

“For What Is Your Life?”

We must die! We have no choice! By mortal observation and sacred declaration do we realize that “death” is our last appointment on the agenda of our earthly pilgrimage (Rev. 9:27)? It is a migration of our spirits we struggle to comprehend but our finite minds cannot fathom. Only one possible alternative exists: to be shrouded in this tent of flesh when Christ returns at the end of the world. But in either case our state of being must undergo a radical and eternal change. For “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption” (1 Cor. 15:50-52). So we wait; for we do not know when either shall appear (Mat. 24:36).

In the light of these sobering facts our sojourn here takes on new and vivid meaning. Material things are seen in a different light; for we hunger and thirst after those things that shall transcend death. We want to go into the judgment with the characteristics that shall abide and receive the blessings of Jesus. In summation, we want to go to heaven. We want to live so as to hear our Savior say .to us; “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Mat. 25:21).

We become, therefore, more aware of the inner man and its needs, rather than the needs of the outward man. “For indeed we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened” (2 Cor. 5:4). We understand more fully why Paul said, though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal (2 Cor. 4: 16-18).

O how marvelous! O how wonderful!

Through the sacred Word by the eye of faith our God has blessed us to see the unseen—the eternal. With the father of the faithful, we too can look “for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God” (Heb. 11:10).

Where at one time we were worldly minded “all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (1 John 2:16); we now know that for our spirits to be prepared for our “home” we must hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil (Ecc. 12:5, 13-14).

For our spirits to be prepared to make their flight into eternity we must mold them with a love that always brings about a close submission to the will of Jesus (John 14:15). Because “whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him” (1 John 2:5). If man does not have to obey Christ in order to manifest his love to Him,

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BELVEDERE BEACON

“Ye are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14)

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What About Christmas?

There is no proof that Christ was born on December 25. But the glorious good news is in the fact that He was born as our Saviour, that He came down from heaven to seek and to save the lost (Luke 2:8-12).

Christ should be just as precious to us as if He had been born on December 25. In fact, if He had been born only yesterday we would know nothing of His wonderful life, His miracles, His teachings, His death for our sins, His resurrection and ascension into heaven. We would know nothing about the New Testament church and the spreading of Christianity upon the earth, as in the Acts of the Apostles. In fact, if Christ had been born yesterday, we would not yet have the New Testament and Christianity.

Another fact worthy of consideration is the fact that we can rejoice in Christ, as Christians and believers in Christ, on December 25, just the same as on the other 364 days of the year. We do not have to cease to be happy in Jesus at “Christmas” just to be different from others. Paul says, “Rejoice in the Lord always” (Phi. 4:4). This would take in Christmas the same as all other days of the year.

Instead of revealing the date of the birth of Christ, God has revealed the day on which He was raised from the dead—the first day of the week (Mark 16:1, 9; Luke 24:1-47). God does want us to celebrate this day. It is a day called “the Lord’s Day” (Rev. 1:10; 1 Cor. 16:2). In it we are especially rejoiceful and glad.

We should show our faith in Christ, in His birth, in His life, in all He did for us, and is doing for us, in every proper way; but we should not deceive others into thinking we are celebrating December 25 as the birthday of Christ, for there is no good reason to believe it is the date of His birth. But when all the facts are considered, there is nothing to prevent our enjoying the holiday season just ahead called “Christmas.”

We may give and receive gifts in this season, or at any other season of the year, on December 25, or on another day of the year that we wish—on our birthday, or that of others. In fact, we should “rejoice with them that do rejoice” at Christmas or any other time. There is not enough happiness in the world any way. We can, however, do all this without celebrating Christmas as the birthday of Christ.

Finally, it is proof of the divinity of Christ to find Him so popular in the world nineteen hundred years after His birth that the civilized world wants to celebrate His birth, whether it knows the date or not. Thank God for our Lord and His coming into the world, regardless of the exact date of His arrival by virgin birth. We shall, therefore, go on teaching His truth, whatever is proper and fitting, regardless of “Christmas.”

Gus Nichols
Deceased

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SUNDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 10.00 am.
Morning Worship 11.00 am.
Evening Worship 6.00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 7.00 p.m.

