

The Keys Of The Kingdom

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If you would like to be a guest writer for TKOK you may contact me at jfmiller61@gmail.com. To announce up coming events like Gospel Meetings, Lectures, Singing events etc... Just use the email link above to contact me. Please feel free to tell others and have them sign up for their copy today. Use this link to join the mailing list. http://jfmiller.com/keysofthekingdom/?page_id=1316 . May God Bless You. Jim and the Staff

Voices from the Past

The Curse Of Negligence

Homer Hailey

Tampa, FL.

March, 1940

A very dangerous attitude affecting the whole structure of society is that of doing just enough to “get by.” The efforts of men are too often half-hearted, with no spirit and fervor in the work. Such an attitude is serious enough, and bad enough, in secular affairs, but when it invades the sacred realm of religious life it becomes disastrous. Here one must deal with God, for it is He who is insulted and robbed by half-hearted efforts, and the “get by” spirit.

In the history of Moab, the time finally came, when, because of her idolatry and corruption, she was ripe for destruction. The word of Jehovah came unto the prophet Jeremiah pronouncing her doom, and commanding that she be destroyed, adding a curse upon those who should enter the work of destruction negligently, or refusing to act at all; hear the prophet: “*Cursed be he that doeth the work of Jehovah negligently; and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood*” (Jer. 48:10). Two words here need defining, namely “curse” and “negligently.” The word “curse” is defined, “to invoke evil upon, anathematize, excommunicate, execrate.” One needn't get over-excited when the pope curses or “damns” him, as he did the Russians recently, but when God pronounces a curse, to disregard it is tragic. “Negligently” is defined, “apt to omit what ought to be done.” This is about the greatest problem facing the church today, the tendency to “omit what ought to be done.”

In Deuteronomy 10:10, God demanded service with “*all the heart.*” Jesus said the greatest command is that men should love God “*with all the heart*” (Mt. 22:37-39). God commanded that “*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might*” (Eccl. 9:10). Also, Christians should be “in diligence not slothful; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord” (Rom. 12:11). But, what if someone should not take seriously the Lord in this matter, going about the work negligently today? The nausea of the Lord is declared against the insipid, indifferent, lukewarm attitude in no uncertain terms when to the church in Laodicea He said, “*I will spew thee out of my mouth*” (Rev. 3: 16). That exactly expresses God's attitude still toward such a disposition.

The general attitude of many congregations today, entirely too many, is that of doing *“the work of the Lord negligently”* in worship, in work, and in warfare of a spiritual and doctrinal nature. But, note more carefully the next curse of Jehovah through the prophet: *“And cursed is he that keepeth back his sword from blood.”* Moab must perish, must be destroyed. God commanded it, and whosoever would hold back, or shrink from the task, must perish under His anathema. The Lord's people are still His army, although not now engaged in carnal warfare, yet engaged in a warfare none the less terrific and deadly. The Christian fights *“against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”* The exhortation to *“contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered unto the saints”* was not given to preachers exclusively, but to all Christians. No man, preacher or otherwise, can *“contend earnestly for the faith,”* and at the same time *“hold back his sword.”* To *“contend”* is to wield the sword, to smite *“hip and thigh,”* as did Samson of old. The armor of the Christian is of a spiritual nature, perfectly adapted to the warfare, and as said the apostle, *“mighty before God to the casting down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God”* (2 Cor. 10:4, 5). But for the sword to be felt among those whom God has said destroy, the work cannot be done negligently, nor the sword kept back *“from blood.”* Is it true that in the army of the Lord there are too many *“camp-followers,”* and not enough actual fighters? Xerxes said, *“I wish I had as many soldiers as men.”* Maybe that is what the Lord wishes, too. Gideon's army lost nothing of strength when of the thirty-two thousand men, twenty-two thousand of them went back, and then later, when through lack of diligence, nine thousand seven hundred more of them were rejected. *“A few with God are mightier than a multitude without Him,”* someone has said. Certainly, the negligent and the *“holders back”* do not have Him, for He has said, *“My righteous one shall live by faith: and if he shrink back, my soul hath no pleasure in him.”*

And now, along with all the other *“isms”* the army of the Lord has to fight, such as denominationalism, pre-millennialism, *“straddle-the-fence-ism,”* etc., Catholicism looms more formidable than ever before. For a long time the blood stained harlot that rules from the seven hilled city on the Tiber has been casting her lustful eyes toward the United States. It seems that at last our President is about to embrace her. I am not appointing myself a critic of the President of the United States; neither did God appoint me such. Rather, He said that I should pray for him. But every student of History knows what that this gesture will

ultimately mean to the religious life of this country if carried to the full maturity of the Pope's desires. Without speculating on what might be the outcome, for only God knows that, the vital point is this: Every Christian must tighten the belt a few notches tighter, whet the sword a few degrees sharper, exercise himself to greater ability, and shake off the spirit of doing the work of the Lord "negligently," striking with all his might this monster of iniquity upon every occasion.

Who dares hold back his sword when God says "Strike!"?



DEDICATED TO REFUTING THE FALSE DOCTRINES OF MAN

If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

The Preacher

Jim Miller

Gray, Maine

The preacher is a man dedicated to the proclamation of the word of God, so that others might come to know of the saving grace and mercy of our Lord, and so that those already saved, members of the Lord's church, can be taught and edified and grow. The preacher takes his position very seriously, knowing he will be held to a higher standard than the everyday Christian in the congregation. He is called upon to preach at least two sermons, and to teach one or more classes a week, assuming, of course, that there are no gospel meetings or lectures that he is scheduled to attend.

Few people really understand what being a preacher entails. They believe that his position is one of ease, having only to get up in front of the congregation to speak on God's word two, maybe three, times a week, and then the rest of his time is his own, to do with as he pleases. In reality, nothing could be farther from the truth.

Some mistakenly believe the preacher is to do all the work, which they, themselves, should be doing. Some say that it is the preacher's job to take up the slack of the congregation because they just don't have the time. They think that the preacher has been employed to do the bulk of visiting, or even cleaning the building. To most people's surprise, the preacher is not just someone hired to pick up the slack of the church members. Too many people have the idea that the preacher should get out and round up all the straying sheep, which is one of the duties of an Elder. If brethren within the church become "at odds" with one another, they believe that the preacher should arbitrate between them; again, one of the duties of an Elder. If anyone in the congregation gets sick, they believe that the preacher must drop all he is doing, and run right over to see about them. If members become needy, they believe that the preacher should know about it, and be sure that it is taken care of – again, duties specific to Elders and Deacons. Additionally, preachers are expected to make rounds at the hospital, as though he were a doctor, and he dare not miss visiting the homes of any of the members. Likewise, preachers are expected to run errands for anybody who calls on them to do so. Is it any wonder they have so little time to study and prepare their lessons? Too often, members believe that this is what the preacher is paid to do, and that he'd better do it, or else!

