

# Fulton County Gospel News

"The Churches of Christ Salute You"

Second Class Postage Paid at Mammoth Spring, Ark.

VOLUME 12

Mammoth Spring, Arkansas 72554

NOVEMBER 1977

NUMBER 82

## TO WORSHIP GOD

By Ordell Heavin

Weekly attendance at religious services among adults in this country dropped from 49 per cent to 42 per cent from 1958 to 1969. In a recent survey the percentage of people who attend every weekly assembly is somewhere close to 15 to 20 per cent. Based on these figures, one out of three members of the Lord's church attend only one service a week, usually Sunday morning."

The Scriptures are filled with warnings about neglect. "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4:17.) The sin of "commission" is doing what God has expressly forbidden men to do. The sin of "omission" is clearly a failure to do what we are commanded to do. But the important thing to remember is that both are sin, and all sin is damning.

All 46 verses of Matthew 25 are devoted to warning men against neglect. The first 13 verses tell about the parable of ten virgins. Five were shut out from eternal blessings because of neglect. Verses 14-30 give the parable of the talents. A certain master gave five talents to one servant, two to another, and one to the third. He left his servants to use the talents with wisdom and profit. The one with five gained five more, the one with two also gained two more. The third man was called "wicked, slothful, and unprofitable" because he did "nothing." He was punished severely for neglect. Verses 31 - 46 give a glimpse of the final judgment. A great separation is made, the sheep (righteous) are blessed and given an eternal home with God - "Come, ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." The goats (unrighteous) were cursed - "Depart from me ye cursed, into eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

Why spend so much time on the terribleness of neglect? Because if it can be shown that God has commanded public worship, it is for sure to neglect it as a Christian duty is a sin.

The word "worship" in different forms appears 191 times in the Bible; 115 times in the old, and 76 times in the new.

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## BEGINNING AT JERUSALEM

By Harold Turner

Acts chapter two stands out as one of the most significant chapters in the entire Bible. Within this chapter numerous Old Testament prophecies are fulfilled. However, probably the greatest significance is seen in that this chapter marks the beginning of a new era in the relationship between God and man. It is the beginning of the Christian age.

A few days prior to the events recorded in this great chapter Jesus had told his apostles, "That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." He then instructed them, "But tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." (Luke 24:47-49.) In Acts 1:4-5, the day that Jesus ascended back into heaven, he, "Being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."

Shortly before his death, Jesus promised the apostles that they would receive the Holy Spirit, through which they would be taught all things (John 14:26), and be guided into all truth (John 16:13). In Matthew 10:20 he told the apostles to take no thought how or what they were to speak, assuring them, "For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you."

In Acts 2:4 we find the above promises becoming a reality. While they are assembled together in Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost, "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." When the people were discussing this wonderful event, Peter explained, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel." (Acts 2:16.) Joel's prophecy, made some 750 years before, has now come to pass, along with the numerous promises of Jesus to his chosen apostles.

In the above Scripture (Luke 24:47-49) Jesus had told the apostles that "Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name . . . beginning at Jerusalem." And that they should tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. In Acts 1:8 he

promised them that they would receive this power after the Holy Ghost was come upon them, and that they then would begin witnessing for him.

The apostles have now (Acts 2:4) received the Spirit and the power, and are now ready to begin preaching repentance and remission of sins in Christ's name.

The first step is two-fold. Jesus must be declared as Lord and Christ. These very people are accused of having crucified and slain him as an evidence of their rejection of this very fact. They must now accept and embrace this if they are to be saved. The apostle Peter reasons with them from facts which they knew to be true (vr. 22), and from the Old Testament Scriptures which pointed to their fulfillment in Jesus. He summed up by saying, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." (Acts 2:36.)

The second important factor in this preaching was to convince these people that they were lost in their sins, and needed this Lord and Christ to save them.

The sermon was successful in accomplishing both of these factors. In Acts 2:37 we learn, "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" These words show that the Spirit's message reached their heart, convincing them of the fact that Christ is Lord, and of their lost condition.

Up to this point in the chapter nothing has been said about repentance and remission of sins. The sermon set forth the necessary facts about Christ to instill faith in their hearts. Before a person will determine to turn from his sins and come to Christ for the remission of them, he must first believe with all his heart that Jesus Christ is Lord and Christ, the Son of God (Acts 8:37).

By faith these people are pleading, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" When Jesus gave the great commission to the apostles, he said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark

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**FULTON COUNTY  
GOSPEL NEWS**

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**CONTRIBUTIONS**

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“Talk to the Lord about sinners, then talk to the sinners about the Lord.”

