

1953

50th Anniversary

2003

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

Volume 37

Mammoth Spring, AR 72554

June 2003

No. 6

THE NATURE OF TRUTH

Part Three

By Ted J. Clarke

REVIEW

Part One of this series showed that the Old Testament Law of Moses was nailed to the cross, done away in Christ (cf. Colossians 2:14, Galatians 3:16-29). Part Two demonstrated that the Sabbath (the seventh day, Saturday), that was formerly the day of worship and rest for the Hebrews, was annulled by God as the day of worship in the Christian age in which we now live (Hebrews 7:11-14; Colossians 2:14-17).

The new day of worship for a New Covenant is rooted in the greatest event in the history of humankind - the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (Mark 16: 1-2, 9; Revelation 1:10). That day is the Lord's Day, the first day of the week, Sunday. The aim of this article is to establish by the Scriptures: (1) the significance of the first day of the week; and (2) to show that Sunday is the day selected by God for the assembling together of Christians to engage in corporate worship to Him, including a remembrance of the sacrifice of Christ for our sins in our observance of the Lord's Supper.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK

First, Jesus was raised from the dead on the first day of the week (Mark 16:1-2, 9). Second, the prophecy of Jesus being declared to be the Son of God, begotten by the Father (Psalm 2:7), was fulfilled that first day of the week (Acts 13:32-33; Romans 1:4). Third, Jesus showed Himself to be raised from the dead on the first day of the week by appearing that very day to: [a] Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9);

[b] the two Marys (Matthew 28:1,9); [c] two of the disciples (Luke 24:1, 13-31); [d] to Peter (Luke 24:34); [e] to the eleven apostles, minus Thomas (Luke 24:33-43; John 20:19-24). These appearances (and possibly others) occurred on the day of Christ's resurrection, the first day of the week. Jesus, one week later on Sunday, appeared to Thomas with the other disciples (John 20:26-28). The phrase "after eight days" in John 20:26 is a Hebrew idiom for one week later.

Fourth, the prophecies concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28-32; Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1:4-8); salvation through Christ (Joel 2:32; Matthew 1:21; Luke 2:67-79; John 1:29); Christ being made King and the establishment of the Lord's church (Isaiah 2:1-4; Daniel 2:44; Luke 1:31-33) all were fulfilled on the first day of the week, on the first Pentecost following Christ's resurrection (Acts 2:1-47). Pentecost was always on the first day of the week (cf. Leviticus 23:15-16). Fifth, the prophesied New Covenant that promised absolute forgiveness of sins (Jeremiah 31:31-34) began on Pentecost Sunday when salvation was first preached in the name of Jesus Christ. It was also upon this Pentecost Sunday that the firstfruits of the spiritual harvest of souls were gleaned in Christ's name. In the Old Testament Pentecost also was called the feast of ingathering, when they brought in the firstfruits of their harvest (Exodus 23:16). On Pentecost in Acts 2, three thousand souls obeyed the gospel and were saved from their sins in Christ's name

(Acts 2:36-41). These were added to the church of Christ by the Lord (verse 47). The same process by which they were saved made them a part of Christ's church.

The sabbath was a great day in that it was the day God rested from the labors of creation (Genesis 2:1-3) and it was given to the nation of Israel as a sign of the covenant God made with her (Exodus 31:12-17; Nehemiah 9:13-14; Ezekiel 20:10-12). However, the covenant that included the sabbath was limited to national Israel and by a particular time period. The covenant God has made through Jesus Christ is universal (Matthew 28: 18-20; Acts 1:8; Ephesians 2:11-22) and irreplaceable (Hebrews 13:20). Read the New Testament book of Hebrews and notice that in the Old Covenant God made with the Jews there was provision for a New Covenant to come. Under Christ there is no such provision. His covenant is universal and without end! **Never has there been a day of such tremendous significance as the first day of the week, the day upon which our Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead!**

DEFINING WORSHIP

What does the word "worship" mean in the New Testament? The most frequent word in our English New Testaments translated worship is from the Greek verb *proskuneo*. Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words says it means "to make obeisance, do reverence to . . . used as an act of homage or reverence." See Matthew 4:10; John 4:21-24 and elsewhere. Other Greek verbs given by Vine's are: *sebomai*, meaning "to revere, stressing the feeling of awe of devotion" (Matthew 15:9; Acts 16:14; 18:7, 13); *latreuo*, meaning "to serve, to render relig-

FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

USPS Publication #211780

... is a Periodical publication issued monthly by the Church of Christ at Third and Bethel (P.O. Box 251), Mammoth Spring, AR 72554-0251. **POSTMASTER: Please mail all changes of address to the above address.**

FCGN is mailed free of charge to any who care to receive it. We will be happy to add any names to the regular mailing list. If you send in a name we must have a complete address, including number and street name, or R.R. or HCR number, plus box number, or a P.O. Box number and the **NINE DIGIT ZIP CODE**. This paper is supported by voluntary contributions for which we are grateful. Financial information will be furnished upon request. **Mail all address corrections or manuscripts to:**

FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

P.O. Box 251
Mammoth Spring, AR 72554

TED J. CLARKE EDITOR
Phone (870) 625-3217
Fax (870) 625-3137
E-Mail cocfcgn@ozarks.com

ious service or homage," variously rendered worship or service, depending upon the translation (Philippians 3:3; Acts 7:42; 24:14; Hebrews 10:2; Romans 12:1); *eusebeo*, meaning "to act piously toward" Acts 17:23). Worship then may be an act of devotion toward God, conducted in reverence, awe, and humble submission as we are guided by God's word (Hebrews 11:4; Romans 10:17).

WORSHIP IN THE CHRISTIAN AGE

God has always indicated what constitutes acceptable worship to Him. This fact was established early by the worship experience of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4:1-8. Whatever one believes about Cain's offering to God being rejected, it is clear from Scripture that Abel's offering was accepted by faith. "*By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain . . .*" (Hebrews 11:4). Romans 10:17 instructs us, "*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*" God told these men, either through Adam or directly, how to worship Him. Abel did what God said to do, like God said to do it. Cain did not do so. Acceptable worship can only come by following God's word.

Regarding a required day of worship by the Lord, we can expect to

be informed by His word so that we can worship by faith (Romans 10:17). We are already alerted to the significance of the first day of the week by the material presented in the previous section, but is there emphasis placed upon it as a day of assembled worship for Christians? The answer is, "Yes!" Consider first Numbers, chapters 28 & 29. In that revelation to Israel, God specified daily worship activities (verses 3-8); weekly worship obligations (verses 9-10); monthly offerings (verses 11-15); and yearly feasts (28:16-29; 40). While the New Covenant is not like the Old in many respects (Hebrews 8:8-9), we surely can expect that God would reveal to us His requirement for any special day of worship, and He does.

Hebrews 10:25 admonishes, "*Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*" Regardless of what one believes "the day approaching" refers to, there is an implied demand for "the assembling of ourselves together" and an explicit warning against "forsaking" such assemblies. These assemblies of Christians are said here to contribute to the "exhortation" or encouragement of one another in a manner that those not present for these assemblies would miss.

Such assemblies are also seen in specific acts of worship mentioned in the Scriptures. For example, the new Christians of Acts 2:41-42 were engaged in these specific acts. "*Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*" Their steadfast continuance was in four acts of worship: (1) the teaching of the apostles; (2) the fellowship or sharing of material goods to aid the needy; (3) the breaking of bread, which is a reference to the observance of the Lord's supper; and (4) the prayers offered in concert. While "breaking of bread" can refer to a common meal (cf. Acts 2:46b), in the context of other worship activities it refers to the Lord's supper (Acts 2:47; 1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:23-38). The

Lord's supper is again mentioned with regard to the assemblies of Christians in First Corinthians 11:17-34. "Com[ing] together in the church" is referred to in verses 17, 18, 20, 33. Although the Corinthians abused their coming together and perverted the purpose of the Lord's supper to having a common meal, it was one of the purposes for which they were to "come together." The references to their assembled purposes continued in chapter 14 (cf. verse 23), speaking of edifying the church through teaching of the inspired word by prophesying (verses 3-5, 12) singing (verse 15), and praying (verses 15-16). Mutual edification and teaching of one another through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs also is enjoined upon the church in Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16.

Two other passages contribute significantly to the concept of assemblies for specific worship to God through the avenues mentioned. Acts 20:7 says "*And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.*" Since Paul was in a hurry to get to Jerusalem before the Jewish feast of Pentecost (verse 16), there must have been a compelling reason for his company to stay in Troas for seven days (verse 6). Verse 7 seems to give that reason as a desire to assemble with the brethren there on the first day of the week for worship, mentioned here by the "breaking of bread" and Paul's extended teaching. It is worthy of note that if the Lord's supper could be observed on any day of the week, there would have been no need for Paul and his fellow travelers to have tarried in Troas for seven days. They assembled on the first day of the week to observe the Lord's supper (break bread) together. Obviously there was a sense among Paul and the disciples of the necessity of doing this on the first day of the week, Sunday, the Lord's day.

