

The Good Tidings

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

Vol. 1, No. 1 - September 2004

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.

Editor:

Michael Willey
mbwilley@yahoo.com
419 Lynn Drive
Nashville, TN 37211

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

Who Couldn't Use Some Good Tidings??

War, terrorist threats, murder, rape, man's inhumanity to his fellow man on display. We see all this and more when we turn on the television news programs. Some years ago, singer Anne Murray told us that we sure could use a little good news, and that sentiment still rings true today. And that is what *The Good Tidings* is all about - good news. But the good tidings that we are spreading is not about falling gasoline prices, reduced crime rates, or even a sale at Wal-Mart. It is the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

And this news is more important than anything else in the whole of creation. In Matthew 16:26, Jesus asked, “For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” The apostle Paul wrote that the Gospel “is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes...” (Romans 1:16). In Hebrews 5:9, we read that Christ “...became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation.” Think about that for a moment. The most valuable possession each of us holds is our own soul. What can save our soul? The Gospel of Jesus Christ, BUT only if we obey it. It is therefore evident that the good tidings of the kingdom of God is the most important news that can be told. This highlights the two-fold goal of *The Good Tidings*: to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ far and wide so that people can learn of Jesus Christ and render obedience to Him, and to encourage those who are already Christians to greater faithfulness and service to Christ.

Jesus said, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19). The power and immediacy of email allows us to “go” places to which we could never physically travel and reach people with the Gospel that we could never personally meet. And you can help spread the Gospel simply by forwarding *The Good Tidings* to all of your email contacts and by printing out copies for friends who do not have access to email. Won't you please assist us in this effort, because, after all, in this day and age, who couldn't use some good tidings?

—Editor

Since There Are So Many Churches Today, How Can a Person Know Which One Is Right?

There are literally hundreds of different denominations in the world today. And, they certainly are confusing and contradictory. The question is, is God pleased with so many? The resounding answer from the Bible is NO (not according to the Bible). Should we pray for and support them all? Again the answer is NO. Can we know which one, if any, God approves? The obvious answer is YES! Jesus said, “upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18). Ephesians 4:4 says, “there is one body.” The one body is the one church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18).

The place to start in finding out which church is approved of God is to leave your *feelings* out of the picture. All they can do is cloud the issue with human bias. The next place to turn is the *Bible*, specifically the New Testament. Creeds, manuals, councils and synods have absolutely nothing to do with an honest search for the God-approved church for they are not the authority (the Bible is the authority).

Long established

traditions have no bearing in one’s investigation. Every man and woman can learn the Truth for himself or herself. The Bible can be understood (Eph. 3:4).

Next, have an *open mind*. Approach the Scriptures desiring to learn what God wants and be willing to accept it no matter where it leads, even when it is different than you have always believed. Remember, God is the one that must be pleased, not ourselves. It doesn’t matter what we want.

As we turn to the Bible, several questions must be asked. What were the characteristics of the church we read about in the New Testament? What **name** did it wear? What **doctrine** did it teach? **How** and by what means was worship conducted? **What** was done in worship? **What** was the organization of the church? **What** did the church practice? **How** did its members live from day to day? These are vital questions for none of the answers are left to man’s discretion. When the honest answer from the Scriptures is found, then turn to the world and begin your search for the one that matches the identity

of the church you read about in the Bible. Which church today fits this description?

You would do well to investigate the “churches of Christ” (Rom. 16:16). Jesus is its head, the Bible its guide, and heaven its home. Take an honest look at it.

—Garland M. Robinson

KNOW YOUR BIBLE CAMPAIGN!

In order to encourage a greater interest in the Scriptures, a special FREE Home Bible Study Course is now being conducted. This course is:

- **Completely undenominational**
- **Absolutely free of charge**
- **Conducted entirely by mail**
- **Based directly on the Bible**

For a free sample lesson, contact the Editor. Do it now before you forget and get started on your journey to greater Bible knowledge!

HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU NEED?

The facts are these:

The Bible contains 3,586,489 letters; 773,692 words; 31,173 verses; 1,189 chapters; and sixty-six books.

Considering this book from a perspective of sheer size, it is a massive library bound into one large volume - a volume which many consider overwhelming, and thus impossible of being read and studied fully.

Have you ever thought about following a plan whereby the entire Bible could be read, only to dismiss the idea as being impractical and too difficult?