Now, I am not saying that a preacher should not do most of the activities mentioned above, but rather that they are not a part of his preaching duties. Indeed, as any Christian, he has the same responsibility as any other member in the church. There is no Scriptural evidence, however, that such works are to be performed as part of his duty as a preacher. In Acts 6:2, we read, “*It is not reason that we should leave the word of God to serve tables.*” Here the principle is well established that preaching the gospel is more important than taking care of physical details. The church under the guidance of the apostles was instructed to choose from among them men who would take care of serving tables so that the apostles could give themselves “*continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word*” (Acts 6:4).

Today, because of a lack of leadership in the church, most congregations expect the preacher to make sure that there is a weekly bulletin, mow the lawn, and do a host of other things that do not fall within the purview of his preaching duties. In Paul's letters to Timothy, he explains that the work of an evangelist, generally speaking, is to live an exemplary life (1 Tim. 4:12), and to read, study and teach (2 Tim. 2:2, 15; 1 Tim. 4:13). What a tremendous task this is in and of itself! You should try being what we call a “full-time” preacher and see for yourself.

There are also those who complain that their preacher spends too much time in study; they do not understand the real duty of an evangelist, nor do they give thought to the mental toll it entails. These same people also complain that then don't get much out of the preacher's sermon on Sunday morning. Members who expect the preacher to carry on the work of an elder/deacon can not expect him to have worthwhile sermons, too. The preacher simply cannot do it all.

A preacher's successful effort behind the pulpit is directly connected to the amount of time he spends in his study. Any preacher worth his salt will spend many hours in study daily. It is no simple task keeping up with the false doctrines that have made headway into the churches today. He will spend much time in prayer, not just for himself, but for others, also. Then there is the preparation of his sermons and bible class lessons. This is not to mention any article writing, radio programs, or other lessons that he may have to prepare. He might also be taking classes, himself, to further his knowledge and understanding, not to mention time that he might be spending helping others who come to him for help about their understand of God's word.

A preacher's work is not a nine-to-five job; it is a way of life, to the true preacher of God's word. Some preachers also hold down a full-time secular job in order to make ends meet if the congregation where he serves cannot afford to pay him, or

if there is no support available from other places to care of his needs.

People, especially Christians, need to understand that the preacher is already carrying a heavy load, and that he does so out of love for God and his fellow man. To place the burden of the the elders and deacons, and even the congregation, upon his shoulders is asking far to much of these men.

In the words of Irven Lee, a faithful brother from Toney, Alabama:

There is a message that should be carefully delivered to every person in all the world. This enormous task is the work of preachers as God ordained it (Mt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Lk. 24:47). There is an urgency about getting the message delivered, and the preacher should grasp the seriousness of this (2 Tim. 4:1-5). Paul used many expressions to remind the Ephesian elders of his attitude toward preaching: "*what manner,*" "*humility of mind,*" "*many tears,*" "*temptations,*" and of how he "*kept back nothing that was profitable.*" He could claim that he was pure from the blood of all men because he shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:17-35). He did not preach for the money at Ephesus. In fact, he earned his own money and funds for the care of his helpers while he was there. He knew that his work of preaching was important.

Paul and Silas "*suffered*" and were "*shamefully entreated*" at Philippi, but they went right on to Thessalonica and were "*bold*" to speak the "*gospel of God.*" It was this bold presentation of the truth in such a way as to be well pleasing to God, rather than flattery and other men pleasing tactics upon which they depended to get the job done. They were allowed by God to be put in trust with the gospel so there was a feeling that they were debtors to others (1 Thes. 2:1-13).

Friends, There is a lot of time that goes into preparing two sermons and two or three classes per week. There is the special preparation for each of these lessons, and there is a lot of general reading and constant efforts to grow in background knowledge. Some who do not know what the preacher's work truly is might benefit by going with him for a week and observing how many questions are asked on many different subjects. One never knows what subjects will be brought up. We are to be ready always to give answer (1 Pet. 3:15). Next time you see your preacher, why not stop and thank him for his hard work, and ask him if there something you can do to help.

Draw All Men

Scott D. Crawford

Clay, Alabama

“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day” (Jn. 6:44).¹

Although the number and availability of Brotherhood preaching over the “airwaves” is increasing, one can easily find himself listening to preachers and speakers that do not hold Biblical positions on Biblical topics. Some believe the practice of listening to men speaking from a denominational perspective is something to be avoided; others believe that to listen to such men falls under the rubric, “know thy enemy.”

Recently, while listening to a sermon, the speaker made reference to the above verse, and then made a typical point that we, as Christians, must first be drawn by the Holy Spirit before we can understand and know the gospel as presented in the Scriptures, presumably with the Father as the ultimate source. This is the erroneous doctrine held by much of the denominational world, commonly referred to as “illumination.” In a nut shell, illumination means that the Spirit of God “works directly on the mind of a believer²,” enabling that believer to understand the truth presented in His Holy Word. This doctrine is directly related to another false doctrine we frequently see propagated in the form of original sin and human depravity, a position popularized by the reformer John Calvin in the sixteenth century³. As an aside, many of those that promote and believe in the doctrine of illumination also preach and believe in the doctrine of predestination, two doctrines that would appear to be mutually exclusive. Consider this, however: if I am predestined to spend eternity in heaven with God, and there is nothing I can do in either word or deed to alter that destiny, then what need is there for any person to have the Holy Word illuminated to me by the Spirit of God? Well, that question will have to wait for another time. So what is the truth? What should Christians believe?

1 All Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted.

2 David J. McKinley. “John Owen’s View of Illumination: An Alternative View to the Fuller-Erickson Dialogue.” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 154, no. 613 (1997), ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost (accessed March 7, 2015).

3 Wayne Jackson, “The Holy Spirit “Illumination” Theory: A Critical Review,” *Christian Courier* (1998-2015), <https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/641-holy-spirit-illumination-theory-a-critical-review> (accessed February 4, 2015).

What do the scholars who study Greek say?

Not everyone who studies the Scriptures is a Greek scholar. We are, therefore, blessed and gladdened by those who have devoted a significant portion of their life and education to helping the unlearned, including this writer, to understand the language used in the New Testament. A typical place to start for many Bible students is the Lexicon produced by Joseph H. Thayer. One of the advantages of Thayer's approach is that when words have more than one meaning, or can be used in both literal and metaphorical senses, those distinctions are made and the verses that go along with a particular meaning or sense are noted. When discussing the word translated as "draw" in John 6:44 ("...*unless the Father who sent Me draws him...*"), Thayer notes that this is a metaphorical use of the word, indicating to "draw by inward power, lead, impel." Thayer then goes even further and paraphrases a parallel use of the word from John 12:32: "*And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself,*" as "*I by my moral, my spiritual, influence will win over to myself the hearts of all.*"⁴ Obviously, Thayer saw a metaphorical implication in these verses and not a direct operation of the Holy Spirit. William Mounce agrees with Thayer on this, and again says that at both John 6:44 and 12:32 the usage of the word translated as "draw" is "met., to draw mentally and morally."⁵

Another Greek scholar, R. C. H. Lenski, who wrote a series of commentaries which focus on the Greek used in the New Testament, makes two very informative comments when discussing the idea of "draw" as presented in John 6:44. First, Lenski quotes Martin Luther (which isn't surprising since Lenski is a Lutheran) as saying:

"I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him; but the Holy Ghost has called me by the gospel..."⁶

Notice carefully where Martin Luther indicates the calling of the Holy Ghost as taking place: *by, or through, the Gospel*. Lenski then builds on this idea – being called by the gospel – and comments on the power in the gospel:

"While it is power (Rom. 1:16), efficacious to save, it is never irresistible (Matt. 23:37, "and ye would not")."

