

The Good Tidings

“...I must preach the good tidings of the kingdom of God...” (Luke 4:43)

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THE GOSPEL IS THE POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION

(Romans 1:16)

A monthly e-journal of New Testament Christianity published in portable document format and sent free to interested individuals via email. Its primary purpose and goal in publication is to “preach the gospel to the whole creation” (Mark 16:16). Subscribers are encouraged to assist us in this effort by forwarding *The Good Tidings* to all their email contacts and by printing out copies for folks who do not have access to email. Send articles and subscription requests to the Editor.

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What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the Word of God

John 8:45; Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ

John 3:16; 8:24

Repent of your sins

Luke 13:3, 5; II Peter 3:9

Confess Jesus is the Christ

Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37

Be baptized for the remission of
your sins

Acts 2:38; 22:16

Live faithfully everyday

Matthew 10:22

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

The church of Christ is not a physical building nor is it a denomination. It is the blood-bought body of Christ (Eph. 5:25-27). At the end of time, the church will be delivered up to God (I Cor. 15:24-25).

The church of Christ is the church promised and built by Jesus (Matt. 16:18-19). Jesus did not build a denomination. His interest is not in a physical building. The church of Christ is a living organism. It is composed of people saved by the blood of Jesus.

The church of Christ is God’s promised kingdom (Daniel 2:44-45). The church is that kingdom which shall stand forever. The eternal kingdom was established in the days of the Roman kings. This was during the lifetime of some who heard Jesus speak. “Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power. (Mark 9:1).

The church of Christ wears a Bible name which honors Jesus (Rom. 16:16). The name “church of Christ” is a Bible name and it is a name big enough to embrace all the saved. The Bible gives no specific name for the church. It does, however, identify the church with several Bible expressions. The members of this body are known simply as Christians (I Peter 4:15-16).

The church of Christ worships according to the New Testament pattern (Acts 2:42). The day of worship is the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). On each Sunday we sing (Eph. 5:19), study God’s word (Acts 20:7), pray (I Thess. 5:17-18), give (I Cor. 16:1-2), and observe the Lord’s supper (I Cor. 11:23-26.) Only these Bible things are done in worship!

The church of Christ has no religious guide but the Bible (John 17:17). Churches of Christ have no “creed books,” “manuals,” or “confessions of faith.” Our only rule of faith is the Bible (II Tim. 3:16-17). It is in harmony with the Bible to use the name church of Christ, to call yourself a Christian, and to accept Jesus as the only head of the church. It is scriptural to accept the Bible as your only rule of faith, to plead for unity in Jesus and to follow the Bible pattern in worship. Those who follow the Bible are Christians, members of the church of Christ. “We seek to do Bible things in Bible ways and call Bible things by Bible names.”

—Charles Box

Essentials for Successful Christian Living

In all the good we do, every Christian has the desire to be a success. Success, however, is measured in different ways, depending on a person's perspective. There are the high ideals of service and customer satisfaction, but if there is no profit, it will not last for very long. **Christians are interested in seeing success through the eyes of God.** How does God see success? Successful Christian living is more about the spiritual than the monetary and secular. What then is successful Christian living?

Successful Christian living requires patience. "Knowing this that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." James 1:3-4. Benjamin Franklin said, "He that can have patience can have what he will." Shakespeare said, "How poor are they who have not patience! What wound did ever heal but by degree." It is easy for us to find reasons why others should have patience with us. Our God is longsuffering with us. We need to expect the same patience of ourselves as we expect of others.

Successful Christian living requires wisdom. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

James 1:5. Knowledge is generally defined as the possession of facts and wisdom is the right use of that knowledge. God gives men wisdom as He gives them gold: His treasure house is not the mint, but the mine. The mine that contains the treasure is the Bible. If we want wisdom, we must search the scriptures.

Successful Christian living requires constant prayer. "...let him ask of God...But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering (doubting)." James 1:5-6. James goes on to say that we have not because we ask not or we ask for selfish reasons. Prayer is our communication with God. He wants to hear from us on a constant basis, not just in emergencies and at "routine" times. Prayer has power, but we need to be actively engaged in it.

Successful Christian living requires faith. "...let him ask in faith...a double minded man is unstable in all his ways." James 1:6, 8, 21. This is faith that stabilizes and holds as an anchor for the soul. Faith keeps us steady on the foundation of Jesus Christ. When our thinking is split (double minded) we become unstable and the storms of life will be more likely to knock us over.

Successful Christian living requires gratitude. "Every good gift and every

perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of light..." James 1:17. We have brought nothing into this world and have nothing but what God has provided. Someone has said, "He who receives a benefit should never forget it; he who bestows one should never remember it."