“Arguments thrive where facts are scarce.”

“No time is wasted that is used in getting ready for a good work.”

“An atheist belittles the Christ, but prefers to live among Christ-ians.”

No apologies for failure are necessary, if one has done his best. Not success, but faithfulness is the divine requirement.

“Being at peace with the devil is no evidence of a peaceable disposition. The man who is at peace with the devil is at war with God.”

“If you play with sin it will soon crowd you out of the society of decent people. Sin should never be considered as a play-thing. Sin will soil the most beautiful garment.”

*Topical Bible Lessons*

By Harold Turner

**BIBLE WARNINGS:**

1. Matthew 24:4, Of what did Jesus say we should take heed?
2. 1 Corinthians 2:5, In what should our faith not stand?
3. Galatians 3:1, Why were these not obeying the truth?
4. 2 Corinthians 11:14-15, Satan's ministers are transformed to appear as what?
5. 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10, Who are Satan's ministers able to deceive?
6. Matthew 15:9, When we follow the doctrines of men, what does our worship become?

**THE NEED FOR THE RIGHT STANDARD OF AUTHORITY:**

1. Philippians 3:16, God wants Christians to walk by what?
2. 1 Corinthians 1:10, God wants Christians to speak what?
3. John 17:20-21, Jesus prayed that all believers be what?

**WHO HAS COMPLETE AUTHORITY TODAY?**

1. Matthew 28:18, How much authority (power) did Jesus say was given him?
2. Ephesians 1:22-23, Over how many things in the church is Jesus the head?
3. 2 John 9, What is the result of not abiding in the doctrine of Christ?
4. John 12:48, By what standard will we be judged?

**HOW IS THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST DELEGATED TO US?**

1. Acts 1:2, After his ascension, to whom did Jesus give his commandments?
2. John 16:13, Into how much truth was the Spirit to guide the apostles?
3. Galatians 1:11-12, How did the apostle Paul say he received the gospel he preached?
4. Acts 20:27, Did the apostles receive and declare the whole counsel of God?
5. 1 Corinthians 14:37, What did the apostles write?
6. Ephesians 3:1-5, How did the apostles make known what had been revealed to them?

7. 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Are the Scriptures an all-sufficient guide for God's people?
8. 2 Peter 1:3, Have all things pertaining to life and godliness been given through the revealed knowledge of Christ?
9. 1 Peter 4:11, Those who teach and preach today must speak only as what?
10. Revelation 22:18-19, Deuteronomy 4:2, Has God ever permitted his people to add to or take from his word?

If you would like to have this lesson graded and returned to you, please send it along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

**NORTHERN ARKANSAS CHURCH  
MAKES HISTORY**

The Lord's Church in Melbourne, Arkansas (Izard County) reports a history making assembly. Sunday night, September 25, 1977 the usually quiet community of 1,200 came alive as 553 people assembled on the closing night of a Gospel Meeting to worship and to hear Christ preached by Larry Wishard of Dallas, Texas. This was the largest religious assembly ever reported in the history of Izard County.

The local evangelist, Dennis Crawford, stated, "It was a trying night for some. Our auditorium is supposed to accommodate only about 360. We used 150 folding chairs, but even at this, young people sat on the floor in front of the pulpit and many men were forced to stand in the back."

Crawford also said, "We had announced to the community a goal of 450 for this night. We have proved to ourselves when we faithfully work with God, He will bless us even above our dreams and prayers! We are giving the glory to God."

During the 4 day meeting, 5 were baptized into Christ and 12 Christians responded publicly for various reasons.

Dennis Crawford  
P. O. Box 267  
Melbourne, AR 72556

“Three great essentials of happiness are - something to do, something to love, and something to hope for.”

## Beginning at Jerusalem (Cont.)

16:15-16.) The apostles have preached the gospel to these people, they have been convinced that they are true, and now desire to obey. Peter instructed them, saying, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost . . . And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." (Acts 2:38-41.)

Here we have seen fulfilled the commission of Jesus as stated in Luke 24:47-49 and Mark 16:15-16. The apostles tarried at Jerusalem where these glorious events were to begin. Here they received power from on high through the Holy Spirit. They preached the gospel to the great multitude gathered in Jerusalem, convincing them to believe that Jesus is truly the Christ, the Son of God. These believers are then instructed how to receive the remission of their sins through repentance and baptism in the name of Christ - and when they obeyed this they are added to the church the day that it began. As the gospel continued to be preached, "The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." (Acts 2:47.)