The power of the gospel is for the entire world, and no sinner has fallen so low

4 Joseph H. Thayer, *Thayer's Geek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Coded with Strong's Concordance Numbers*, 8th ed. (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2007), 204-205.

5 William D. Mounce, *The Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 183.

6 R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1943), 474-475.

but that “this power is able to reach him effectually.”⁷ The idea that the power of the drawing is not an irresistible demand is further reinforced by the use of the Greek word translated as “draw” in the Septuagint, where the method that God uses to draw a person is defined:

“The Lord has appeared of old to me, saying: “Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you” (Jer. 31:3, LXX).

If anything, this Old Testament verse echoes the truth that the method used by God is similar to that of a father's imploring cries of love and concern to draw us back home to safety and comfort, not an irresistible calling that cannot be denied.

There are certainly many who would disagree with what has already been written. R. A. Torrey, a man that worked around the turn of the 20th century, wrote:

“It is only through the direct testimony of the Holy Spirit in the individual heart that any man ever comes to a true and living and saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.”⁸

This sentiment has been echoed, and continues to be echoed, by writers without second thought. Two views may contribute to this understanding. First, these writers have been taught in their Sunday Schools, seminaries, and colleges throughout their lives that the Holy Spirit must enable us to understand before we can respond. Second, and perhaps more subliminal, is the truth that if the burden of a man's salvation rests on an illumination of the Holy Spirit, that somehow releases us from our responsibility to respond to the gospel; how can I be condemned if I have never been called, or illuminated?

Responding to the truth, as is shown repeatedly in the Scriptures, is the responsibility of each individual. There are eight times in the book of Acts – which could also be called the “book of conversions” – that the pattern of individual salvation is recorded, apart from the sermon preached by Peter on the Day of Pentecost recorded in Acts 2. In Acts 8:4-25 we find the conversion of the Samaritans; in Acts 8:26-39 we find the conversion of the Ethiopian nobleman; in Acts 9:1-20 and 22:1-16 we find the conversion of the apostle Paul; in Acts 10:1-48 we find the conversion of Cornelius; 16:12-15; likewise with Lydia in Acts 16:22-34; the Philippian Jailor in Acts 18:8; and, the disciples of John in Acts 19:1-6. This is a wonderful list to have handy; write these references down in

7 R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1943), 475-476.

8 R. A. Torrey, *The Holy Spirit: Who He Is and What He Does* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1927), 66.

your Bible. To continue, it should be noted that of all these conversion examples, only that of Lydia's might there in any way be construed a direct operation of the Holy Spirit on her heart, as recorded in the Bible:

“Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul” (Acts 16:14).

One of the best commentaries written on the book of Acts was written by J. W. McGarvey, and his comment on this verse is as follows:

“The assumption, therefore, that her heart was opened by an abstract influence of the Spirit, is entirely gratuitous and illogical, while the real cause is patent upon the face of the narrative in the preaching done by Paul.”⁹

There are no cases of individual conversions recorded in the New Testament in which a person did not first hear the truth, believe in Christ, repent of sin, and submit themselves to baptism; this was the pattern then, and this is the pattern now.

So what is Jesus saying in John 6:44?

Sometimes the Scriptures are their own best commentary. For example, when we look into the Scriptures we find the command to sing, as recorded in Ephesians 5:19. That we are supposed to sing has never been disputed, but the Scriptures indicate that the melody we make is to be in our hearts – musical instruments are never mentioned. Now, look back to the complete thought presented by Jesus:

“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. 45 It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me” (Jn. 6:44-45).

Verse 45 is a direct commentary on the method by which the Father draws people to Him – *“they shall all be taught by God.”* So the question then becomes, since we know the drawing comes from being taught by God, how does the teaching occur, through direct operation of the Holy Spirit, or another method?

Jesus begins to give us a glimpse of the method in what we commonly call the

⁹ J. W. McGarvey, *A Commentary on Acts of Apostles with a Revised Version of the Text*, 7th ed. (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1975), 203.

Great Commission.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen”
(Mt. 28:19, 20).

Notice, Jesus says that after disciples are made and baptized, those new Christians are to be taught all things that have been commanded. The operation in this passage isn't a direct working of the Holy Spirit, but a direct working of the disciples of Jesus, teaching other people. Further, this fact was also understood by R. A. Torrey, who we have already seen believes there must be a direct operation of the Holy Spirit. Torrey says:

“Every conversion recorded in Acts of the Apostles was through human instrumentality, not one single conversion is recorded there that was not by human instrumentality.”¹⁰

Although this seems like a contradiction on Torrey's part, the Scriptures reinforce the truth of human instrumentality.

“How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher” (Rom. 10:14).

“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”
(Rom. 10:17).

“For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe” (1 Thes. 2:13).

“For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it” (Heb. 4:2).

In each of these passages, the need of the person to hear the Word presented to them is paramount. This is why the presentation of the gospel is something in which each of us must be willing to participant. It is clear from these and other verses, that “the Holy Spirit always operates upon the heart of the sinner in conversion through the truth, and that truth is the gospel.”¹¹

10 R. A. Torrey, *The Holy Spirit: Who He Is and What He Does* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1927), 60.

11 H. Leo Boles, *The Holy Spirit His Personality, Nature, Works* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1942), 198.

Paul sums this up for us in a couple of verses:

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek” (Rom. 1:16).

“How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher” (Rom. 10:14).

First, we see that the gospel is the net thrown into the sea of humanity. Second, we see that the fishermen standing on the boat and casting out the net is each one of us. Jesus directed the apostles and those first disciples to proclaim the gospel, because it is by triumph proclamation that others are taught the truth. Paul said in First Corinthians 9:16, *“woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!”* We should have that same spirit that Paul had – a spirit to preach and teach the gospel, because it is by the gospel that all mankind will be saved.

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“Nero vs. Christianity” (Part 1)

Tim Bench

Abilene, Texas

“As to Nero, I shall not say that he was the worst of kings, but that he was worthily held the basest of all men, and even of wild beasts.”¹

“...a career of wickedness, extortion, atrocious cruelty, which it is not necessary to describe, but which has made his name a synonym for all that is vicious in human nature, and despicable in a ruler.”²

“...savage madman in whose reign Peter and Paul were martyred...Nero, a man with light blue eyes, thick neck, protruding stomach, and spindly legs, was a crazed and cruel emperor, a pleasure-driven man who ruled the world by whim and fear.”³

“One of the most despicable manifestations of human flesh ever to disgrace this planet was Nero Claudius Caesar.”⁴

“...an ineffectual, neglectful and brutal leader.”⁵

“Through the influence of his conniving mother, Agrippina, Nero seized the throne (54-68) and soon became one of the great monsters of history.”⁶

“Roman Emperor Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus....the most depraved monster that ever disgraced the annals of history. The name Nero is proverbial for murder, rape, sodomy, incest, cruelty, and every kind of crime imaginable...”⁷

“Nero, that monster to his race...”⁸

1 From Sulpicius Severus, see “Section XXVIII, Sacred History” and www.preteristarchive.com.

2 From “THE JULIAN EMPERORS—TIBERIUS TO NERO”, Chapter XXIV, by William C. Morey, www.forumromanum.org.

3 From “Persecution in the Early Church: A Gallery of the Persecuting Emperors” by Mark Galli, July 1, 1990, Christianity Today.

