

Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

"...Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body." - Ephesians 5:23

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THE PRICE OF TRUTH: ETERNAL VIGILANCE

The Gospel and Eternal Vigilance

by Robert R. Taylor

Lovers of the gospel must be stalwart and stationary sentinels on Zion's walls guarding the dynamic deposit of saving truth. Paul was. That is why he penned these words of weight and wisdom to the fickle Galatians, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the gospel of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:6-9). Eternal vigilance and an ever deepening love for God's gospel prompted Paul to write in the very next chapter of gallant Galatians, "And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you" (Gal. 2:4-5). For many years I have preached a sermon based on this text. I call it, "They Yielded No Ground." Paul wanted Timothy to be a jealous sentinel guarding the deposit of sacred oracles of God. He wrote his young son in the gospel, "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called..." (1 Tim. 6:20). The ASV has "guard that which is committed unto thee" with a marginal reference of "the deposit." "Guard the deposit" is the eloquent Greek construction here.

The gospel is the good news of redemption in Christ (Luke 2:10,11). It was announced by angelic agency here but later would echo from the lips of faithful and able preachers. It is God's power to save as per Romans 1:16,17. By it we

are begotten (1 Cor. 4:15; James 1:18). When implanted it is able, totally able, to save our souls.

The gospel is composed of facts (to be believed), commandments (to be obeyed), promises (to be enjoyed), warnings (to be heeded), and implications (to be logically deduced).

We must be jealous of the great gospel plan that saves us initially and of that grand gospel plan designed to keep us saved. We must be jealous in guarding it against the perversions, additions, subtractions, alterations, modifications, and substitutions that human wisdom seeks to mix and mingle with this glorious gospel. It used to be the case that we had to guard it from outside forces determined to undermine and change it. Now we have to do the same with many of our own loose and lax reconstructionists who are determined to undermine and restructure the gospel and the Lord's church.

We must be ever vigilant relative to what the perverted Bible versions of our day have done and continue to do to the gospel. When they get through overhauling the gospel that is so offensive to them, it is not a forty-second cousin to the pure gospel that came from Father and Son, revealed faithfully by the Holy Spirit to scribes of soundness who dared not change a syllable of what heaven had bequeathed man.

We must be vigilant in informing people that pulpits void of Bible messages must either change or folks will change to loyal congregations who still preach Christ and His holy gospel of rich redemption. More often than not folks are going to have to change, for liberal preachers are an adamant group about making any changes back to truth. The changes they advocate are away from the gospel - not back to it.

Eternal vigilance is the price we must pay to have Christ's gospel in our deter-

mined grasp and be able to pass this lovely legacy on to our children, grandchildren and generations yet to be born if time continues on.

Next month "The Church and Eternal Vigilance." [These articles are taken from the *Ripley Beacon* from Ripley, Tennessee].

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A Serious Point

by Ed Allard

Baptists are well known for their jokes about Methodists and Methodists for their jokes about Baptists. This joke must have come from a Baptist:

A cat belonging to the son of a Methodist preacher died. The father told his son to bury the cat in the back yard. Going into the yard later, the father found the cat with just a little bit of dirt on it. He called his son and said, "I told you to bury the cat." The son replied, "Well, don't you sprinkle a little water on a person and call it a burial?"

That story may be humorous to some and to some down right silly. The point it makes is a serious one, however. Careful readers of the word see that God has always taken a more serious view of His words than man ever has.

Some words are so steeped in tradition they have become emotional "fighting words" if one attempts to use the meaning those words have in the Bible instead of their traditional meaning. This makes it extremely difficult for one to examine the subject with an open mind.

Man likes his own words and definitions, and will get upset at the "drop of a word" if it is not used according to how he sees it, no matter what the Bible teaches.

A good Methodist of more than 60 years said he had many translations of the New Testament and had never seen the word immersion in Acts 2:38. He asked, "How could I have missed it?"

This gentleman didn't miss it. It isn't there, because the standard translators

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have chosen not to translate this word but simply give the Greek word an English spelling.

He has missed the word "buried" however, in both Romans 6:4 and Colossians 2:12, where it speaks of baptism.

