

# Fulton County Gospel News

"The Churches of Christ Salute You"

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## CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE (4)

### "How Do I Become A Member Of The Lord's Church?"

Our previous studies have shown that Christ only established one church and that he is the Savior of this church. We also gave some identifying characteristics to help us locate this church in our world today. Now, suppose someone recognizes the truth of this teaching and does locate a congregation of the Lord's people, how does he go about becoming a member of this church?

Again, we must remember to go to the Bible for our answer. Since salvation is in the church (Eph. 5: 23), then our question might be better worded, "What must I do to be saved?" As we study Biblical examples of salvation, we need to remember that what saved them will save us (Rom. 2:11; Heb. 6:18). Please study carefully the following chart:

EXAMPLES OF CONVERSION					
MATT 28:18-19					MARK 16:15-16
PREACHING	BELIEVED	REPENTED	CONFESSED	BAPTIZED	SAVED
Pentecost Acts 2:14-41		Repent Verses 37-38		Baptized 38:41	Remission of Sins - 38:47 Saved
Sarnaria Acts 8:5-13	Believed 12			Baptized 12:13	
Eunuch Acts 8:35-39	Believed 30-37		Confessed 37	Baptized 38	Rejoiced 39
Saul Acts 9:17-18				Baptized 18	Sins Washed Away 22:16
Cornelius Acts 10:34- 48	Believed 43			Baptized 48	Remission of Sins 43
The Jailer Acts 10:32	Believed 31			Baptized 33	
Lydia Acts 16:15	Attended 14			Baptized 15	
PREACHING Rom. 10:14	FAITH Heb. 11:6 Heb. 5:8, 9	REPENTANCE Luke 13:3	CONFESSION Rom. 10:10 II Thess. 1:7-9	BAPTISM Gal. 3:27	SALVATION II Tim. 2: 10

All of these people were taught the Word of God. They were taught concerning Christ and His Kingdom (Acts 8:12) - the church (cf. Mark 9:1). Since God is no respecter of persons, then what he required of one, He required of all. Thus, you have the concluding line of the chart. It is also very interesting to note the emphasis God puts on baptism. It is the one thing mentioned in all of these examples. **NO ONE IS SAVED BEFORE BEING BAPTIZED** (cf. 1 Peter 3:21). Baptism places one in the church (I Cor. 12:13); salvation is in the church (Eph. 5:23); thus, in order to be saved, one must be baptized.

Once a person has been taught concerning Christ and His church, and is

convicted of his sins, then that person can be baptized to have those sins removed (Acts 22:16), and to become a member of the Lord's church. "How do I become a member of the Lord's church?" Hear, Believe, Repent, Confess, and **BE BAPTIZED**. To not do these things keeps you out of the church and without salvation.

Please give careful consideration to these things.

Charles Coats

## Is The Church of Christ Still Pure?

John Shafer

Some 1900 years ago Jesus was speaking with his disciples about who men said that he was. "Now when Jesus came into the parts of Caesarea Phillipi, he asked his disciples, saying, Who do men say that the Son of Man is? And they said, some say John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the Prophets. He saith unto them But who say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jonah: For flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter (Petros) and upon this rock (petra) I will build my church: and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." The church was not built on Peter, but upon his belief that Jesus was indeed the Son of God. It was upon this sincere and pure statement that the church of Christ rested.

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## IS THE CHURCH OF CHRIST STILL PURE?

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As we study more about the church that Christ established we can see many characteristics that separate it from denominations. Let us at this time search the scriptures to see what these are.

On the day of establishment of the Lord's church, we see some 3000 souls that were spiritually united with Christ. Just how they were is spelled out in Acts 2:38 where we find that those who were in obedience to the Gospel of Christ, were baptized "for the remission of sins". They were then "added to the church" as stated in Acts 2:47. In Galatians 3:27 Paul affirms that we are "baptized into Christ". So we see that we become a part of Christ and His church through baptism. As we become a part of Christ through baptism, we also become a part of His church as we study in Ephesians 5:22-33.

Christ did not just establish the church and then leave it up to man as to what was to be done concerning the worship. You see, Christ knows man too well. Christ knows that man, given his own free will, will not always do that which is pleasing to God, so he left us examples of how to do service to Him. As Christ is head of the body, the church, as stated in Col. 1:18, we know that He is the only one authorized to set up the rules.