4 From “Nero Caesar and the Christian faith” by Wayne Jackson, Christian Courier.

5 From “Nero (37 AD to 68 AD) at www.bbc.co.uk.

6 From “Nero: Maniac or Genius?”, Semester class on “The Roman Empire”, University of Colorado, Noel Lenski.

7 From “Emperor Nero's Perverted Same-Sex Marriage!!”, www.reformation.org.

8 From 1923 Abilene Christian College Lectures, “THE GOSPEL, THE POWER OF GOD, UNTO SALVATION” By W. D. CAMPBELL, page 205.

"An absolute villain whose debauchery is unmatched in the annals of human history....the suffering Nero inflicted upon first-century Christians is almost beyond our comprehension."⁹

Periodically, reports surface from across the globe that evangelizing Christians face arrest, and in some cases, even death, for promoting their beliefs. Documented cases such as these have become, in the minds of many, expected in Christian-hostile regions such as China, North Korea, and heavily Muslim-influenced areas of the Middle East. Simply stated, there exist governments across the globe which do not tolerate the promotion of Christian ideals and beliefs, and those who choose to do so in such regions may literally be putting their own safety, or even their own life, in jeopardy. Americans are often aghast at these reports and cannot comprehend such extreme opposition to their faith. Government-sponsored opposition to Christianity is NOT, however, a new development. Cases such as these have existed throughout the centuries in every corner of the globe. Interestingly, such pressures against Christianity have often proven to be the driving force behind the continued growth of Christianity. This article will focus briefly on, perhaps, the greatest earthly enemy the church has ever known in human history: Nero, whose acts of barbarism were the fulcrum not only behind the mass genocide of Christians in 64 A.D., but also led directly to the siege of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., foretold by Jesus Christ, Himself, in Matthew 24:2. Additionally, we will look briefly at the Great Fire of Rome of 64 A.D., and how Nero, ruler of the Roman Empire at the time, capitalized on this event in his first-century attempt to quash the fledgling religion from gaining any further ground within his empire. Nero was, regardless of one's denominational bent, a massively important figure in the establishment of Christianity. This persecution was to be rather limited in scope (although not in ferocity) compared to later crusades against Christianity. This was not the first government-sponsored crusade against Christianity, but has proven to be, perhaps, the most barbaric and well-known example.

"Hitler. Mussolini. Stalin. Attila the Hun. Jack the Ripper. Richard Speck. Charles Manson. Nero. Few names in human history are as infamous."¹⁰

9 From Ed Enzor, Ph.D., retired professor at Abilene Christian University.

10 From "Caesar Nero" by Steve Hale, Mt. Juliet Church of Christ, Mt. Juliet, TN, www.mtjuliet.org.

"The Christian writers of the later ages joined the ancient historians in their condemnation of Nero and his actions because the emperor's terrible persecution of the Christian community of Rome caused the deaths of many Christian martyrs; the Christians never forgot their first persecutor. In fact, Nero's oppression is the first recorded against the Christians and served as a prototype for the later executioners of Christians."¹¹

Nero is not mentioned by name in the Bible, but was obviously the Caesar to whom Paul appealed (Acts 25:11), perhaps even hearing Paul's case in person (the Apostle Paul would later suffer a martyr's death via Nero).

"Originally the surname of the Julian gens (thus, Caius Julius Caesar); afterward a name borne by the Roman emperors. In the New Testament the name is definitely applied to Augustus (Luke 2:1, "Caesar Augustus"), to whom it belonged by adoption, and to Tiberius (Luke 3:1, "Tiberius Caesar"; compare Matthew 22:17, 21). The "Caesar" to whom Paul appealed (Acts 25:11, 12, 21) was Nero."¹²

"Under Roman law, each citizen accused of crime had the right and privilege of being heard before the imperial seat. Authorities on Roman law assert that local magistrates had discretionary power where appeal was concerned. They could decide if the case warranted such a privilege where guilt was obvious and the crime of such enormity that a delay would thwart true justice."¹³

"Nero was the Caesar to whom Paul appealed for justice... (Acts 25:11). After Paul was delivered to Rome, Nero placed Paul under house arrest (Acts 28:19). Paul writes of teaching the gospel to some of the Praetorian Guard and that some members of Nero's own household were Christians during his imprisonments (Philippians 1:13; 4:22). Paul was eventually released, but then later rearrested and executed."¹⁴

11 From "Nero: The Artist, the Athlete and His Downfall", John Mouratidis, Visiting Lecturer of Physical Education, McGill University, Journal of Sports History, Spring 1985.

12 From International Standard Bible Encyclopedia.

13 From www.gospeldoctrine.com and The Life and Teachings of Jesus & his Apostles, pages 341-342.

14 From "Render unto Caesar" by Jon W. Quinn, Expository Files 13.8; August 2006.

It becomes both fascinating as well as horrifying to read in detail the lengths to which Nero would resort to combat this “new” religion, and it is likewise frightening, as well as inspiring, to read of the terrors, horrors, and persecution first-century believers were forced to endure. To many, Nero was also the unnamed “beast” in the Book of Revelation, his atrocities garnering him attention from John on the Isle of Patmos. These early Christians and their ability to survive almost-incomprehensible tyranny and government opposition are by and large one of the very reasons we are able to possess the Bible today and worship as we do.

Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, better known simply as “Nero” was born on December 15, 37 A.D. His birth name would be Lucius Domitius Ahenaborbus. His mother, Agrippina the Younger, was the sister of the emperor Caligula and Nero’s father, Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus, is described thusly:

“...the father of Nero, a man hateful in every walk of life; for when he had gone to the East on the staff of the young Gaius Caesar, he slew one of his own freedmen for refusing to drink as much as he ordered, and when he was in consequence dismissed from the number of Gaius' friends, he lived not a whit less lawlessly. On the contrary, in a village on the Appian Way, suddenly whipping up his team, he purposely ran over and killed a boy; and right in the Roman Forum he gouged out the eye of a Roman knight for being too outspoken in chiding him. He was moreover so dishonest that he not only cheated some bankers of the prices of wares which he had bought, but in his praetorship he even defrauded the victors in the chariot races of the amount of their prizes. When for this reason he was held up to scorn by the jests of his own sister, and the managers of the troupes made complaint, he issued an edict that the prizes should thereafter be paid on the spot. Just before the death of Tiberius he was also charged with treason, as well as with acts of adultery and incest with his sister Lepida, but escaped owing to the change of rulers and died of dropsy at Pyrgi...”¹⁵

Continued next month.

