

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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JESUS CHRIST

by Thomas F. Eaves, Sr.

"ONE SOLITARY LIFE"

"Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village. He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty, and then for three years He was an itinerant preacher. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never owned a home. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put His foot inside a big city. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place where He was born. He never did one of the things which accompany greatness. He had no credentials but Himself.

"While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against Him. His friends ran away. One of them denied Him. He was turned over to His enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed on a cross between two thieves. His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth, and that was His coat. When He was dead He was taken down and laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

"Nineteen wide centuries have come and gone, and today He is the centerpiece of the column of progress.

"I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that ever were built, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as has that One Solitary Life!" (Author unknown)

The study of the life of Jesus Christ is one of the richest studies one can engage in because it is in Jesus that man obtains his salvation (Acts 4:12) and enjoys the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27).

The name of Jesus is equivalent to the Hebrew name Joshua, which means, "Jehovah is salvation." The angel which appeared to Joseph indicated that Jesus would also be called "Immanuel," which

is interpreted, "God with us" (Matthew 1:23). "Christ" is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew "Messiah." The name Jesus Christ designates Jesus as the fulfiller of the Messianic hopes of the Old Testament and the Jewish people.

The New Testament tells us of the pre-existence of Jesus Christ, that is He existed before He came to earth to be a perfect sacrifice for all men (John 1:1, 14; Colossians 1:13-17).

CHRIST IN SECULAR HISTORY

Non-biblical sources testify that Jesus was a historical person.

The Roman author Suetonius, wrote biographies of the twelve Ceasars from Julius Caesar onward. In his book on Claudius (24:5) he tells of a disturbance which he blames on Chrestus (a common slave-name and a popular misspelling of the name of Christ) which resulted in the expulsion of Christians from Rome. (The apostle Paul mentions this event in Acts 18:2).

Tacitus, the Roman historian, writes in his work, *Roman Annals* (written between 115-117) that Christians derive their name from Christ whom Pontius Pilate executed.

Pliny the Younger, imperial legate of the Roman Empire, wrote to Trajan (Emperor of Rome, A.D. 98-117) seeking advice on how to deal with Christians, the followers of Jesus Christ.

About 52 A.D., Thallus, a freedman of Tiberius who wrote a history of the eastern Mediterranean world, is quoted by Julius Africanus as bearing witness to the crucifixion of Christ and the darkness which accompanied it.

Josephus, a Jewish historian who, according to Origin, did not believe in Jesus, wrote about Jesus as:

1. A historical person.
2. Being a brother of James the Just.

3. Having a reputation of being a miracle worker.
4. Being crucified under Pilate.
5. Being the founder of the "tribe of Christians."

THE BIBLICAL JESUS

The Bible student gets his/her first glimpse of Jesus in Genesis chapter three when God says that the seed of woman would bruise the head of Satan (Genesis 3:15; Galatians 3:16). Again Moses prophesied of Jesus Christ when he wrote what God had told Abraham, that through his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:1-3). Isaiah prophesied the coming of Jesus and that He would be born of a virgin [a woman who had never had sexual relations with a man] (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23).

Someone has written that there are over three hundred prophecies of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament. A few are given to illustrate.

PROPHECY	FULFILLMENT
Isaiah 7:14;	Matthew 1:23
Micah 5:2	Matthew 2:4-6,9
Hosea 11:1	Matthew 2:14-15
Isaiah 53:9	I Peter 2:22
Isaiah 53:10	Acts 2:31-32
Psalms 110:4	Hebrews 7:1-17

The many Old Testament prophecies of Jesus Christ were translated from the Hebrew into Greek some time during the life of Ptolemy Philadelphus (B.C. 284-246). These prophecies concerning Jesus Christ were in print at least 200 years before the birth of Jesus, thus they could not have been made after the events they describe. This Greek translation of the Hebrew scripture is called the "Septuagint," also designated as "LXX."

We are thankful to God that Jesus came into the world and accomplished His Father's will (John 1:29). Through Jesus Christ all men have the opportunity to become children of God and be saved eternally.

Thank God for Jesus!