The Bible is the rule of faith and

practice of the church. As we look at 2 Timothy 3:16-17 we see that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:" and the reason for this follows, "That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Let us now look to the Bible to reveal the pattern of worship for the church. In John 4:23 we find that true worship to the Father is "in spirit and truth." Spirit is the nature of our worship and our worship must be from the heart. Truth is the standard to be employed. In John 17:17 it states, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." So let us go to the scripture to find these truths. The Bible indicates that there are 5 different items of worship:

*"And they continued stedfastly in the Apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."* Acts 2:42.

*"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them . . ."* Acts 20:7.

*"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God has prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."* I Cor. 16:1-2.

*"Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."* Col. 3:16.

We observe from these passages that upon the first day of the week Christians assembled that they might worship God in spirit and truth. This inspiring and acceptable worship includes the breaking of bread each first day of the week; the privilege of giving as we have been prospered; hearing the Word of God; praying together; and singing praises

to God. We should continue by faith as we worship in spirit and truth, as this is the only pattern of acceptable worship of the New Testament church.

Now, why have we stated all of these? Because today as there was even when the church was in its infancy, there are those who would compromise what the scriptures teach. Today it is being proposed that the Church of Christ is not the church that Christ established; that there is more than one group that will be saved. Even though the scriptures plainly teach that there is only one church (Eph. 4:4-6), there are others that would teach that we need to compromise in order to exist. To these the scripture plainly states in Gal. 1:6-10, "But though we or an angel from heaven should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema." There are those who would say that it doesn't matter what type of music you would use in your worship to God, and again the scriptures teach in Rev. 22:18-19 ". . . and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book." The list could go on and on; the scripture remains.

Our Lord wishes "To present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph 5:27).

There is no doubt, that when the Lord returns he will find many who have left their first love and will be wearing and honoring names other than Christ's, and living in sin and unrighteousness. We needn't think for one moment that Christ will overlook this infidelity and give mansions in heaven to those who were unfaithful. For the unfaithful will indeed reap their reward as shown in Matt. 13:41-42. But also, to those who would remain faithful and not compromise or add to or take away from Christ's word, there also is a reward. This is a welcome that we all should strive for, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the

Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. (Matt. 25:34).

Remember the Lord wants His church to remain pure, let us each do whatever is necessary in spirit and truth to accomplish this.

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## ELDERS, WATCH FOR THEIR SOULS!

Dean Fugett

When the Hebrew writer penned his words, "Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves," he included an awesome description of the duty of those with authority when he added, "for they watch for your souls." If he had left it with those words, the burden would have been great for every elder with a sense of true responsibility for the sheep, but he went on to say, "as they that must give an account" (Hebrews 13:17.) Elders must truly know those over whom they watch. The giving of account cannot be adequately done if the overseeing is slothfully done. Too many of the Lord's sheep are falling prey to the devil's wolves.

Every eldership needs to come up with some definite and organized way to keep tabs on the members of the congregation. Too many elders see their work as being "business managers" rather than shepherds of a spiritual flock. Elders who function strictly as financial controllers and physical plant supervisors with interest limited to fiscal matters are failing in their God-given charge to "Feed the church of the Lord" (Acts 20:28.) Those of you who have sat in elders' meetings over the past few years need to assess the areas of attention to see if they have been predominantly physical or spiritual.

If more elders would give attendance to the content of the lessons of the preacher who is charged with the pulpit food of the flock, there would be far less trash mixed with the feed. Watch for the souls of the

flock by protecting them from the wolves in sheep's clothing who are filling many pulpits today. Watch for the souls of the flocks by keeping them aware of the perils of the mixtures of some-truth-lot-of-error that is being offered by many today. Watch for their souls by warning them of the dangers of materialism, worldliness, indifference, apathy, lukewarmness and faithlessness. Watch for their souls by providing every family of the congregation with good, sound reading material by way of brotherhood journals. Watch for their souls by providing the instructions necessary to preserve the sanctity of the home via pulpit and classes. Watch for their souls by insisting that Bible class materials be those written by brethren who are faithful to the Word and do not have as their goal the restructuring of the church to make it more like the denominations around it. Watch for their souls by stipulating that those who stand before the classes be faithful to attend all services of the church. Too many children are tempted to be faithless in their attention to spiritual fellowship by teachers who give an example of faithlessness in attendance at periods of worship and fellowship. Watch for their souls by being faithful yourselves, giving an example of holiness of life and depth of integrity that makes it easier for them to feel good about following the shepherds as they lead the flock. Watch for their souls by being kind and compassionate in correction while at the same time being consistent and fair and firm and scriptural. Watch for their souls!