15 From Suetonius, “The Life of Nero” from The Lives of the Caesars, page 95.

What is the Gift of the Holy Spirit (Part 8)

Doug Post

Vernon, Connecticut

Acts 2:38 and the *Gift of the Holy Spirit*

The most popular view concerning the phrase, *gift of the Holy Spirit*, is the “appositional” view, which sees the **gift** as being the **Holy Spirit**, Himself. Scholar F.F. Bruce is representative of this view saying, “The gift of the Spirit is to be distinguished from the gifts of the Spirit. The gift of the Spirit is the Spirit himself.”¹ Of course, the “most popular” view does not mean it is the truth. The tendency, among many, is to assume the Person of the Holy Spirit as the gift, rather than the gift being something “out from” the Spirit (Genitive of source), as both Acts 2:17-18 and 2:33 indicate within the very same context. Most scholars say Acts 2:38 may be interpreted either as Genitive of Apposition or Genitive of Source (Ablative), but end up demanding the “appositional” view, due in large part by their assumed view that the gift of the Holy Spirit and the indwelling of the Spirit mean the same thing. On the other hand, there are some opposing views, such as the one Bullinger proposed: “the gift of the Holy Spirit” in Acts 2:38: ‘Ye shall receive the gift of the hagian pneuma.’ Here the ‘gift is so called, and is clearly distinguished from the Giver, who is the Holy Spirit.’² Of course, as noted above, Bullinger believed that every appearance of pneuma hagian (“spirit holy”) were references to operations of the Spirit, namely, the bestowal of miraculous ability and/or power associated with nature of the Spirit.

Regarding the concepts of “baptism” and “receiving of the Spirit,” Augustine of Hippo wrote: “For those that are baptized do not now receive the Spirit on the imposition of hands, so as to speak in the tongues of all the peoples; neither are the sick healed by the shadow of the preachers of Christ falling on them as they pass; and other such things as were then done, are now manifestly ceased.”³ Augustine uses a common figure of speech called “metonymy” with reference to the Holy Spirit and miraculous power. This is, indeed, the primary meaning of “Spirit” as used in the New Testament as Bullinger noted above. When folks of the first century received the “Spirit” they were NOT receiving the Person of the Holy Spirit, but rather miraculous power, which came OUT FROM the Spirit. Augustine draws the connection between receiving the Spirit and baptism (Acts

1 Bruce, F. F. *The Book of the Acts*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1988. 71.

2 Bullinger, E. W. *Word Studies on the Holy Spirit*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel Publications, 1985. 90.

3 Warfield, Benjamin Breckinridge. *Counterfeit Miracles*, New York: C. Scribner's, 1918. 41.

2:38), rightly teaching that the concept of receiving the Spirit is metonymical for receiving miraculous power FROM the Spirit. If one was said to have received the Spirit, then they received power from the Spirit. They did not literally receive the Person of the Spirit. If one had miraculous ability and could work miracles, or prophesy, or speak in tongues, etc, then the person was said to have received the Spirit. He did not receive the Person of the Spirit, but that which came from the Spirit. What Augustine does not teach, nor was aware of, is the modern day concept of receiving the Person of the Holy Spirit, which today is explained as the literal, spatial, habitation of the Spirit in human flesh.

Understanding how words are used can help determine the meaning of the phrase. The word “gift,” when used in connection with the Holy Spirit, is found six times, including Acts 2:38: 1. In Acts 8:20 “the gift of God” is miraculous. 2. In Acts 10:45 “the gift of the Holy Spirit” is miraculous. 3. In Acts 11:17 “the like gift is miraculous. 4. In Ephesians 3:7 “the gift of the grace of God” is miraculous. 5. In Ephesians 4:7 “the measure of the gift of Christ” is miraculous. The association of δωρεὸν (gift) with the Holy Spirit, in each of these passages, is used in reference to the miraculous associated with the nature of the Holy Spirit. Consistency of word usage and meaning demands that “gift” in Acts 2:38 should be viewed in the same manner as the other passages above. Coincidentally, the gift of Christ in Eph.4:7 (singular) is equivalent to, “gifts to men” in Eph.4:8 (plural), demonstrating that “gift of the Holy Spirit” is equivalent to “gifts of the Holy Spirit” (Heb.2:3-4). The same analysis can be made of the word “receive” (λαμβάνω). Regarding this matter, Camp provides some profound insight:

“Put together the six times the word ‘gift’ is used with the eight times the Bible speaks of people ‘receiving the Spirit,’ and my conviction is that the ‘gift of the Spirit’ means miraculous, as established by the Bible. If these arguments do not prove it, I must confess that I do not know how to prove anything by the Bible”⁴

Another point Scripture reveals is that whenever the term “gift of” is used in reference to a person or to Deity, it will never refer to the person named in the phrase. For instance, all the references to the “gift of God” never refer to God as the gift, but to something God gives (Eccl. 3:13, 5:19; John 4:10; Acts 8:20; Rom. 6:23; 1 Cor. 7:7; Eph. 2:8; 2 Tim. 1:6). The same rule applies to “gift of Christ” (Eph.4:7). While Christ may be a “gift,” when it comes to the phrase gift of Christ is does not refer to Christ as the gift, but to something Christ gives, namely miraculous gifts (Eph.4:7-8).

⁴ Camp, Franklin. *The Work of the Holy Spirit in Redemption*. Birmingham, Ala.: Roberts & Son, 1974. 147.

This leads us to Acts 10:45, where the only other time the same exact same phrase (gift of the Holy Spirit) is found in the New Testament. The phrases, fell upon (10:44), poured out (10:45) and received (10:47) are all synonymous figures of speech. The phrase “poured out” is the exact same phrase as found in Acts 2:17-18, wherein it refers to miraculous ability, which was promised to be poured out from the Holy Spirit upon all flesh (Jew and Gentile). The gift of the Holy Spirit in Acts 10:45, is the gift of speaking in tongues in verse 46. It should also be noted that Acts 10:45 is an ablative construct, meaning “the gift poured out from the Holy Spirit upon the Gentiles.”

Moreover, the use of “Holy Spirit” in 10:44-45 is the metonymy of the cause. Here the context is miraculous in nature, demonstrating (just as in the Old Testament Scriptures we noted previously) that this passage is simply NOT a mere reference to the Person of the Holy Spirit, but to the miraculous associated with the nature of the Holy Spirit. Consistency of language, as well as word usage, demand the same concept for Acts 2:38. Since the same phrase is miraculous in Acts 10:45, then there is no reason to think it is anything else in Acts 2:38. However, there is one exception. Cornelius and his household received miraculous power directly from God, while those on Pentecost, in Acts 2:38, would receive power when the apostles laid their hands upon them.