The second passage is found in 1 Corinthians 16:1-2: "*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 hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." Literally, verse 2 reads in the Greek "Upon the first day of **every** week . . ." and signifies the importance of every first day of the week to every Christian as a day to contribute to the work of the church in aiding the poor. If one considers the emphasis upon the assemblies in the rest of this epistle (cf. chapters 11, 14), the laying by in store must have reference to a common treasury for the church that Paul expected to access, so that he need not travel about Corinth gathering or collecting from each member. Otherwise, his admonition makes no sense.

CONCLUSION

There are some acts of worship that may be done on an individual basis, such as reading or studying God's word, praying, or singing, but in view of the study above one cannot successfully deny God's intention for His children to assemble together on the first day of every week to engage in corporate worship in partaking of the Lord's supper, preaching, giving to the work of the church, praying, and singing. Usually the New Testament speaks of things belonging to the Lord by phrases like *"the name of the Lord"* (Colossians 3:17); *"the word of the Lord"* (1 Thessalonians 1:8); *"the day of the Lord"* (2 Peter 3:10). Only twice in NT Scripture is something said to be *"the Lord's ___"*. Those are *"the Lord's supper"* (1 Corinthians 11:20) and *"the Lord's day"* (Revelation 1:10). The Lord's supper is His in a way that it can be no other. It is in memory of His body and blood given on the cross for the sins of the world. The phrase, the Lord' day, is a special way of identifying the day of His resurrection from every other day. The phrase "the day of the Lord" is a term used throughout Scripture to indicate a day of judgment (Isaiah 13:6; Joel 2:31; Amos 5:18,20; 1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10). To avoid confusion the first day of the week, a weekly day to worship God and remember Christ in His Lord's supper, was called "the Lord's day." What could be more fitting than the Lord's supper on the Lord's day?

The Nature of Truth in the New Testament is such that we can know when and how to worship God in such a way that it is acceptable to Him. God seeks our worship (John 4:21-24), but will reject unauthorized worship today as He did Cain's (Gen. 4:1-8). (To be continued next month - Unauthorized Worship)

NEWS AND APOLOGY

Some time ago a brother in Texas volunteered to maintain a web site for **FCGN** and to send out via e-mail the paper each month to those who desired to receive it in that fashion. We truly appreciated his willingness to help and the work he accomplished in that area. However, unknown to us, this brother experienced some difficulties with his computer and could not maintain the web site or send out the monthly paper by e-mail. We began receiving inquiries about **FCGN e-mail** and visited the web site to find out is it not being maintained.

We deeply apologize to all that volunteered to drop receiving **FCGN** via regular mail, believing they could access it through the Internet or would receive it by e-mail. We are currently in the process of establishing a web site that we will control through our own efforts, in place of depending on someone else, but that may take some time. We have some of the e-mail addresses, but most were lost in the crash of the brother's computer mentioned above. We are doing our best to get to a point where can send out to those whose e-mail address we still have. In the mean while you can contact us to be put back on the regular mailing list (as several have already done), or you can send me your current e-mail address and we will add you to the list we have.

We appreciate your understanding and ask for your patience. From this point on please do not send any inquiries regarding FCGN to brother Joseph Chase. He is unable to help you with any problems with the paper. Please send all e-mail regarding **FCGN** to cocfcgn@ozarks.com.

Thank you
Ted J. Clarke, editor

THE BEAUTY OF THE CHURCH

By Harold Turner
(Co-editor 1974-1981)

A study of the New Testament reveals one of the most beautiful pictures in all human relations. The birth of the Lord's church, its growth, organization, and function pictures to us the infinite wisdom of God in meeting the needs in human relations.

Man is born with a need for companionship and fellowship with others. In his efforts to satisfy these needs, men have organized numerous social and fraternal orders. And while these may have provided opportunities for man to better his relations with others, they fall short of totally fulfilling his need for fellowship.

The church is designed to fulfill and meet every spiritual and social need. Social and fraternal orders can no more take the place in fulfilling this need than some club can take the place of the home.

