

# 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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## Nobody Likes A Bad Sport

by Allen Webster

Every playground has one. The chip-on-the-shoulder kid. The play-by-my-rules-or-I'll-take-my-ball-and-go-home youngster. He cries foul every play and the ball never bounces his way. He gets mad when he loses and gloats when he wins. He is a bad sport.

They did not play our games in Bible times, but they had their share of "bad sports."

**THE PHILISTINES WERE "BAD SPORTS"** (Jd. 16:25). After capturing Samson and putting out his eyes, the Philistines wanted him to "make sport" before them. We know not the sport, though it was likely something that showed off his great strength.

Josephus, a Jewish historian, comments on this: "He was brought out that they might insult him in their cups" (Antiq. Jud. lib. v., cap. 8, s. 12). This fits the context. They wanted to laugh at their captive, taunt their prisoner, and insult their enemy. The Philistines showed "bad sportsmanship" by laughing at Samson's plight. We see similar attitudes in the "trash talking" that goes on in many ball games today. Players mock opponents' weaknesses.

The lesson for us is we must not laugh at another's misfortune — even an enemy. "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thy heart be glad when he stumbleth" (Prov. 24:17). We are to love our enemies and do good to them that hate us (Mt. 5:44). "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink" (Prov. 25:21). Paul adds, "...for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head" (Rm. 12:19-20).

Saul was insulted (1 Sam. 10:26, 27); Job had insult added to injury (30:1, 9, 10); children insulted Elisha's baldness (2 Kgs. 2:23); the Pharisees said Jesus had a devil (Mt. 12:24); and Paul was insulted by the high priest (Acts 23:2). Insulting puts one in bad company. Samson's tormentors received punishment. He

"brought the house down" — and not in the way that they had expected!

**MISCHIEVOUS PEOPLE ARE "BAD SPORTS."** "It is as sport to a fool to do mischief" (Prov. 10:23). We think of a mischievous person as a prankster, but the Bible uses the word for more serious offenses. "He that deviseth to do evil shall be called a mischievous person" (Prov. 24:8).

In the Old Testament, "mischief" is generally used of physical violence or harm (Gen. 42:4; 44:29; Ex. 21:22; Psa. 7:14, 16). In the New Testament "mischief" (*rhadiourgia*) occurs only once (Acts 13:10) and means "laziness, lewdness, fraud, villainy, and trickery" (Earle). The wicked man boasts of mischief (Psa. 52:1), devises it (Psa. 62:3; Prov. 6:14), practices it (1 Sam. 23:9), runs to it (Prov. 6:18), thinks to do it (Neh. 6:2), talks of it (Prov. 24:2) and seeks after it (1 Kgs. 20:7).

The application? A bad sport is one who thinks that hurting another person is fun. He wants to "run up the score" and "rub it in." Here is the bully, whether on the school playground or the corporate work room. The gang member, drive-by shootist, rapist, murderer, and spouse abuser fit the bad sport mold.

**DECEIVERS ARE "BAD SPORTS."** "So is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport?" (Prov. 26:19). The bad sport is one who, when his lie is found out, denies it by saying "Oh, I was just kidding. You didn't really think that I meant that, did you?" A bad sport lies about a game's score or about some play he made. He never lets truth get in the way of making himself look good.

The Bible tells the truth about lying. It originates with the devil (Jn. 8:44) and terminates in hell (Rev. 21:8). It is practiced by the proud (Psa. 40:4), the wicked (Psa. 58:3), and false prophets (Jer. 23:14-26). Foolish folks delight in it (Psa. 62:4), take refuge in it (Isa. 28:15),

and believe in it (2 Thes. 2:11). A "good sport" hates lies (Psa. 31:6), disassociates himself from liars (Psa. 101:7), and prays for deliverance from lying (Psa. 120:2).

The wise man, in the context of Proverbs 26, says the "bad sport" passes by and meddles with strife that does not belong to him. He is compared to one who takes a dog by the ears (not a good idea!). Paul would call him a busybody (1 Tim. 5:13). The wise man continues, "Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth" (26:20). Thus the bad sport lies to cover up for meddling in another's business.

**DIRTY-MINDED PEOPLE ARE "BAD SPORTS."** Peter wrote of some, "Spots they are and blemishes, *sporting themselves* with their own deceivings while they feast with you; Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls..." (2 Pet. 2:13, 14).