Of course, others disagree with this view concerning Acts 10:45. In his book, *The Holy Spirit Center of Controversy – Basis of Unity*, concerning Acts 10:45, Mac Deaver wrote, “And there the reference is indisputably to the Holy Spirit Himself (see v. 44).”⁵ Deaver maintains that the gift under consideration in both Acts 2:38 and Acts 10:45 is the Holy Spirit, Himself, in order to teach his heresy of modern day Holy Spirit baptism. The absurd conclusion of his argument is that the Holy Spirit has, seemingly, given Himself as a gift in both passages. In other words, since he believes “gift” is the Holy Spirit then the phrase might as well be, “the Holy Spirit of the Holy Spirit” instead of it being properly “the gift of the Holy Spirit.” While one may argue that the Genitive of Apposition means

Moreover, Deaver maintains that Holy Spirit baptism is simultaneous, occurring at the same time when one is baptized in water, even though this is clearly not the case with Cornelius and his household. In fact, when the events are explained in order (Acts 11:4), we understand Cornelius received the gift of the Holy Spirit, which Deaver equates to being baptized in the Holy Spirit, prior to having faith (11:15).

In trying to maintain his alleged “simultaneous” error in the case of Cornelius,

⁵ Deaver, Mac. *The Holy Spirit (Center of Controversy-Basis of Unity)*. Denton, Tx. Biblical Notes. 2007. 27.

Deaver compounds his error. He claims that modern day baptism in the Holy Spirit is normative, meaning it is non-miraculous. He argues that the case of Cornelius receiving the miraculous gift of tongue speaking, is not the norm but simply the exception to the norm. He states no one who is baptized in the Spirit today, receives such miraculous gifts as tongue speaking. However, in dismissing the miraculous aspect associated with Holy Spirit baptism, he also dismisses the normative process of salvation, conveniently shrugging off the sequential order of salvation by faith and obedience. Regarding salvation for both Jew and Greek, we note what Peter says about it:

“Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith” (Acts 15:7-9).

God sent Cornelius to Peter who would tell him “words by which you and all your household will be saved” (Acts 11:14), which is the Word of God, the very thing that produces faith (Rom.10:17). In the context of Acts 10:45-46, Cornelius received miraculous power from the Holy Spirit – the ability to speak in tongues (10:46) – the gift of (from) the Holy Spirit (10:45) – Acts 10:46 explains Acts 10:45, which is simply a parallelism or synonymy, meaning that receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit in Acts 10:45, is synonymous or parallel with the gift of speaking in tongues in Acts 10:46. All of this is inclusive of the figure of speech called metonymy of the cause. Where Luke states Cornelius received the Holy Spirit (10:44-45), he also explains what exactly that gift was: “for they heard them SPEAK IN TONGUES and magnify God.” Cornelius did not receive the gift of speaking in tongues (gift from the Spirit) as a sign of his salvation, because he had yet to hear Peter preach the Word, the very thing that produced his faith (Acts 11:14). The whole purpose of Cornelius going to see Peter was so he and household could hear, believe, and obey the gospel of Jesus Christ that Peter was to preach to them.

Just as the apostles on Pentecost, Cornelius received the “same gift” of speaking in tongues (11:17), however, he was not baptized in the Holy Spirit as brethren allege. Rather, the promise being baptized in the Holy Spirit was a promise that Jesus applied to the apostles only (Acts 1:4-5, 8, 2:1-4; cf. Luke 24:49; cf. John 14, 15, 16). Had Cornelius been baptized in the Holy Spirit he and his household would had the same miraculous ability as the apostles. The apostles enjoyed the ability to perform all miracles, including the ability pass on miraculous ability,

which was the sign of an apostle (2 Cor.12:12). Because they baptized (overwhelmed) in the Holy Spirit they had overwhelming miraculous power. This could not be said of Cornelius and his household. Cornelius simply received the “same” or “like gift” as the apostles used on the Day of Pentecost.

The occasion of Cornelius is how God demonstrated, to both Peter and the Jews with him, He had accepted the Gentiles to be saved along with the Jews. In doing so, however, God in no way altered the plan of salvation by faith and obedience (sequential order), making some alleged exception with Cornelius as Deaver falsely assumes. Rather, God kept that plan and the process of salvation intact, maintaining the exact same means and process of salvation for both Jew and Gentile, making no distinctions (Acts 10:34-35; 15). Peter says Jew and Gentile had their hearts purified in the same manner (Acts 15:9), not differently. The only exception within the context is the miraculous experience involving Cornelius and his household – receiving the gift of tongues (the gift of (from) the Holy Spirit). At the moment of receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, Cornelius and his household **DID NOT RECEIVE:**

1. The Person of the Holy Spirit;
2. Baptism in the Holy Spirit;
3. Salvation.

On the contrary, they simply received the gift of tongue speaking and magnified God with that gift. When the miraculous element of the context is held in abeyance (the visions, the angel of God telling Cornelius what he needed to do, Peter speaking by inspiration, and receiving tongue speaking from the Spirit) what we discover is the simple plan of salvation. The sequential order of salvation is the same: Cornelius heard the word, believed it, and was baptized for the forgiveness of sins. This is exactly how the Jews on Pentecost were saved in Acts 2.

The baptism in the Holy Spirit of Acts 1:5 and the gift of the Holy Spirit of Acts 2:38 does not mean the same thing as Deaver alleges. The word “baptistheeto,” is aorist tense, which contemplates a completed action in the past. Aorist tense indicates punctiliar action instead of linear. Therefore, if receiving the “gift of the Holy Spirit” in Acts 2:38 means “baptism in the Holy Spirit” in Acts 1:5, as assumed by Deaver, then Luke would have used the present tense imperative, which implies a continual action or process. Instead, the Holy Spirit through Luke used the aorist tense verb, demonstrating completed action as it relates to being “baptized.” Following this completed action of baptism, is the receiving

of the “gift of the Holy Spirit” (“Holy Spirit baptism”). Therefore, the “baptism” of Acts 2:38 cannot include Deaver’s alleged, simultaneous Holy Spirit baptism, because the completed action of immersion in water is both grammatically and theologically distinct from the receiving of “the gift of the Holy Spirit. They are two separate activities, and at no time could there be merging of water baptism and Holy Spirit baptism. A simultaneous Holy Spirit during water baptism is proven to be false.

Of course, since the completed action of being baptized in Acts 2:38 also proposes a major problem for those who believe the “gift of the Holy Spirit is the Spirit, Himself, received at baptism. Again, because of the completed action baptism makes the two actions separate and distinct from one another, then “the gift of the Holy Spirit” is not received at the moment one is baptized. This causes a dilemma for such a doctrine because those believing in a personal indwelling of the Spirit, also contend that anyone who does not have the Holy Spirit, does not belong to God (Rom.8:9). While I hate to be the bearer of bad news, this reasoning is very similar to Deaver’s “Simultaneous Theory.” Both views rest their respective cases upon the premise that the “the gift of the Holy Spirit” is received simultaneously with water baptism, while claiming that anyone not having the Holy Spirit cannot belong to God. However, that creates an absurd contradiction with one of the most basic conversion passages found in the Bible. It is not possible for one to obtain forgiveness of sins as a result of the completed action of baptism, and not be a child of God at the same time. But such is the result of the view espoused by “personal indwellers.” They have the person being baptized in water, but grammatically and theologically, the person doesn’t receive the “gift of the Holy Spirit” until sometime AFTER being baptized. Since the “personal indweller” also claims that one cannot belong to God without having the Person of the Holy Spirit, literally dwelling in their flesh (Rom.8:9). Therefore, the completed action of baptism in Acts 2:38 causes a dilemma for both Deaver and “personal indwellers.” This helps in demonstrating several things concerning the gift of the Holy Spirit:

1. It is not the Person of the Holy Spirit that is the gift.
2. It is rather the gift the Spirit gives.
3. The gift the Holy Spirit gives is what is promised in the very same context (Acts 2:17-18).
4. That from out of the Spirit would come miraculous ability in the form of various miraculous gifts. It would be for Jew and Greek, male and female, young and old, slave or free.