One of the pictures of the church, relating its beauty in human relations, is where it is pictured as a family. God is our Father, and we are his sons and daughters (2 Corinthians 6:18). In relationship one to another, we are brothers and sisters. This is a relationship where love, concern, and compassion are openly expressed one to another. In 1 Corinthians 12:26 Paul admonished the open expression of our feelings, saying, "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it." God's love grows in our heart, and is expressed in helpful ways toward others. Many times I have been astounded at the response of God's children when a need is reported. Frequently their response not only meets the need but abounds far beyond the need.

The gospel provides us with guidelines to help us grow out of the realm of selfishness into the realm of compassionate service to others. This kind of growth shines forth as a radiant light to a world of darkness. One of the contributing factors for the phenomenal growth of the early church was the beauty of their relationship one with the other. In Acts 2:44-45 the early

Christians are pictured in a beautiful realm of love; "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." In Acts 4:34-35 this picture continues; "Neither was there any among them that lacked; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." It is little wonder that the church grew so rapidly. These people were "Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47).

Isn't this picture of the early church the expression of what Jesus meant when he said, "Ye are the light of the world, a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid, neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16).

The gospel of Christ is the power of God to save the lost, but men are deeply attracted to the gospel by the example and beauty of it's message being lived out in the daily lives of the followers of Jesus. Each of us should awaken to the need of keeping the lamp of our life trimmed and burning brightly so that those living in darkness may see the beauty of Christ living in us.

A PROMISE

Once a young man was about to leave home to begin his freshman year in college. Since the college was some distance from his home, he asked his father to buy him a car. After thinking about it the father told his son that he had a proposition to make to him. He handed his son a Bible and said, "If you will read this Bible while you are away in college, I'll give you a car." The son agreed. The son then

left for college. By Christmas vacation he had not received the car. He asked his dad about it. The father replied that he would keep his promise. At the end of the school year he still didn't have the car. Again he approached his father. The father replied, "Don't worry about it; I'll keep my promise." This went on and on at each vacation and at the end of each semester. Finally, the boy graduated. Everyone was congratulating him on this joyous occasion. But he was still worried about he car that his father had promised and that he had never received. It had rested heavily on his mind. Finally, he approached his father and expressed his concern. "Dad, why didn't you keep your promise to me to give me a car while in college?" "Well, son, do you remember our bargain? I have kept mine. You'll find a check for the car filed under the book of Genesis in the Bible that I gave you on the first day that you left for college." Are we keeping our Christian agreement with our Father in heaven?

MAY CONTRIBUTIONS

CHURCHES

Church of Christ (Agnos, AR)	\$50.00
Dellhalf Church of Christ (Myrtle, MO)	30.00
Church of Christ (Bakersfield, MO)	50.00
Church of Christ (Viola, AR)	25.00
Pilot Church of Christ (Mammoth Spring, AR)	40.00
Jeff Church of Christ (Thayer, MO)	25.00
Church of Christ (Moody, MO)	50.00
Lowell Church of Christ (Springdale, AR)	50.00
Church of Christ (Garfield, AR)	50.00
White's Chapel Church of Christ (Eldridge, AL)	150.00
Church of Christ (Clarkridge, AR)	75.00
Church of Christ (Elizabeth, AR)	25.00
Church of Christ (Thayer, MO)	200.00
Camp Church of Christ (Mammoth Spring, AR)	25.00
Church of Christ (Garfield, AR)	50.00

INDIVIDUALS

M/M Bennie Thornton (Hampton, VA) ...	\$10.00
Lee & Glenna Giles (Hardy, AR)	10.00
Gary & Ann Wilson (Hot Springs, AR)	35.00
Katheryn Jean (Magnolia, AR)	100.00
Ralph & Donna Thompson (White House, TN)	40.00
Tim Young (West Plains, MO)	6.00
Clarence Johnson, (Bald Knob, AR)	15.00
Mary Ellen Andrews (Neosho, MO) In memory of Edith Emery	50.00

"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).

CHURCH OF CHRIST
P.O. BOX 251
MAMMOTH SPRING, AR 72554

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED
#BXNGHZD *****3-DIGIT 325
MICHAEL HATCHER
4852 SAUFLEY FIELD RD
PENSACOLA FL 32526-1724
PKG 1
SACK 94

Periodical Postage
Paid At
Mammoth Spring, AR
72554-9998
Publication #211780