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**PLEASE NOTICE CHANGE
IN OUR E-MAIL ADDRESS****WHAT SHALL WE SPEAK?**

by Owen D. Olbricht

Because Israel had wandered away from God, they needed a message that would turn them back to Him. This could not be accomplished with a message of human origin, so God sent Ezekiel to warn Israel to leave their evil ways. "You shall speak My words to them, whether they hear or whether they refuse, for they are rebellious" (Ezekiel 2:7 NKJV).

Notice, he was to speak "My (God's) words."

Jesus commissioned the apostles with a similar command, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). The gospel is the "word of truth, the gospel" of salvation (Ephesians 1:13).

They Preached The Word

Acts records the fact that God's word was preached with boldness (Acts 4:31) everywhere Jesus' followers went (Acts 8:4); to Samaritans (Acts 8:25), and even to other countries (Acts 11:19; 13:5, 46, 49; 14:25; 15:35, 36; 16:32; 17:13; 18:11; 19:10). Paul's customary approach was to discuss God's word, the Scriptures (2 Timothy

3:16); "Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures" (Acts 17:2).

The apostles saw the importance of the word. They were not sidetracked to serve tables, which others could do, but devoted themselves to preaching the word (Acts 6:2-4).

Why Preach the Word?

We are to preach God's word, which is the gospel of our salvation (Ephesians 1:13; Romans 1:16), because it can make people "wise for salvation" (2 Timothy 3:15; Acts 13:26). An angel told the apostles to preach "the words of this life" (Acts 5:20). Peter spoke words to the first Gentiles to tell them what to do to be saved (Acts 11:14).

Response to the Word

Those who had a readiness of mind received God's word (Acts 17:11); however, those whose minds were closed rejected it (Acts 13:46; 28:26, 27).

Receiving God's word brought people to believe (Acts 4:4; 17:11, 12) and to be baptized (Acts 2:41; 8:12; 18:8). The pattern presented in the book of Acts is that, when the word was preached, those who received it believed and were baptized for the forgiveness of their sins. This was true of those on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38-41), of those in Samaria (Acts 8:12, 13), the Ethiopian (Acts 8:35-39), the first Gentile converts (Acts 10:47, 48; 11:1), Lydia (Acts 16:14, 15), the jailer in Philippi (Acts 16:32, 33), and the converts in Corinth (Acts 18:8).

When the report was given concerning those who had believed and been baptized, the statement is made that they received the word (Acts 2:41; 8:14; 11:1), but not that they received Jesus as their personal Savior, prayed the sinner's prayer, received the Holy Spirit, or any such statement.

Conclusions

From the preceding information we can draw the following conclusions:

1. God expects His word to be respected and preached (2 Timothy 4:2).
2. God's word will save those who receive it.
3. The proper response to the word is faith, repentance and baptism, followed by a life dedicated to Jesus.

*(Continued on page 3)***A WORD OF EXPLANATION
ABOUT THE INSERT**

The elders of the church at Third and Bethel in Mammoth Spring, Arkansas believe in the awesome power of the printed page. If that were not the case, the church here, with the aid of many others, would not have published the **Fulton County Gospel News** for nearly fifty years.

The insert gives you important information about a new publication, **The Gospel Journal**, which will debut in January, 2000. Although this publication is only available through a subscription cost, it is a non-profit venture. All monies collected will be directed back into the operating costs of publishing the paper. We have included the insert to give you an opportunity to look over the Editorial Aims and Staff of **The Gospel Journal**, so that you would know of this good work. I know the editors and directors of this new venture and I am convinced that this will be an excellent paper to assist you in your Bible knowledge and growth as a child of God. My opinion is that **The Gospel Journal** will be a strong and faithful paper, providing a balanced content which proclaims the gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16-17) while warning its readers of those things which might lead Christians astray (Acts 20:29-31).

I hope many of our readers will take action to become charter subscribers to this proposed new paper. Complete information for subscribing is found on page three of the insert. This is not a work of FCGN so please **do not** send your subscription to our Mammoth Spring, AR address. The church here does not profit in any financial way from making this insert available nor from the publication of **The Gospel Journal**. We just believe strongly in the good this new journal can and will accomplish.

