Dr.  
P. O. Box 72380  
Louisville, KY 40272

## Road Creek

12121 Regina-Belcher Hwy.  
P. O. Box 59  
Regina, KY 41559  
**Contact:** Clifford Coen  
**Phone:** (606) 754-9175

## Northside

689 North Main St.  
Russellville, KY 42276  
**Contact:** Keith Burnett  
**Phone:** (270) 726-3472

## Gallatin Road

1147 Gallatin Rd.  
Scottsville, KY 42164  
**Phone:** (270) 237-9514

## MARYLAND

**Southwest** (just south of Baltimore)  
805 Meadow Rd.  
Severn, MD 21144  
**Contact:** Brandon Trout  
**Phone:** (410) 969-1420  
**Phone:** (410) 570-1885  
**Email:** brandontrout@msn.com  
**swcfcchrist.com**

## MISSISSIPPI

**Northeast**  
1558 Hamm St.  
Tupelo, MS 38804  
**Phone:** (662) 842-8277

## MISSOURI

**Kirkwood**  
948 S. Geyer Rd.  
Kirkwood, MO 63122  
**Preacher:** L. A. Stauffer  
**Phone:** (314) 821-4910

## Elm Street

2039 Elm St.  
St. Charles, MO 63301  
**Contact:** David Behle  
**Phone:** (636) 723-6314  
**Contact:** Jack Behle  
**Phone:** (314) 832-4012  
**Contact:** Kerry McDaniel  
**Phone:** (636) 397-3091  
**Contact:** Jack Meier  
**Phone:** (636) 447-4668  
**ElmStreetChurchOfChrist.org**

## NORTH CAROLINA

**Shooting Creek**  
48 Jackie Cove Rd.  
Hayesville, NC 28904-5343  
**Phone:** (828) 389-9840

## OHIO

**Lockland**  
419 W. Wyoming Ave.  
Cincinnati, OH 45215  
Exit I-75 at 12A; West 3 blks.  
**Phone:** (513) 821-0410  
(513) 554-0746

## Northside

25 Greenfield Pike  
Hillsboro, OH 45133  
**Preacher:** Bill Pierce  
**Phone:** (937) 205-0530

## Lisbon

202 Pritchard Ave.  
Lisbon, OH 44432  
**Phone:** (330) 424-2327  
(330) 424-5551

## Medina

4730 Sharon-Copley Rd.  
State Route 162  
Medina, OH 44258  
**Preacher:** Larry DeVore  
**Phone:** (330) 345-9030  
(330) 725-2201

## Norwalk

386 North Edgewood Dr.  
(Right off U. S. 250 North)  
Norwalk, OH 44857  
**Phone:** (419) 541-6254  
**NorwalkChurch.org**

## Westview

800 S. Canfield Niles Rd. (Route 46)  
Youngstown, OH 44515  
**Preacher:** Bobby Schrimsher  
**Phone:** (330) 792-9807  
(330) 270-3706  
**Westview-Church.com**

## Zanesville

4900 West Pike (Route 40 W.)  
Zanesville, OH 43701  
**Preacher:** Jonathan Brown  
**Phone:** (740) 454-2212  
(740) 452-2261

## OKLAHOMA

**Seminole Pointe**  
P. O. Box 720738  
16300 N. May Ave.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73013  
**Preachers:** John Duvall  
Matt King  
**SeminolePointecofc.org**

## SOUTH DAKOTA

**Southside**  
1302 E. Fairmont Blvd.  
Rapid City, SD 57701  
**Phone:** (605) 348-7990

## TENNESSEE

**Campbell Road**  
320 E. Campbell Rd.  
Madison, TN 37115  
**Preacher:** Robert Jackson  
**Phone:** (615) 868-7153  
(615) 227-1515

## Cason Lane

110 Cason Ln.  
Murfreesboro, TN 37128  
**Preacher:** Wilson Adams  
**Phone:** (615) 896-0090  
(615) 895-3438  
**CasonLaneChurch.org**

## Guntown

185 Clarksdale Cir.  
Rogersville, TN 37857  
**Preacher:** Marshall Stubblefield  
**Phone:** (473) 272-2404  
**FindTheChurch.com**