"Sporting" is sometimes used in Scripture to refer to romantic or sexual activity. Isaac was spied "sporting with Rebekah his wife" by Abimelech (Gen. 26:8). In a figurative sense, Isaiah pictures Israel as "sporting" with idols (57:4). Peter says these "bad sports" had "eyes full of adultery" (*moichalis*, lit., "having eyes full of an adulteress"). This term describes a man who is unable to look at a woman without regarding her as an object for lasciviousness (cf Mt. 5:28) (Woods). (Just look at TV programming — or, on second thought, don't!)

"Beguiling" or "enticing" (*deleazo*) means "to bait." Peter, the fisherman, refers to the practice of baiting a hook to catch a fish. They were constantly looking for opportunities for sexual sin. In this they are not much different from many today who are always looking for partners with whom to perform wickedness.

We are all starters in the game of life. The devil and his forces are the opposition. Fellow Christians are team mates. God is the Referee. The Bible is the rule book. The score pad is the book of life and death is the final horn. In this game, good sportsmanship counts. Nobody likes a bad sport — not even God.

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**DOES HE KNOW YOU?**

by Jim Gillaspie

A little boy had managed to get about as dirty as a little boy can get. Soon he went running home and asked his mother: "Who am I?" His mother, who was used to the dirt, thought he was playing a game, so she answered, "Superman!" The little boy gasped! "Our next door neighbor was right!" he said. "She said I was so dirty that my own mother wouldn't recognize me!" Would the Lord recognize you? Sure, He knows who you are. He knows everything about you. Psalm 90:8 says "You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of Your countenance." But would He recognize you as one of His own? To those who fail to do the will of God, Jesus will say "I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:23). In 2 Timothy 2:19, Paul declares that "the Lord knoweth them that are His..."

Perhaps you know what it is like to not be recognized by an old acquaintance or friend. Maybe you have felt the disappointment of having someone you thought was a close friend forget all about you. But there will be no greater disappointment or hurt than to stand in judgment, and hear the Sovereign Lord of the Universe declare "I never knew you!" And if He fails to recognize us, it will be for the same reason that the little boy thought he would not be recognized... the filth of sin! Have you been washed in the blood of Jesus? (Rev. 1:5, Acts 22:16) If Jesus returned today, would He know you?

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**A WORD OF EXPLANATION**

We appreciate all of the readers of the **Fulton County Gospel News** whether they always agree with everything we say or not. While we do not print articles to please everyone (an impossible task), we do not intend anything we print as an isolated attack on any individual, nor do we print material just to make people angry. We try to deal with principles instead of personalities, but even the apostle Paul named names when he believed that the teaching of certain individuals was destructive of "the faith" (1 Timothy 1:18-20; 2 Timothy 1:15; 2:16-18).

This month's FCGN was to have an article dealing with some of the specific teachings of brother John N. Clayton which we felt are destructive of one's faith, or at least bear that potential. Some of brother Clayton's supporters have contacted us, contending that he is misunderstood or quoted out of context, that he is not a theistic evolutionist in any sense of the term and has done much good for the cause of Christ.

I have been sick this past month and not able to prepare for this article as I had intended. Consequently, I was going to use an article by another writer to deal with brother Clayton's material. Instead of doing that, in all fairness to brother Clayton and those who believe he is not teaching anything seriously in error, I have decided to restudy the material brother Clayton has generated for any misunderstanding I may have formed and to document (in context) those matters which are of a serious nature and need to be discussed. While we do not want to misrepresent anyone's true positions nor be hyper-critical, we do want to take a stand for what the word of God teaches regardless of who stands in opposition to us. If warranted, the article mentioned will appear in the September issue of FCGN. - Editor

**IGNORANCE OF GOD'S WORD  
The Shame of the Church**

by Ted J. Clarke

Perhaps preachers have sounded so many alarms over the years that most people do not even listen any more. But, it hardly seems fair to blame the preachers altogether, because there have been many reasons to sound out warnings.

Ignorance of God's word is not a new warning, but it is one that must be re-

peated in every generation! Hosea 4:6 quotes God as saying,

**"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee..."**

Jeremiah 10:23 notes that man is not able within himself to know how to walk, therefore, he needs the direction of God if he is to walk in the right way (Psalm 119:105, 130, 133).

Brethren, one problem we face is that many Christians do not even bring their BIBLES with them to Bible study and worship! **SUCH IS A SHAME ON THE CHURCH!** Yes, I know we have Bibles in the pews, but when you use your own personal study Bible you can highlight verses and write in the margins, things that will help you remember and make it easier to find points to help yourself and to teach others.