Ted J. Clarke, Editor
Fulton County Gospel News

(Continued from page 2)

4. Those who received the word were baptized for the forgiveness of their sins.
5. Salvation comes to those who obey Jesus when they hear the name of Jesus and the kingdom preached (Acts 8:4, 5, 12).
6. Even though the Samaritans received the Holy Spirit through the laying on of apostles' hands and the Gentiles received the Holy Spirit directly from God, the reports about them simply included that they had "received the word" (Acts 8:14; 11:1).
7. The description given of the response on the day of Pentecost, when preaching forgiveness in Jesus' name began (Luke 24:47), which must have set the precedence for all following conversions, was that those who received the word were baptized. This must mean that receiving the word includes baptism in order to be saved (Mark 16:15, 16), for the word can make us wise to salvation, and baptism was the result of receiving it (Acts 2:41).
8. Preachers who do not preach the word today are failing to bring people to salvation.
9. Failure to preach the word is to fail to follow the instruction of Jesus and the precedence set by the early church.
10. Receiving God's word is the only way to salvation, yesterday, today, and until the end of the world.

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ARE YOU LOST OR SAVED?

by Ted J. Clarke

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE LOST?

The word "lost" carries with it several different meanings. It can mean "not knowing where we are." It can also mean "destroyed," such as, "All lives were lost in the plane crash." Another meaning is "no longer held or possessed," such as, "I lost my job." A final meaning for our purposes is "unprofitable, wasted," such as, "This was a lost evening." To be spiritually lost carries a touch of all of these meanings and much more.

Those who are spiritually lost do not "know where they are," nor where they are going. Jeremiah 10:23 says, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps." Proverbs 14:12 says, "There is a way which seems right

to a man, but its end is the way of death." Jesus claims that He is **the light and the way** (John 8:12; 14:6). If we do not follow Christ, we walk in darkness and stumble about in the broad way that leads to death (Matthew 7:13). "Lost" people will ultimately be destroyed. Paul says that "those who know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ...shall be punished with **everlasting destruction** from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power" (2 Thessalonians 1:8, 9). Everlasting punishment is as real as everlasting life. See Matthew 25:46! To lose physical life is one thing, to lose your soul is the greatest tragedy of all (Matthew 16:26). Those who are spiritually lost are no longer "held or possessed" by God, at least not in the sense of being "with" God. God says, "All souls are mine," meaning that He is Creator and will finally judge the eternal destiny of all men (Ezekiel 18:4).

When we go into a life of sin, we deny our Creator and become slaves of another (Matthew 10:33; Romans 6:16). We are lost to God when we serve ourselves, sin and Satan. God will judge us, but we are no longer His possession, His children! Those who are lost spiritually are living "unprofitable and wasted" lives! Jesus taught that we ought to be laying up treasures in heaven for eternity, because everything pertaining to this earthly life will one day mean absolutely **nothing** (Matthew 6:19, 20)! Peter says that the earth and all the works in it will be destroyed, dissolved with fire hotter than anything we have known (2 Peter 3:10). Paul says, "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is **certain we can carry nothing out**" (1 Timothy 6:7). Everything you have worked for in this life will some day mean nothing to you! Without Christ your life will have been "wasted."

One does not have to be lost nor stay lost! We exist to serve you and will gladly help you **find God. If you need such help, call today.**

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE SAVED? The word "saved" has several shades of meaning, much like the word "lost" which we just discussed. Basically, we are using the meaning "to be rescued from danger; to make and keep safe." To be lost means to be separated from God and doomed to everlasting punishment. To be saved is to be reconciled to God, thus being saved from the punishment of an eternal hell. In addition to avoiding

hell, we gain the promise of eternal life in heaven with God, Christ and the saved of all the ages (Matthew 8:11; John 14:1-6; Revelation 21:1-7; 22:1-5). Please read all of those verses and see the eternal joy that will ultimately belong to all the saved. **But wait! There is more!**

Critics of Christianity accuse us of preaching, "Pie in the sky, in the sweet by and by." Such charges are made, saying that Christianity really doesn't offer a person anything for this life, it is all "afterlife," and we really don't know that there is an afterlife. Our critics are wrong on both counts! An empty tomb near Jerusalem nearly 2000 years ago and the spread of Christianity based on the resurrection of Jesus **prove** that there is an afterlife, if one will consider the facts objectively. The charge that Christianity is only "pie in the sky" is equally false!