Successful Christian living requires trials and temptations. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation..." James 1:12-16. Most of us would just as soon do without trials and temptations, but James goes on to say, "...for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love him." Trials are character builders. We often ask God to make us stronger, but we have a tendency to complain about the weights.

Successful Christian living requires compassion. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction..." James 1:27. The final judgment scene in Matthew 25 is mostly predicated on how we treated others before the end of all things. Jesus interprets the way we treat those in need as how we would treat him. All of us are challenged to **look at these ingredients** and see if we have the proper amount in our own lives.

—Charles R. Williams¹

Solutions?

A recent news story reported that the Chico, California, City Council had passed a ban on nuclear weapons. They've set a \$500 fine for anyone detonating a nuclear weapon within city limits. According to their website, the city of Chico has 71,317 people living in it. I'm not the most knowledgeable about nuclear munitions but I'm fairly sure that if someone detonated one there, the \$500 would be a moot point. I doubt there'd be anyone left to arrest the culprit much less collect the fine. I really don't think hitting the criminal that wants to blow up a city in the pocket book would be much of a solution.

It reminds me of the solutions people come up with to their own problems. Couples who have "fallen out of love" and are just having a miserable time living together attempt to solve it by divorcing instead of digging in, remembering their commitment, changing or seeking help. Individuals go through financial struggles and instead of developing self-control they up the credit line, apply for another credit card or declare bankruptcy and start accumulating debt again. Two friends have a falling out and instead of confronting the issue and each other to lovingly resolve, they build walls, write the friendship off and hold grudges.

No, man's solution to

his own problems, from start to finish, whether it be sin or just practical resolutions, at best serve as temporary Band-Aids. For a complete solution borrow the mind of God by living in His Word and Will. His wisdom is always wiser (1 Cor. 1:20), His ways are always higher (Isa. 55:9), His will is always perfect (Psalm 19:7), His path is always better (Psalm 119:105).

One more important thing to remember: In case someone detonates a nuclear bomb in your city, the best solution for you would be to be right with the Lord. Maybe the city council should mention that to its citizens.

—Dale Jenkins²

What is a Pattern?

A pattern is a blueprint, representative sample or specimen, a model to be followed in making things, an ideal worthy of imitation. Most everything around us is "made by" or "according" to a pattern. There are patterns for clothes, houses, machines -- everything imaginable! This article is written according to a pattern. I remember the letters of the alphabet posted on the wall in my first grade class. We were given instruction to copy those letters. We were so careful to make our letters exactly as they were. They were the pattern we were to follow.

Christians are to imitate

the Lord's example/pattern. *"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps"* (1 Peter 2:21). God has always demanded that His pattern be followed. Noah built the ark according to God's pattern (Genesis 6:22) and was saved as a result of it (Heb. 11:7; 2 Peter 2:5; 1 Peter 3:20-21). Moses constructed the tabernacle according to the pattern given him (Heb. 8:5).

There is certainly a spiritual pattern that all men must follow today to stand approved in God's sight. This pattern is not found in creeds, manuals or disciplines of men. God's approved blueprint or pattern is the Bible, God's Word. It is His Word by which we will be judged in the end. Jesus said, *"...the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day"* (John 12:48; cf. Rev. 20:12).

Does your belief and practice match God's pattern or the doctrines of men? Jesus said the doctrines and commandments of men will cause ones worship to be vain and will be rooted up as unwanted plants at the end of the world. *"This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.... Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up"* (Matthew 15:8-9,13).

Does God's plan of salvation match what you did? Does your worship match God's pattern? If not, then you are not saved and your worship is in vain. Jesus said that for one to be saved, he must: **believe** in Christ (Mark 16:16), **repent** of all his sins (Luke 13:3), **confess** faith in Jesus as being the Christ, the only begotten Son of God (Matthew 10:32), and **be baptized** into water for the forgiveness of sins (Mark 16:16). The Lord will then add you to the church, the body of the saved (Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:23). Have you followed this pattern?

—Garland M. Robinson

Islam and Christianity Compared

Christianity and Islam are two major religions in our world today. Many of the teachings of these religions contradict. We know they cannot both be right. If Christianity is right, then Islam is wrong and vice-versa. Jesus said, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

Christianity is based upon the Bible. We can prove the Bible is true. The Bible was written by about forty different writers over a period of about 1,600 years. Many of these writers did not know each other, yet there are no contradictions in the Bible. Even though the Bible is not a science book, it has

many scientific facts in it. The Bible teaches us the earth is round (Isaiah 40:22; Proverbs 8:27). It also teaches us we cannot count all the stars (Jeremiah 33:22). There are about 1,000 prophecies listed in the Bible which were all fulfilled. Many of them were prophecies concerning the Messiah.