Another problem is that many Christians simply do not read their Bibles during the week! The mind is a marvelous gift of God, but unless we use it, we lose it. We must read and reread the Scriptures to keep in mind what they say and where certain things are found. Paul told Timothy that one of the roles of a preacher was to be a reminder.

"If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou has attained" (1 Timothy 4:6).

Brethren, we cannot know what we do not study!!! We will also forget what we do not review and restudy!!! It is just that simple.

What a shame it is for supposedly mature Christians not to know how to show someone what he/she must do to be saved! It is equally shameful for a Christian to be unable to defend the fundamentals of true Christianity from his/her Bible! Hebrews 5:12-14 points out that every Christian ought to grow to the point where he/she can be a teacher of God's word and not a perpetual baby who needs to be bottle fed even as an older Christian.

Determine to bring your Bibles, read and study at home and in class and worship. **Learn for yourself and to help save others!** You will not be ignorant nor bring shame upon the Lord's church.

## WHY PEOPLE DON'T UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE ALIKE (3)

by Jerry Moffitt

It is always perplexing and disconcerting when men do not understand the Bible alike. We look at the vast number of commentaries that are written and ask, "How can so many smart men be wrong?" We know better, and we remind ourselves that the word of God does not penetrate a keen intellect; it pierces quickly an **honest** and **good** heart. In the parable of the sower, after the various bad soils which represent poor-quality hearts are described, Jesus talked of the heart that he seeks. Jesus said, "and that in the good ground, these are such as in an **honest** and good heart, having heard the word, hold it fast, and bring forth fruit with patience" (Luke 8:15). Notice the heart must be honest. A dishonest heart changes in its mind the meaning of the word of God. An honest heart changes the life in accordance with God's word. It is also a sign of a bad heart to practice doctrines of men. An honest heart would not do that. Jesus said the people were hypocrites and reminded them that God said, "in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men" (Matt. 15:7-9). In such practice he said their heart was "far from" God.

With people who have dishonest and evil hearts, God becomes a kind of Adversary. He weeds them out with truth and even warns them that that is what He is going to do. Notice, "and he said, Go and tell this people Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn again and be healed" (Isa. 6:9, 10).

Along this line, there can be a problem with the human will. This answers the question regarding why some hearts are good and others bad. The will and affections get involved. Jesus said, "If any man **willeth** to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself" (John 7:17). Jesus put it another way. He said to the Jews, "why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do" (John 8:43,44). Why don't they understand?

They want to do the lusts of their father. Their will is to do at least one evil thing, and it might surprise us how small a thing it might be. It may just be a small thing connected with jealousy and pride.

All this can make a person so vulnerable that he can easily be deceived. We often ask, do false teachers know they are false teachers? No, they do not. They are deceived. Notice Paul said, "But evil men and impostors shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:13). Jeremiah, recall, said the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked (Jer. 17:9). So people write commentaries, preach, talk, argue, and debate passionately, as sincere as they can be, yet they are wrong and are false teachers. They are sincere in what they believe for their heart has deceived them and they sincerely think they are right.

So far we have seen men do not understand the Bible alike because they don't love God with all their heart, they are not hungry enough, their heart is not honest, their will is perverse, and they have ungodly lusts. All this ought to make us prayerfully consider ourselves. It can happen to each of us. Let us be courageous as we study God's word, so we won't try, out of fear, to change its meaning. May God help us long for light and not lust after darkness. Else we delude ourselves.

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## CONTRIBUTIONS

### CHURCHES

Moko Church of Christ, Salem, Ar. ....	\$25.00
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Pilot Church of Christ, ..... Mammoth Spring, Ar.	40.00
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## THE USE OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP

by Dan Rogers

Is the use of instrumental music in the worship of God under the New Covenant a sin? Either it is, or it is not. Is the use of instrumental music a matter of opinion (and thus a matter of liberty), or is it a matter of faith? It cannot be both a matter of opinion and a matter of faith.

Brethren, we (the body of Christ; the church) used to know the correct answer to these questions (that is, that the use of instrumental music in the worship of God under the New Covenant is SIN). However, in this day and age, it seems as if many no longer profess to know the answer, thus (with regard to the use of instrumental music in the worship of God under the New Covenant) taking an agnostic position. Likewise, there are many who no longer believe that the use of instrumental music in the worship of God under the New Covenant is sinful!