While heaven is the ultimate "hope" of every true Christian, **the Christian life is the best possible life for the here and now!** The apostle Paul says, "...godliness is profitable for all things, **having the promise of the life that now is** and of that which is to come" (1 Timothy 4:8). While Jesus admitted that God sends the sun and rain on the good and bad alike (Matthew 5:45), He inspired the apostle Paul to teach that only "in Christ" can we find **"every spiritual blessing"** (Ephesians 1:3). There are no spiritual blessings outside of Christ! No sins are forgiven outside of Christ. There is no fellowship with God outside of Christ. There is no promise of watchcare and protection outside of Christ. See Ephesians 1:7; John 14:6; Romans 8:31-39; Hebrews 13:5, 6. Only in Christ can there be true peace of mind, trusting in God in life or in death (Philippians 1:21; 4:6, 7, 13).

No, Christians are not promised immunity from all problems. We grow and strengthen our faith through trials (James 1:2-4). We are promised strength to endure and that earthly trials are **nothing compared to the glory of heaven** (Philippians 4:13; Romans 8:18; 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:8). Read these verses and get the comfort that comes from them! Being "saved" can mean everything to your life **right now!** Call us if we can help you learn what to do to be saved.

Man receives no nourishment from chewing the rag.

A well rounded life is achieved by watching your corners.

It's only a tiny rosebud...
A flower of God's design;
But I cannot unfold the petals
with these clumsy hands of mine.



The secret of unfolding flowers
Is not known to such as I...
The flower God opens so sweetly
In my hands would fade and die.

If I cannot unfold a rosebud,
This flower of God's design,
Then how can I think I have wisdom
To unfold this life of mine?

So I'll trust in Him for His leading
Each moment of everyday,
And I'll look to Him for His guidance
Each step of the pilgrim way.

For the pathway that lies before me -
My heavenly Father knows...
I'll trust Him to unfold the moments
Just as He unfolds the rose.

- Author Unknown
From Higden, Ar. church bulletin

Beware! You May Be Backsliding

Just as you can tell when your physical health is failing, there are symptoms or danger signals which warn us that things aren't as they ought to be! J. Curtis Manor lists ten warning signals to watch for in regard to backsliding.

- Lack of time for Bible study, church assemblies or Christian service.
- Devoting of more time to reading newspapers or novels than the Bible.
- Preference for the company of the irreligious to that of Christians.
- Looking for reasons to justify something you have already done or decided to do.
- Evaluating the sermon more by its length than by its content.
- Becoming more prone to illness on Sunday than on other days of the week!
- Stretching one week's excuse to cover two or more weeks of absence from church.
- Thinking of the church in terms of "they" rather than "we."
- Reaction to sorrow, doubts, or personal problems by avoiding Christian association which might help to resolve them.
- Resentment toward being visited by representatives of the church.

"These danger signals are early symptoms of the various aspects and developmen-

tal phases of worldliness, a malignity far more deadly than cancer. Early diagnosis and intensive treatment are of the utmost importance. Should any of these warning signals be detected, it should receive immediate attention."

"This stubborn ailment has been known to respond favorably to massive ingestion of Bible study, combined with regular and sustained attendance at worship assemblies and committed involvement in teaching, visitation and personal service, supplemented by increased exercise of prayer and sacrifice."

- Author Unknown

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GOD'S AUTHORIZED WORSHIP - COLOSSIANS 3:17

1. **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).
2. **PRAYERS** - (Acts 2:42; Philippians 4:6-7; 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18).
3. **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.
4. **GIVING** - Free-willed, cheerful, generous, and every week (Acts 20:35; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8 & 9).
5. **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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