The Bible is the source of truth. Jesus said, "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth" (John 17:17). It cannot be destroyed. Peter wrote, "Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.... But the word of the Lord endures forever. Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you" (1 Peter 1:22,23,25). Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Matthew 24:35).

The Bible teaches us Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. We can prove this is true. Jesus was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, performed miracles to prove His words were true, died on the cross, was buried, and rose from the dead (Matthew 1:22,23; Hebrews 4:14,15; Mark 15:16-28,42-47; Romans 1:4; 1 Corinthians 15:1-19). Islam denies that Jesus is the Christ.

Islam denies the resurrection of Christ. It teaches that Jesus was a prophet, but not the greatest prophet. It teaches Jesus was a great man, but He was not the Son of God. Jesus taught people He was the Son of God. If He was not, He was a false prophet and a liar!

The Bible reveals God's eternal plan to save man through the church (Ephesians 3:10,11). Salvation is in Christ (John 14:6; Acts 4:11,12; Ephesians 1:3). Those who are saved are in the body, the church (Ephesians 5:23; 4:4). Islam denies the way to be saved is through the church of the Bible.

Islam teaches that Mohammed was the final spokesman for God, but the Bible says Jesus is (Hebrews 1:1-3). Mohammed was only a man who died and awaits the resurrection. Jesus died and rose again never to die again (Revelation 1:18).

There are many religions in the world which claim to be from God. Islam is one of those religions. This religion cannot be from God because its teachings contradict the Bible, which is the Word of God. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

—John M. Grubb

Remember to forward The Good Tidings to all your email contacts! Thanks!

What Then??

On graduation night, a father said, "Son, what are your plans? The boy said, "Dad, you know I'm going to college." The dad said, "That's right, but **what then?**" The boy replied, "Well, I'll want to get a good job, and hopefully get married." The dad said, "Well, that is also fine, but **what then?**" The boy said, "Well, I want to have some kids. Then, after I put in the required years on the job, I'll retire." The father replied, "That's good, son, but **what then?**" And the boy said, "Well...uh...I don't know...I guess I'll get old and die." The dad said, "That's right! **What then?**" The boy dropped his head as he realized he had plans for life on earth, but had not made plans for life beyond this world. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). **What then?**

"TOO LATE! NO TIME, NO..."

Those were the last words heard on the cockpit voice recorder of the French Concorde supersonic jet airplane that crashed in Paris on July 25th [2000], killing all on board and several on the ground. In all, 113 people died. On take-off the plane had hit a piece of metal on the runway that punctured a tire. The tire flew apart and hit an engine and fuel tank on the plane, causing an explosive fire that brought the plane down only 90 seconds into its flight. When made aware of the emergency situation the pilot said he would land at a nearby airport. However, a few seconds later he said, "Too late. No time, no..." and then there was silence. One can only imagine

the horror of the passengers, the screams and shrieks and exclamations of terror as they heard the noise of the accident, saw the flames and felt the plane plunging to earth. For all on board and those few on the ground it was **too late**, and there was **no time** left. Their eternal destinies were sealed.

We cringe at the thoughts and feelings of the last seconds of those who lost their lives in this tragic accident, **and yet, none of us know that we are not living under the same possible urgency.** At any moment, the same sort of freak accident could happen to us. A heart attack, a stroke, a ruptured aorta, an explosion, a head-on car crash, a slip in the bathtub, choking on food - literally thousands of things can happen to end one's life on earth. James 1:14 says, "*Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.*" First Peter 1:24 says, "*For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth away and the flower thereof falleth away.*" When these times come, one's eternal destiny is set. It is "too late" to change it! There is "no time" left.

The suddenness with which death can come is illustrated by the Lord's teaching on the rich fool (Luke 12:13-21) and the account of Lazarus and the rich man (Luke 16:19-31). The time to be concerned about one's eternal destiny is now, while you are alive and have time to obey the gospel or be restored to God's grace! Also, Jesus repeatedly reminded us that we do not know the hour of His return, which also

seals our destiny (Matt. 25:35-44). Matthew 25 is all about living in such a way as to be prepared to meet the Lord. Our death, or His second coming, will place us before Him. Are you ready?

---Ted J. Clarke

Sources of reprinted articles.

Please note that out-of-print publications are not listed.

1. *The Broadcast*, Nashville Road church of Christ, 1883 Nashville Pike, Gallatin, TN 37066
2. *Aim*, Granny White church of Christ, 3905 Granny White Pike, Nashville, TN 37204

POINTS TO PONDER

Worship is like everything else in life; you get out of it what you put into it.

Man's way leads to a hopeless end ... God's way leads to an endless hope.

Don't put a question mark where God puts a period.

If you are able, help us spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ by printing out copies of The Good Tidings for friends and neighbors who don't have access to email. Thanks so much!