The only way one can be "buried" with Christ is to be immersed. The word "buried" is both descriptive and decisive. Baptism depicts the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. Other actions such as sprinkling or the pouring of water over the head do not picture our being buried with Christ, and raised as He was raised. The significance of this can only be represented by a burial, an immersion.

From a report in *Firm Foundation* an article in the *Houston Chronicle*, June 8, 1996, says that some Catholic priests have begun to "baptize" people by immersing them, so they say.

Their "immersion" is definitely not an immersion however, since the person is kneeling in only six inches of water, with the priest pouring a little more water from a pitcher over their heads. They say this is in imitation of the burial of Jesus. A rather poor imitation, indeed.

Scholars from Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Episcopal, Presbyterian and Methodist Churches agree and teach that "baptism" as taught in the Bible and as practiced by Bible people was a burial, an immersion.

Founder of theological systems such as Luther, Calvin and John Wesley knew and taught this also. However, they chose to follow the Roman Catholic practice. A practice justified solely on the basis of tradition, after the Biblical practice had been changed. The Greek Orthodox church, refusing the Roman Catholic change, has always practiced immersion.

We owe much to the truths that Luther, Calvin and Wesley learned and taught, but in this case they chose to follow a tradition that in no conceivable way pictures a burial and resurrection.

I honor the truths all religious people hold, including Bible teachers and preachers, and I honor their sincerity and do not question their honesty in any way for the most part. But I want the whole truth, and nothing but the whole truth of God's word.

I do question why, when knowing that Bible baptism is immersion, a burial, they continue to follow a tradition that, by the admission of Bible scholars and their systems' founders, is not what the Bible teaches. Is it because they are bound by their church laws to follow what is nothing more than a man-made tradition?

What would Jesus say about this today? What authority do we have to add to, take from, or change what Jesus said? He never gave anyone the authority to do that. If He had, He would have violated and contradicted the very word of God Himself. He didn't, but spoke of those who did, saying, "And in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men... making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down" (Mark 7:7; 13).

Both they who are following such traditions and their church laws say the Bible is the word of God. That it is the standard of authority, the rule of faith and practice; that which we are to follow. And then they don't in the matter of baptism. Shouldn't they practice what they preach in this matter also?

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The Bible is a map to peace, happiness, and Heaven. Follow it and you will have a safe journey. Wander from it and you are in trouble.

The well-rounded character is square in his dealings.

Why Should I Study The Bible?

by Joel Wheeler

Why should I or anyone study the Bible? Most individuals would rather leave it to the preacher and the elders to do all the studying of God's word. Most people are content to let the Sunday school teacher study the word of God for them. But, we must remember that no one can leave one's Bible study to someone else to do. On the great day of judgment every one will stand alone to be judged and everyone will be required to answer for one's self (2 Cor. 5:10).

The basic questions of life can be answered through studying the Bible. *Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going? How should I live?* All of these questions and more can be answered by the scriptures (2 Pet. 1:3). *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works"* (2 Tim. 3:16,17). Man's philosophy cannot give a substantial answer to these most important questions.

One must study the word of God because man cannot infallibly guide himself. *"It is not within man that walketh to direct his steps"* (Jer. 10:23). Solomon warned, *"He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool..."* (Prov. 28:26). Jesus said "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God" (Matt. 22:29). Man is not born with the answers to life's questions. He must obtain them through study of God's word.

The Bible is the only infallible guide for man. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" (Psa. 119:105). The inspired apostle Peter wrote, "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3). The Bible is a sword: "For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). It cuts to the very core of man to convict of wrong and give answers.

There are also great and terrible consequences for not studying God's word. God said, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee..." (Hosea 4:6). God gave the Gentiles over

to a reprobate mind because they did not retain God in their knowledge (Rom. 1:28). The Jews had rejected Jesus as the Christ and were therefore lost. "What is this then that is written, the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the corner? Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (Luke 20:17-18).

One must study the Bible to know his purpose in life, to know his destiny, and to know what he must do to be saved (2 Tim. 2:15). There is no substitute for reading and studying the word of God. Therein are the answers to the most important questions of life.