It is our judgment that if more elders of the congregations would truly be the **pastors** that they ought to be, the preachers would not become pastor images, and preachers would then have less pastorate-power to wrest the congregation from the oversight of the elders. Such a role for the elders will demand much watching for their souls and a great measure of taking heed to themselves and to the flock over the which the Holy Spirit has made them overseers.

Elders, please watch for their souls.

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## IGNORANCE

Charles Coats

One of the two most dangerous problems affecting the church today is the problem of ignorance. The other is apathy. In this article, we want to deal with ignorance.

It seems that I am hearing more and more concerning people's lack of knowledge of the Bible. What astounds me about this is that most seem to be proud of it! Maybe we need to take a little time to notice what God says concerning ignorance.

(1) It is a must that we be students of God's Word (2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Peter 2:1, 2; 2 Peter 3:18). It has always been God's desire that his people know His Word (Deut. 6:4-6 and 11:18, 19). To be woefully ignorant of God's Word will cause us to be displeasing to God.

(2) Since we will be judged by God's Word (John 12:48), it would behoove us to know God's Word in order that we might be able to do God's will.

(3) Ignorance destroys (Hosea 4:6). This verse continues by telling us that God will reject those who reject His Word. One might also consider that it is our knowledge of God's Word that will enable us to recognize false teachers and keep them from leading us astray (cf. 1 John 4:1; Eph. 4:11-14).

Being ignorant of the Bible is not to our benefit. It is nothing of which to be proud. It is destructive to the soul. Let me urge you to study to show yourself approved unto God. Not only does your soul depend on it, but also the souls of all those you will influence in your life.

## THE PRICE OF A LIE

Garry Stanton

I read a very interesting article in the *Hutchinson (Kansas) News* on November 11, 1984. They printed a special story commemorating the 25th anniversary of the famous Clutter murders. Herb Clutter and his wife and their 15 year old son and 16 year old daughter were

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## THE PRICE OF A LIE

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brutally murdered on November 15, 1959 in the heartland of our great nation. Their death is still called the worst crime in the history of the state of Kansas. In fact, Truman Capote told the story of this crime to the world in his book, *"In Cold Blood"*. The two who actually committed this hideous crime were eventually hanged by the state of Kansas.

One of the facts of the case which caught my eye was the reason that the whole horrible thing occurred. The underlying motive was robbery. This was the reason that Hickock and Smith went there in the first place. Hickock had been told by a fellow prisoner, while serving time in the penitentiary, that Mr. Clutter kept at least \$10,000 cash in a safe at the farm house. Based on that cellmate's information, Hickock contacted Smith and they began to plan to steal the money. The problem with the information about the money was IT WAS A LIE. One man's desire to "look big" led to the deaths of four innocent people. Had the convict not bragged about the money that did not exist, then Hickock and Smith would not have gone to the Clutter's farm and would not have become murderers. What was the "price" of this one lie? **Six people lost their lives!**

This really should not surprise us, if we have studied our Bibles, for it has told us the price of a lie long before the tragedy of November 15, 1959. Jesus warned us that Satan "is a liar, and the father of it." (John 8:44). James tells us that "the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things," it is "a fire, a world of iniquity" (James 3:5,6). A lie can begin as a little fire but can easily and dreadfully turn into an out-of-control raging fire as the Clutter case vividly demonstrates. So called "little white lies" can cause as much destruction as any bold, brazen lie Satan could tell. Therefore, let us carefully consider the words of inspiration in Revelation 21:8 which says, "All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." 807 Welton, Pratt, KS 67124

## THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; I Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2, 3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 12:13).

## GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian living (I Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

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