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Newsweek magazine in its December 15, 2008 edition has an article entitled “Our Mutual Joy” written by Sarah Bell and Anne Underwood in defense of “homosexual marriage.” In that article, after quoting the words of a Methodist preacher, Richard A. Hunter, who stated: “The Bible and Jesus define marriage as between one man and one woman. The church cannot condone or bless same-sex marriages because they stand in opposition to Scripture and our tradition,” they write:

“To which there are two obvious responses: First, while the Bible and Jesus say many important things about love and family, neither explicitly defines marriage as between one man and one woman. And second, as the examples above illustrate, no sensible modern person wants marriage—theirs or anyone else’s—to look in its particulars anything like what the Bible describes. “Marriage” in America refers to two separate things, a religious institution and a civil one, though it is most often enacted as a messy conflation of the two. As a civil institution, marriage offers practical benefits to both partners: contractual rights having to do with taxes; insurance; the care and custody of children; visitation rights; and inheritance. As a religious institution, marriage offers something else: a commitment of both partners before God to love, honor and cherish each other—in sickness and in health, for richer and poorer—in accordance with God’s will. In a religious marriage, two people promise to take care of each other, profoundly, the way they believe God cares for them. Biblical literalists will disagree, but the Bible is a living document, powerful for more than 2,000 years because its truths speak to us even as we change through history. In that light, Scripture gives us no good reason why gays and lesbians should not be (civilly and religiously) married—and a number of excellent reasons why they should.”

In this article, as the above quote shows, the writers clearly show their ignorance of Scripture. Jesus clearly teaches, quoting the Old Testament (Genesis 2:24): “*And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder*” (Matthew 18:4-6). What do these writers not understand regarding the word “man” and “wife”? Jesus did not say “man and man” or “woman and woman.” He clearly draws a distinction between man and woman and proclaims that a marriage is between a man and a woman.

The writers seek to pay “lip service” to the Bible speaking of the “religious institution of marriage” and speaks about those who enter into marriage, from a religious standpoint, doing so “in accordance with God’s will.” However, note what they go on to say: “Biblical literalists will disagree, but the Bible is a living document, powerful for more than 2,000 years because its truths speak to us even as we change through history.” In this statement, they tacitly admit what the Bible teaches but seek to get around it by stating that the bible is a “living document.” What do they mean by that statement – they mean the same as political liberals who refer to the Constitution of the United States as a “living document” who would teach that although the constitution states certain things, it can be reinterpreted and, in so doing, they seek to change what the Constitution clear sets forth. Those who refer to the Bible as a “living document” seek to do the same thing. Thus, although the Jesus and the Bible clearly refer to marriage as being between a man and a woman, these writers can say it doesn’t mean what it says as we have to interpret the Bible in today’s world and since some in society deem “marriage” between members of the same sex to be acceptable, that means that Jesus words were not for all time, but can be ignored today. However, Jesus clearly stated: “*He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day*” (John 12:48). But then, according to the writers He didn’t mean what He said. They will find out that He did at the judgment!

Ken Chumbley

NEWS AND NOTES

Keep in your prayers the following: Helen Culpepper, Pam Gossett and mother, Lavonne McClish, Linda Chumbley, and Rachel Fitzpatrick’s aunt (Eula Baker) who has cancer, Maomi Aaron’ sister who is having health problems, Myrtle Grimsley, Lanny Niver together with his daughter and Tim Smith.

Aiden Arnold was sick Sunday and Wednesday and Ethan was also sick Wednesday night as was Nolan Aaron and Les Culpepper.

We will be having our pot-luck this morning after our worship service. Plan to stay and enjoy this time together.

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what other way is available to do so? We must say with Paul that all that really matters is “keeping of the commandments of God” (1 Cor. 7:19).

We no longer are anxious about the present because we are anchored in the future (Mat. 6:33). Men cease to cause fear in us because we are servants of God and fear Him (Luke 12:4-5). We work in the church of Christ adhering to the principal of “whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Rom. 16:16; Col. 3:17).

We still do not know when our appointment with death will be or when Christ shall appear the second time. But being faithful we know we are prepared and we rejoice in the exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust (2 Pet. 1:4).

With a prayer on our lips and these peaceful sublime thoughts in mind we can pillow our heads in rest at the end of a weary and toilsome day. We can now drift into a pleasant sleep, having the last cares of the day vanquished from our spirits by the words of a sweet refrain. “There’s a land that is fairer than day, and by faith we can see it afar. For the Fathers waits over the way, to prepare us a dwelling place there.”

*David P. Brown
Spring, TX*