5. The gift would be given following being baptized for the forgiveness of sins.
6. The gift of (from the Spirit) would come through the laying on of the apostles hands.
7. The text of Acts 2:38 does not indicate WHEN the giving of the gift from the Spirit would take place, but it would certainly come after being baptized in water.
8. Because they were forgiven of their sins after being baptized in water, they were, washed, justified, and sanctified.
9. Because they were washed, justified, and sanctified, they were children of God and added to the church.

In Mark's account of the Great Commission, Jesus tells Peter (and all the apostles) to go and preach the gospel (Mark 16:15-20). In telling the apostles to preach the gospel, Jesus also promised miraculous ability or power to those who would believe (16:17-20). Therefore, Peter's assignment was to make disciples, by baptizing and teaching them (Matt.28:19-20). And by the same gospel, Peter was also to provide the disciples "signs" or miraculous power. Is this not what Peter was doing on Pentecost in Acts 2? When we compare Mark 156:-15-20 and Acts 2:38 we are seeing the fulfillment of the Lord's Great Commission promise through Peter and the apostles. The promise of Joel 2:28-32 is simply what Jesus taught in Mark 16:15-20 and what Peter and the apostles taught in Acts 2:38. Acts 2:39 is simply Peter's summary of the promise of Joel in Acts 2:17-21, the very background and foundation of Peter's sermon in Acts 2.

How would the Jews on Pentecost have understood the meaning of "gift of the Holy Spirit"? Could it be supposed they would have understood it to mean some internal dwelling of Deity within their flesh that does nothing to or for them? Could it be supposed that they would have understood Peter to be referring to a non-miraculous reception of the Person of the Holy Spirit? I do not believe they would have understood Peter to be referring to such things. In fact, Peter is not even addressing the "personal indweller's" concept of "indwelling" (Deity residing in their flesh). Peter is specifically addressing what Joel promised, and for anyone to misunderstand that, whether it be the Jews on Pentecost, or Christians today, is to have misunderstood Joel. Of course, the Jews were very familiar with the miraculous associated with the nature of the Holy Spirit, and there is not the slightest indication they would have understood Acts 2:38 and the gift of the Holy Spirit any differently.

The phrase “gift of the Holy Spirit” as found in Acts 2:38 is simply a generic reference to miraculous power, which was imparted both by the hands of the apostles (Acts 2:38) and directly from heaven (Acts 10:45). This miraculous power, consisting of a variety of gifts (1 Cor.12:4-12), which was for the first century Christians only, was never intended to be given to all Christians for all time.



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Farewell...

Cloyd B. Frock, Jr.

Parsons, Kansas

In his farewell speech to the elders in Ephesus, the apostle Paul said, “*And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more*” (Acts 20:25). Mutual affection was shared between Paul and the brethren there, very much the same as I believe it has been shared between me and the brethren associated with this very fine publication, *The Keys of the Kingdom*.

After having served this last year as an editor for *The Keys of the Kingdom*, I have gained much needed experience and skill in the craft of writing, which I believe to be one of the greatest assets a preacher and teacher of God’s word may possess, aside from the knowledge and wisdom that he garners from his much time in reading and studying his Bible.

The April, 2015, issue of *The Keys of the Kingdom* is the last one in which I proudly attach my name as an editor. It has been a great pleasure to work with the sound brethren of this writing staff, and especially with the Editor-in-Chief and publisher, brother Jim Miller. My hope and prayer is that this publication will continue to grow, not only in readership, but also in souls converted, or restored, to the kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. God bless you all, and I look forward to seeing each one of you in future pursuits; if not then, than in the last day when we meet on that heavenly shore.

Travel directory of churches of Christ

Since we cannot attest to the soundness of any given assembly, we suggest you call ahead and speak with the Elders or Preacher.

Remember: always make plans to worship God, even on vacation, or just out-of-town for the weekend.

Alabama

Montevallo Church of Christ: 830 Vine St, Montevallo, AL. 35115

Sunday Bible Class: 10 AM ***Morning Service: 11 AM***Evening Service: 6 PM***Wednesday Bible Class: 7 PM***No Website***Phone: 205.665.7579 *****Preacher: Ray Brunner; Scott Crawford; & John Hutchinson**

East Huntsville church of Christ: 801 Humes Ave Huntsville, AL. 35801

Sunday Bible Study: 9:00 am***Sunday Worship: 10 am & 1 pm***Wednesday Bible Study: 7:00 pm
[Church Website Click Here](#)***Phone: 256.534.4001*****Preacher: Bill Cantrell**

Riverchase Church of Christ: 1868 Montgomery Hwy, Birmingham, AL 35244

Sunday Bible Class: 9:30 AM***Morning Service: 8:30 & 10:30***Evening Service: 6 PM***Wednesday Bible Class: 7 PM***[Church Website Click Here](#)***Phone: 205.988.5808*****Preacher: Dewayne Spivey**

Roebuck Parkway Church of Christ: 400 Roebuck Pkwy, Birmingham, AL 35206

Sunday Bible Class: 9 AM***Evening Service: 10 AM***Evening Service: 5 PM***Wednesday Bible Class: 7 PM***[Church Website Click Here](#)***Phone: 205.833.1400*****Preacher: Jason Moon**

Austinville Church of Christ: 2833 Danville Rd. SW Decatur, AL 35603

Sunday Bible Class: 9:30 AM***Evening Service: 10:30 AM***Evening Service: 5:30 PM***Wednesday Bible Class: 7 PM***[Church Website Click Here](#)***Phone 256.353.4256*****Preacher: Mark N. Posey**

Arkansas

Letona Church of Christ: P.O. box 141 Letona, Arkansas 72085

Sunday Bible Study: 10 am***Sunday Worship: 11 Am***Sunday Evening: 5 pm***Wednesday Bible Study: 6 pm***No Website***Phone: 501.230.1201*****Preachers: Sid Scudder, Jack Meredith**

Newton Street church of Christ: 412 Newton Street Paragould, AR. 72450

Sunday am Bible Study - 9:15***Sunday Morning Worship - 10:00***Sunday Evening Worship - 5:00
Wednesday Bible Study – 6:30***No Website***Phone 870.378.5551*****Preacher: Joshua Dement**

Connecticut

Tolland County Church Of Christ: 24 Hyde Ave (Rt.30) P.O. Box 3201 Vernon, CT 06066