Therefore Acts chapter two stands out with great significance. It marks the beginning of the preaching in the name of Christ, a message designed to bring repentance and remission of sins. It also marks the beginning for the receiving of the Holy Spirit, and it marks the beginning for the establishment of the Lord's church.

We, today, should go back to the beginning to learn the pattern for reaching the lost for Christ. We must preach the facts set forth in the Scriptures which declare Jesus to be the Son of God, and when the lost are convinced of these facts, we must then teach them repentance and remission of sins, as did the apostle Peter in Acts 2:38. When this is done the Lord will in turn add these obedient believers to his church.

A good place to begin is at the beginning. Acts chapter two marks the beginning for those who seek to follow Christ (Luke 24:47, Acts 11:15). We urge all people to go back to the beginning and do as these first converts did, and be what they were. Christians only, and members of the church of our Lord.

"Be careful of your thoughts, they may break out in words at any moment."

## THE GOOD MAN

By Leslie Leonard

There are two types of people who are difficult, if not impossible, to reach with the Gospel. One is a person who has some religious connection and will not seriously examine his situation. The other type is a person who can be considered "a good man." Both types may not lie, cheat, swear, commit adultery or fornication, etc. They are good neighbors and good citizens, but they are not active Christians. In fact, the latter type can not see any reason why he should be a Christian because he thinks he's good enough, and that God can't find anything bad enough in his life to call him into account.

The problem is that such people do not have a clear understanding of their condition, and they don't realize the necessity of establishing and maintaining a positive relationship with God. They don't understand man's condition.

The Psalmist said of man, ". . . they are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one." (Psalm 14:1-3.) The apostle Paul quoted this Psalm when he summed up man's condition in Romans 3:10-23. In verse ten he wrote, "There is none righteous, no, not one." And in verse twenty-three, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

There are some who do not like to admit that even the best of us sin at times, and that we will continue to sin as long as we're in this fleshly body. Yet the Bible teaches that there is a constant warfare between the fleshly and spiritual natures of man, with the fleshly nature getting the upperhand at times. (Gal. 5:17.)

One thing that makes the Christian different from the non-Christian is his honesty, or ability, to recognize that he has committed sin. Paul wrote the Christians at Ephesus, saying, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in times past ye walked according to the course of the world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." (Eph. 2:1-3.) This is not a very pretty picture of their previous lives, but it certainly is a true one, and the same thing can be said of Christians in any age. Jesus said he

came to call sinners to repentance rather than the righteous.

For a Christian to remain in a safe condition he must recognize that he can, and does, still sin at times. John wrote Christians, saying, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." (1 John 1:8-10.) Anyone, either Christian or non-Christian, who thinks he is capable of living above sin is only deceiving himself. He is calling the Lord a liar. Satan has lulled him to sleep with a false sense of security.

Although we recognize that we sin it should not be used as an excuse to continue in sin, and because Christians do sin we should not attempt to justify ourselves by what other people do. Recognizing our sinful condition should motivate us to depend upon the Lord for forgiveness. Safety lies in recognizing that we sin, repenting of those sins, and putting our trust in the Lord by obeying Him so that He can remove our sins. We can not live above sin, but we can be free from the guilt of sin by letting Christ cleanse us. When a person recognizes that he is a lost sinner without hope, then he can accept God's gracious gift with thanksgiving, and we can in full faith be confident that we are safe. Not because of something we have done, but because of what has been done for us by the Lord Jesus Christ when he died as a sacrifice for our sins.

Many of those who are difficult to reach with the Gospel because they consider themselves good enough already are often too proud to really look at themselves, see themselves as they really are, and admit that they are sinners. Since they do not have a clear picture of man's condition, and especially their own sinful condition, they will not seek Christ's help. It will be too late for them at the judgment to realize that they were not as good as they thought, and it will then be too late to do anything about their condition.

"Strength unused becomes weakness."

"You are never defeated until you give up."

"Prayer must mean something to us if it is to mean anything to God."

"He that never changes his opinions nor corrects his mistakes will never be wiser or better."

TO WORSHIP GOD (Cont.)

# THE RESTORATION PLEA

By Bobby Dockery

Jesus, after being tempted by the devil, said: "Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." (Matt. 4:10.) In John 4:23-24 Jesus said, "The hour cometh and now is, when true worshippers shall worship in Spirit and truth." Later, in John 9:31 it is said, "We know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth." Too, in Hebrews 10:25, we have this warning, "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." So to neglect these teachings regarding worship is sin.