## TEXAS

**Eastside**  
3107 Hwy. 146  
Baytown, TX 77520  
**Preacher:** Kris Emerson  
**Phone:** (281) 422-8800  
**EastsideBaytown.org**

## South Main Street

P. O. Box 2433  
Lindale, TX 75771  
**Preacher:** Ira Lynn  
**Phone:** (903) 882-7045

## Stallings Drive

3831 Stallings Dr.  
Nacogdoches, TX 75961  
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(936) 564-8666

## Southside

4110 Preston Ave.  
Pasadena, TX 77505  
**Preacher:** Dee Bowman  
**Preacher:** Bubba Garner  
**Phone:** (281) 998-8184  
**SouthsideOnline.org**

## Borden Street

301 W. Borden St.  
P. O. Box 715  
Sinton, TX 78387  
**Preacher:** Tim Rogers  
**Phone:** (361) 364-4734  
**Phone:** (361) 364-2013

## VIRGINIA

**East Main Street**  
P. O. Box 746  
Clintwood, VA 24228  
**Preachers:** Shirley Mullins  
Gary Mullins  
**Phone:** (276) 835-9467  
**ClintwoodChurchOfChrist.com**

## Colonial

P. O. Box 2064  
Williamsburg, VA 23187  
**Preacher:** Steve Walker  
**Phone:** (757) 865-5669  
**Phone:** (804) 642-6401  
**ColonialChurchOfChrist.com**

## WASHINGTON

**Samish Way**  
801 Samish Way  
Bellingham, WA 98229  
**Preacher:** Ted Miller  
**Phone:** (360) 671-8833  
**SamishWayChurch.com**

# Paul Preached at Pisidian Antioch

by Ferrell Jenkins

PAUL AND HIS COMPANIONS left the Pamphylia plain and moved through the Western Taurus Mountains to Pisidian Antioch. Three routes have been suggested by various scholars: Eastern, Central, and Western. The distance from Perga to Antioch on the ancient route is more than 300 miles before the day of modern roads and automobiles.

Some intrepid hikers have traced out a possible route taken by Paul. See *St Paul Trail* by Kate Clow. A portion of the trail follows the Via Sebaste, a famous road built in the days of the emperor Augustus. It may well have been in territory like this that Paul faced "dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers" (2 Cor. 11:26).

Yalvac, the small town nearest ancient Antioch, is located on a plateau at an elevation of about 3,600 feet above sea level; the temperature is more bearable than at Perga. There is a small museum that exhibits evidence of an early civilization in this region, as well as a Roman presence.

Antioch was founded about 350 B.C. by either Seleucus Nicator or his son Antiochus I on territory which had been devoted to the Phrygian god Men. The city was actually in Phrygia, near Pisidia. About two thousand Jewish families were brought to Phrygia from Babylon about 200 B.C. (Josephus *Ant.* XII.3.4).

Paul visited the Synagogue and presented a lesson which summarized the history of the Jewish nation, especially

as it related to the Messianic promise (Acts 13:14-41). The message was so well received that within a week the "whole city" assembled to hear the word of God. When the Jews rejected the word, Paul and Barnabas announced that they would turn to the Gentiles. The Jews instigated a persecution against the preachers and drove them out of the district (Acts 13:44-52).

The tell, a few kilometers northwest of Yalvac, was excavated by Ramsay and Robinson from 1914 to 1924. New excavations have been conducted for the past two decades by Dr. Mehmet Taslialan. Several scholars claim to have

found ruins of a first century synagogue under the floor of a Byzantine church. Others say this claim is unsubstantiated.

The well-preserved Roman aqueduct which brought water from the Sultan Dag to the city is perhaps the most impressive ruin to be seen. There are also ruins of a theater, a bath,

a triple gate, a fountain, and a fourth century Byzantine church. I was impressed with the ruins of the temple of Augustus.

Pisidian Antioch was part of the Roman province of Galatia. If the South Galatian theory is correct, then the epistle to the Galatians included the churches of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe.

Our photo shows one of the main streets with some seats of the theater visible on the left.

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