Some years ago, the now departed and greatly lamented brother Guy N. Woods observed "...that at least 35% of the members of non-instrument churches of Christ that he (was) acquainted with, would not object to the introduction of instrumental music into the worship service and that at least 50% of the members of non-instrument churches have no idea why instruments are not used." When I first saw brother Woods' statement, I thought, "Surely, such is not the case." However, now, some thirteen or so years later, I realize that not only is such the case, but that the percentages given by brother Woods are no doubt low, as compared to today!

Quite obviously, as one of the songs of the past has so expressed it, "The times, they are a changing!" If brother J. D. Tant were still alive, no longer would he be concluding his sermons with the warning, "Brethren, we are drifting!" Rather, he would no doubt say, "Brethren, we HAVE drifted!"

Sadly, many now seem to no longer either know or care what the church teaches. In fact, the idea that the church even teaches something is belittled by many. However, the church does indeed teach something. What does the church teach? Well, the church, which consists of individual Christians (1 Cor. 12:27)

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(Continued from page 3)

belongs to Christ (Matt. 16:18). He is her head (Eph. 1:22-23) and she is his bride (Eph. 5:23-32). As such, she wears his name (Rom. 16:16). And in turn, what else would she teach but "the doctrine of Christ" (2 John 9)? In fact that would be one of the marks of her identity. Thus, any congregation wearing the name of Christ, but refusing to teach "the doctrine of Christ," would become, to say the least, suspect!

Yet, there is an increasing number of congregations which, although they wear the name of Christ, no longer teach "the doctrine of Christ." Rather, whether it be with regard to giving their approval to the use of instrumental music in the worship of God under the New Covenant, or some other area of false doctrine, they have begun to teach "the commandments of men" (Mark 7:7) in place of "the doctrine of Christ." Thus, the church in many places is in a "transition" parallel to and on the scope of the apostasy of the first few centuries which ultimately led to the development of the Catholic Church!

Think about it!

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## YOUR CHILDREN

**It is hard to convince your children:** That the work of the church is really important when you are not taking an active part in the work of the church.

**It is hard to convince your children:** That faithfulness to the church is the most important loyalty in life when you permit them to forsake worship services to engage in other activities.

**It is hard to convince your children:** That the church is the body of Christ when you constantly complain and criticize the efforts of those who care enough to be doing something.

**It is hard to convince your children:** That the church is the world's most important institution when you give so little to finance the church's work.

**It is hard to convince your children:** That they can believe God's word if you cannot believe Him enough to place the kingdom of God first in your life.

*Liberalism may be coming into the churches but it has not yet reached the contribution plate.*

## THE TRUEST OF TREASURES

by Neal Pollard

Paul was obviously well read. The pupil of Dr. Gamaliel, Paul was taught according to the strict manner of the law of the fathers (Acts 22:3). A wealth of Old Testament scripture flowed from the well of knowledge dug by the scholarly apostle. Being an oft-persecuted man, he might have often read the account of Job's life. Three direct quotations (1 Corinthians 3:19; Romans 11:35; 1 Timothy 6:7) are given by Paul in his writing. Romans 11:33 and Job 11:7 compare well. The same is true of Romans 11:34 and Job 15:8. A third text in Romans (11:35) mirrors Job 35:7 and 41:11. Maybe Paul held onto the encouraging conclusion of the matter, that "the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning..." (Job 42:12; cf. James 5:11). Whether or not he had a special affection for Job, they faced life the same way. Both learned deeper devotion from devastation. The much maligned and frequently opposed friend of God, Paul of Tarsus, penned by inspiration a glowing tribute to the riches of God in Romans 11:33.

**DEEP ARE THE RICHES OF GOD (Romans 11:33).** They are "multidimensional." The desire to comprehend the breadth, and length, and depth, and height through a knowledge of the scriptures leads one to be filled with all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:17-19)!

**DIVINE ARE THE RICHES OF GOD (Romans 11:33).** With Paul, our anthem is "blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3).

**DISCLOSED ARE THE RICHES OF GOD (Romans 11:33).** Thankfully, we are not in the dark. The Bible reveals the wisdom, the knowledge, the judgments, and the ways of God. No one should be surprised in the judgment, for all should know His word will judge us (John 12:48).

Beat the moths off of most things and try to cover the rust of the rest, but hold as tightly to the richness of scriptures as Paul did. They are the truest of treasures.

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*Love is friendship set to music.*

## 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; 1 Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (1 Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

## THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; 1 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; 1 Corinthians 12:13).

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