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The Difference A Word Makes

by Dennis Gulledge

We all know the difference a word can make. Sometimes a single word added or left out of a sentence can make as much difference in the sense of a thought as, "She loves me. She loves me not." Satan knew this in the beginning when he said to our first parents, "You shall not surely die" (Gen. 3:4). The inclusion of the little word "not" amounts to a big denial and perversion of God's original demand (Gen. 2:17) to its very opposite.

In the realm of ideas words mean things. The consequences of the meaning attached to them can be minor or great. It may be so small as to leave a reader slightly confused, or it could completely alter a person's thinking process and what they will receive as truth. A few examples in the religious world make this fact obvious.

1. "He that believeth and is not baptized shall be saved." Now, of course this is not at all what Jesus said in Mark 16:16, but this is the way the denominational world interprets it. It is denied by some that Mark 16:16 even has a place in the Bible.

2. "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith only without the deeds of the law." Of course, this is not the apostle Paul's wording in Roman's 3:28, but that of Martin Luther who was reacting to the repressive system of human works fostered by Roman Catholicism. In so doing he injected a little "not" into the Scripture and into the minds of millions since his day. Not only does Luther's

little word pervert the book of Romans but, also the book of James, where it says, "Ye see then how by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (2:24).

3. "Jesus is coming soon." The word that makes a difference in this sentence is the word "soon." It is an undeniable truth that Jesus is coming again. But, the Bible does not teach that Jesus is coming soon, although he certainly may be. James 5:8 says, "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh," which is as true today as it was in the apostolic age in view of the fact that he may come at any moment. In Matthew 24, Jesus gave "the signs" by which Christians could identify the onset of Jerusalem's demise in A.D. 70, but these are not to be applied to the second coming of Jesus Christ.

4. "The church of your choice." People very often like the way this sentence reads, and the message it conveys, because the emphasis is on "your." God's choice is not a consideration. It isn't that God surveyed denominationalism and selected one to wear his name. He selected Christ in order that his eternal purpose might be made known through him, and that the wisdom of God might be made known through the church, of which there is only one - God's select - God's choice (Ephesians 3:11-12; 4:4).

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What There Is In This Life

by Neal Pollard

The more than occasional complaint one can be heard to utter is, "I'm not getting my fair share." Like a whining child, some adults complain that their house is not as big as their neighbors', their salary is slighter than their friends', or their cars are less fancy or older than other motorists with whom they share the road.

So many do not heed Paul's admonition, "And having food and raiment let us be therewith content" (1 Timothy 6:8). Paul learned to take whatever was given him by life (cf. Philippians 4:11-12). Christians are commanded, "Be content with such things as ye have" (Hebrews 13:5). An Old Testament, inspired writer intimates that true satisfaction is a spiritual matter (cf. Proverbs 19:23).

Truly, every individual has his or her own unique problems no one else has to bear. But, everyone is shorted some things and abundantly supplied others. Spiritually, there are many commonalties for all mankind. Facing these realities, one can take these and overcome with their knowledge of them (cf.1 John 5:4). What does every accountable soul have or face?

- An Advocate** - "Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1);
- An Adversary** - "the devil" (1 Peter 5:8);
- An Authority** - the doctrine of Christ (cf. Mark 13:34; Romans 1:16);
- An Attitude** - "trust" (1 Timothy 4:10);
- An Anticipation** - heaven (cf. Hebrews 6:11);
- An Aversion** - hell (Revelation 14:10-11);
- An Affliction** - "all have sinned" (Romans 5:12);
- An Assurance** - salvation (Hebrews 10:22);
- An Association** - Christian fellowship (Acts 2:44);
- An Aspiration** - spiritual growth (1 Peter 2:2);
- An Adoration** - worship to God (Philippians 3:3);
- An Anchor** - "hope" (Hebrews 6:19);
- An Actuation** - "do" (Philippians 4:9);
- An Appointment** - "death" (Hebrews 9:27);
- An Abhorrence** - "that which is evil" (Romans 12:9).

Remember, with Herrick, that "Whatever comes, let's be content withall: among God's blessings there is no one small." Even in grief and liability, let us know that, *even then*, our "*cup runneth over*" (Psalm 23:5)!