Sunday Bible Class: 9 A.M.***Morning Service: 10 A.M.*** Evening Service: 12:45 P.M.***Wednesday
Bible Class: 7 P.M.***[Church Website Click Here](#)***Phone 860.810.9833*****Preacher: Douglas Post**

Florida

Bellview Church of Christ: 4850 Saufley Field Road Pensacola, Florida 32526

Sunday Bible Class 9:00 A.M.***Morning Service: 10:00 A.M.*** Evening Service: 6:00 P.M.***
Wednesday: Bible Class 7 P.M.***[Church Website Click Here](#)***Phone: 850.455.7595*****Preacher:
Michael Hatcher**

Freeport Church of Christ: 17003 Highway 331 SouthPO Box 66 Freeport, Florida 32439

Sunday: Bible Study: 9:00 am*** Sunday Worship: 11am***Evening Service: 6pm***Wednesday Bible
study: 7pm***No Website***Phone: 850.835.4640*****Preacher: Eric Fariior**

College Avenue church of Christ: 337 DeFuniak Springs, FL. 32435

Sunday Bible Class: 9 am***Sunday Morning Worship 10 am*** Sunday Evening 6 pm***Wednesday Bible
study 6 pm***[Church Website Click Here](#)***850-892-5384*****Preacher:Robert Alexander**

Midway church of Christ: 7226 Tamiami Tr. Sarasota Fl. 34243

Sunday: Bible Class: 9:30 A.M.***Morning Service: 10:30 A.M.***Evening Service: 6:00 P.M.***Tuesday:
Ladies Class: 10:00 A.M.***Wednesday: Bible Class 7 P.M.***No Website at this time***Phone: 941-355-
6785*****Preacher: Jack Pinckert Jr.**

Georgia

Hartley Bridge Road church of Christ: 3465 Hartley Bridge Road, Macon, GA. 31216

Sunday Bible Class 10 AM***Sunday Worship 11 AM***Sunday Evening 6 PM*** [Church Website Click Here](#) ***Phone: 478.781.1818*****Preacher: Steve Waller**

Kansas

Parsons church of Christ: 2900 Briggs Ave., Parsons, Kansas 67357

Sunday Bible Class: 9:45 AM***Morning Service: 10:45 AM***Evening Service: 6:00 PM***Wednesday Bible Class: 7:00 PM***No Website***Phone: 620-421-1497*****Preacher: Cloyd “Ben” Frock, Jr.**

Kentucky

Mt Moriah church of Christ: 181 Mt. Moriah Rd. Dunmor KY 42339

Sunday Bible Study: 9 AM***Morning Service 10 AM***Evening Service: 6 PM***Wednesday Bible Study: 6PM***No Website***Phone: 270.934.2007*****Preacher: Rick Shutt**

Sturgis church of Christ: 801 N. Monroe St. Sturgis, KY 42459

Sunday Bible Class: 10:00 AM***Morning Service: 11:00 AM***Evening Service: 6:00 PM***Wednesday Bible Class: 6:00 PM***[Church Website Click Here](#)***Phone: (270) 333-4371*****Preacher: Audie Cherry**

Maine

Gray Church of Christ: 13 Liberty Ave, Gray Maine, 04039

Sunday Bible Class: 10 A.M.***Morning Service: 11 A.M.***Evening Service: 6 PM***Thursday Bible Class: 6 P.M.*** [church website click here](#)***Phone: 207.299.0454*****Preacher: James Miller**

Michigan

Ridge Road Church of Christ: 1770 Ridge Road; Ypsilanti, MI 48198;

Sunday Bible Study 10:00 a.m.*** Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.***Evening Worship 6:00 p.m.***Wednesday Bible Study 7:30 p.m.***[Church Website Click Here](#)***Phone 734-485-293
Preacher: Leonard J. Whit

Nebraska

The Keys Of The Kingdom 31

Kearney church of Christ 1004 East 16th St. PO BOX 643 Kearney NE 68848

Sunday Bible Class 9:30 a.m.*** Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.*** Wednesday Bible Class 7:00 p.m.
[Church Website Click Here](#)***Phone: 308.240.4622*****Preacher:John Shafer**

North Carolina

Eden church of Christ: 250 the boulevard, Eden NC 27288

Sunday Morning Bible class 9am***Sunday Worship 10am***No evening service***Thursday Bible class 7pm***No Website***Phone: 276-340-2653*****Preacher: James Oldfield**

Ohio

Wolf Creek church of Christ: Malta, OH (Rt. 78-West of town)

Sunday Morning Bible Class 9:45***Morning Worship, 10:30 AM***Evening Worship 7:00PM***
Wednesday Bible class 7:00PM***No Website***Phone: 740-962-3363*****No regular preacher**

Tennessee

Sevierville Church of Christ: 208 Hicks Dr, Sevierville, TN 37862

Sunday Bible Class: 9 AM***Morning Service: 10 AM***Evening Service: 6 PM***Wednesday Bible Study: 7 PM***[Church Website Click Here](#)***Phone: 865.453.8009*****Preacher: John Daniels**

Cullom church of Christ: Hwy 84 & Collins Cove Rd, Livingston, TN 38570,

Sunday Bible Study 9am***Worship 10 am***Sunday Evening 6pm***Wednesday Bible Study 6pm***
[Chuech Website Click Here](#)***No phone*****William H. Sowder Sr.**

Central Church of Christ: 112 Hay Long Avenue Mt. Pleasant, TN 38474

Sunday Bible Study: 9:30 AM***Sunday Worship: 10:30 AM***Sunday Evening: 6:00 AM***Wednesday Study: 6:30 PM***[Church Website Click Here](#)***Phone Number: (931) 325-3040*****Preacher: Danny Douglas**

Texas

Oldham Lane Church of Christ: 5049 Oldham Lane, Abilene Texas,

Sunday Bible Class: 9 A.M.***Morning Service: 10 A.M.***Evening Service: 6 P.M.***Wednesday Bible Class: 7 P.M.***[Church Website Click Here](#)***Phone: 325-695-0055*****Preacher: Chris McCurley**

Northpoint Church of Christ: 908 Imperial Dr. Denton, TX 76209

Sunday Bible Class9:30 AM***Sunday Worship 10:30 AM***Sunday Evening 1:00 PM***Wednesday

B.C./Worship 7:00 PM***Scripture Cache www.scripturecache.com***[Church Website Click Here](#)***
Phone: 940.387.1429*****Preacher: Dub McClish**

Central Church of Christ: 507 Park Ave. Weatherford, Texas 76086

Sunday Bible Study: 9:30 AM*** Sunday Worship: 10:30 AM*** Wednesday Study: 4:30 PM***
No Website***Phone 817.304.3615*****No formal preacher: David Calvert**

Leonard church of Christ: 204 East Fannin St. Leonard, TX. 75452

Sunday AM B/S- 9:00-9:40***Sunday AM Worship- 9:45***Sunday PM Worship- 6:00***Wed. Bible
study- 7:00***[Church Website Click Here](#)***Phone: 903.587.2229*****Preacher: Bob Lewis**

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