It is often asked, "Which assembly?" Does it mean Sunday morning, Sunday evening, mid-week, gospel meetings, and all assemblies called by the elders? Elders are to feed and care for the souls of the church-members. The early church met every day for prayer, to praise God, and to study the Scriptures. On the first day of the week they met, not only for prayer, praise, and study, but also to observe the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7), and for giving financially into the church treasury (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

One may talk to people about neglecting public worship, and have them reply, "I believe I can worship God at home or wherever I am." Of course we can and must worship God daily, but we can't obey the command regarding the assembling together to pray, sing, give, teach, and observing the Lord's Supper, at home.

Let's look at three facts about public worship: (1) You should attend all assemblies for the sake of edification, fellowship with Christians, teaching and admonishing in song (Col. 3:16), Bible study, and spiritual growth. (2) Our influence to others, our children, friends, weak brethren, and non-Christians. One either influences for or against Christ. (3) Because the day may come when it will no longer be possible. Life is uncertain and death is sure. We must work while there is time and opportunity to prepare for the future. Neglect and we face spiritual destruction. This is obviously the reason for the command in Hebrews 10:25. A true Christian wants to do all he can in the service of the Lord.

One way to influence others, and to show this spirit is to attend every service. If a man loves his family, he wants to be with them. The same is true of the family of God - the church. If any sin is public, surely being absent willfully from the assembly is. If you are guilty of this, you need to repent, confess your sins to God, and ask the church to pray with you.

Near the beginning of the last century, a great religious movement began to gain momentum in what was then the frontier states of Kentucky and Western Virginia. It was completely unlike any other religious movement since the first century. It had as its aim the restoration of New Testament Christianity in all its original purity and glory.

The movement drew its leaders from men with many different religious backgrounds. Men who had been reared as Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Baptists united in an effort to erase denominational differences in the restoration of New Testament Christianity.

The Restoration Plea called for the following Biblical principles:

(1) THE UNITY OF ALL CHRISTIANS ON THE BASIS OF THE BIBLE ALONE. Recognizing that real religious unity would be possible only when men would subordinate their own opinions to the authority of the scriptures, the restoration leaders resolved to "Speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent." (1 Peter 4:11.)

(2) THE REJECTION OF ALL MAN-MADE CREEDS. Because of the divisive influence of creeds, confessions of faith, books of discipline, and official prayer books, those who desired to be simple New Testament Christians determined to accept only the Bible as the all-sufficient rule for religious faith and practice. (John 12:48.)

(3) THE USE OF ONLY SCRIPTURAL NAMES IN REFERRING TO GOD'S PEOPLE. Resolving to call Bible things by Bible names those who were intent upon restoring New Testament Christianity called themselves not 'hyphenated - Christians' but simple 'Christians' only. It was their intention to honor only Christ - not men, or doctrines, or practices - by the name which they wore religiously. (Acts 11:26.)

(4) THE RECOGNITION OF THE ABSOLUTE AUTONOMY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH. Those who were dedicated to the restoration of undenominational Christianity noted that the churches of the 1st Century were not subject to any Board, Synod, Convention, Association, or Ecclesiastical Hierarchy outside the local church. They insisted,

therefore, that individual churches today, like those of the New Testament, should be governed by a plurality of elders without any organization above the congregational level. (Phil. 1:1, Acts 20:28.)

(5) THE RESTORATION OF THE GOVERNMENT, WORSHIP, AND TERMS OF MEMBERSHIP OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH. Believing that the church of the New Testament provides a continuing pattern for the church as God would have it today, the pioneer preachers of Restoration called for a careful reproduction of all the particulars of New Testament Christianity. (Galatians 1:6-9.)

The Restoration Plea found a receptive audience in frontier America. Thousands joined the movement toward Undenominational Christianity. They were disillusioned with denominationalism and its legacy of factionalism, strife, and bitterness. They realized that the answer was not in the creation of another denomination but in a return to the church of the Bible. They were determined to be Christians only!

After nearly 170 years, the Restoration Plea is more powerful than ever!

Those who are members of the churches of Christ continue to cherish the hope that they may be Christians only! In humility they continue to plead for and seek the unity of a divided religious world on the basis of the Bible alone. In pursuit of that grand objective those who are committed to the Restoration of New Testament Christianity urge, now, more than ever, that men and women of all religious persuasions resolve to examine their beliefs and practices with the intention of sincerely trying to 'Speak where the Bible speaks, and remain silent where the Bible is silent.'

Why not be just a Christian?

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