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COURAGE

by Bill Dillon

In the year 404 a monk by the name of Telemachus traveled to Rome and was shocked beyond measure at the cruelty of the gladiatorial contests. Telemachus leaped over the railing of the Coliseum and tried to stop the gladiators from hacking themselves to pieces by repeated cries of "In the name of Christ, stop!" The little monk stood his ground and refused to move. Shortly he was slain by the gladiators who continued their fight standing over his dead body. But the little monk's sacrifice was not in vain as the consciences of the Roman populace were stirred and Emperor Honorius soon decreed the bloody combat games be forever abolished.

The spirit of courage, exemplified by Telemachus needs to be alive today as modern Christians struggle against deeply entrenched evils such as injustice, indifference and immorality.

The Lord's church is a fellowship of courageous souls who have banded together to grapple with wickedness and all unrighteousness. The church of Christ was not established by cowards nor has it been preserved by cowards. Let God's people be lion-hearted and bold, neither fearing the frowns nor courting the favors of the world. Severe trials and tribulations will only serve to increase our fortitude. God "hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power and of love, and of a sound mind" (II Timothy 1:7).

Only by being courageous can we swim against the world's current and move in the direction of God.

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Ruler Of My Life

*The King of Kings controls the world,
And provides all that we need.
He brings happiness, joy, release
From sin's bondage and Satan's deed.*

*He rules my life with tender hand,
And guides me all the day through.
His love holds me with its strong cord,
And gives me courage anew.*

*King of Heaven! Lord of my life!
Ruler of the universe!*

*Redeemer from death and all strife,
Calvary's precious sacrifice!*

*Give Him your life, your soul, your all;
Yield to His blessed commands.*

*Turn from the world's tempting call,
To what Heaven's love demands.*

—Oran Rhodes

ANOTHER WORD ABOUT CHANGES OF ADDRESS



We have recently discovered that the Post Office has extended until July 1, 1997 the time for us to have 100% of our addresses carrying the nine digit zipcode and corresponding barcode on your address labels. That will give some of you more time to notify us of your current Post Office approved address. If your mailing label on this paper does not have a nine digit zipcode, we "probably" need a more complete address from you!

I say "probably" because we have discovered a problem with the Post Office catching up with new home addresses and also changes made because of communities going to 911 Emergency service. We have had a few people send us addresses which our computer program would not recognize and would not provide a nine digit zipcode. The Post Office says that it takes 90 days or more for these types of changes to make it into their National Database. Because of postal regulations, we cannot override the computer program and enter the information manually. Therefore, we may be asking you for a better or corrected address even though the one you have is approved by your local Post Office.

This is not a problem that will be quickly solved. You are helpless and so are we. Please accept our apologies and be sure to let us know if you are having trouble receiving your paper. We will do what we can to see that you receive your paper, even if we have to mail you the issues first class until we get the problem corrected. Meanwhile, please do all that you can to see that you provide us with a full and current address. We plead for your patience as we try to find a solution to this difficulty.

(Editor)

"YOU CAN HELP WITH POSTAGE"

MOVING? CHANGING TO 911?

Be sure to send us
your change of address.



GOD'S AUTHORIZED WORSHIP — COLOSSIANS 3:17

- LORD'S SUPPER** - The New Testament and early church history record that Christians met on the first day of every week (Sunday) to worship God and remember Christ (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23-34; 16:1-2).
- PRAYERS** - (Acts 2:42; Philippians 4:6-7; 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18).
- SINGING** - God's word authorizes only vocal music and specifically singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12). The New Testament shows no use of mechanical instruments of music in worship to God by the church Christ established. Church history notes no such use for nearly 700 years after the New Testament was completed. It is an innovation of men, not of God.
- GIVING** - Free-willed, cheerful, generous, and every week (Acts 20:35; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8 & 9).
- PREACHING OF THE WORD** - The gospel of Christ, not men's doctrines nor entertainment, saves and strengthens us (Acts 2:42; 20:7; Romans 10:17; 1 Corinthians 1:18-23).

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