Let's do a little simple arithmetic. The Bible consists of 1,189 chapters. An average year is made up of 365 days. 365 divided into 1,189 gives us a figure of just over three (3.2575342 to be more exact). Roughly speaking, then, if we just read a little over three chapters a day, every day, we will have read the entire Bible, from cover to cover, in the space of one short year.

Another scenario: The Bible has 31,173 verses. Again, a year has 365 days. 365 into 31,173 gives us in the neighborhood of 85 ½.. So if we commit ourselves to reading just a bit more than

eighty-five verses each day, we will complete our reading of the whole Bible in one year.

Do you still see the Bible as too large? Your schedule as too hectic and inflexible? Consider this. The average Bible book contains eighteen chapters; the average chapter, twenty-six verses. How long does it take to read less than one-fifth of one book - just a little over three chapters made up of just twenty-six verses each? For a fairly rapid reader, the entire book of Philippians can be read in eight minutes, and Philippians has four chapters!

How much time each day do you spend watching television? fiddling with the computer? reading the newspaper? playing with the dog?

And so you say you just can't find eight to ten minutes a day for Bible reading?

I don't believe it.

—Dalton Key¹

The Bible Passes The Test

The Bible contains two kinds of information. Some of it can be checked; some of it cannot. For example, it is not possible to scientifically "check" the

accuracy of Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." While the affirmation is not in any way inconsistent with scientific data that are available, at the same time the statement is one of pre-human history, and does not lend itself to empirical investigation.

On the other hand, the Scriptures contain hundreds of references that arise out of the background of human history. These may be tested for accuracy. If it is the case that the Bible is demonstrated to be absolutely precise in thousands of historical details, it is not unreasonable to conclude that its information in other matters is equally correct.

One of the most amazing features of the Bible is its uncanny reliability in the smallest of details. Let us note a few examples of incidental biblical precision.

During his personal ministry, Jesus once passed through the region of Samaria. Near Sychar the Lord stopped for a brief rest at Jacob's well. He engaged a Samaritan woman in conversation, during which he suggested that he could provide the woman with water which could perpetually quench her thirst. Misunderstanding the nature

of the Master's instruction, the woman, alluding to Jacob's well, declared: "Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep" (John 4:11). The statement is quite correct, for even now, some twenty centuries later, Jacob's well is approximately 80 feet deep. That's the equivalent of an eight-story building.

Reflect upon another example. In Acts 10 there is the account of Peter's visit in the city of Joppa. Luke declares that Peter was staying in the home of Simon, a tanner of animal hides. Then the historian says, almost as an afterthought, "whose house is by the seaside" (Acts 10:6). Hugh J. Schonfield, a scholar who is certainly no friend to Christianity, and author of the infamous book, *The Passover Plot*, has commented on this passage: "This is an interesting factual detail, because tanners used sea water in the process of converting hides into leather. The skins were soaked in the sea and then treated with lime before the hair was scraped off."

Consider another interesting case of Bible precision. When Paul was en route to Rome for trial, the ship upon which he sailed became involved in a terrible

storm. When it eventually became apparent that the vessel was in a very dangerous circumstance, the crew cast the ship's anchors into the water. At the same time, they "loosed the rudder bands," hoisted up the foresail, and aimed the ship towards the beach (Acts 27:40). There is an interesting and subtle point in the Greek text that is not apparent in the King James Version. The original language actually says that they "loosed the bands of the *rudders*" (plural). This is amazingly precise, for in ancient times, ships actually possessed two paddle-rudders, not a single rudder as with modern vessels. In 1969, a submerged ancient ship was discovered in the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Cyprus. An examination of the ruins gave evidence of dual rudder-oars by which the boat was steered (see *National Geographic*, November 1974), thus demonstrating the remarkable accuracy of Luke's record.

The Bible can be tested repeatedly---historically, geographically, scientifically, etc. And it always passes the test. Its incredible accuracy can really only be explained in light of its divine inspiration.

—Wayne Jackson²

Who is Amenable to the Law of Christ?

The answer to the question: "Who is amenable to the law of Christ?" may be found in one verse of Scripture. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30). These words were spoken by the apostle Paul to the inhabitants of the city of Athens who were idolatrous and pagan in their worship of false gods. They did not know about the true and living God who made the heavens and the earth nor did they know how to worship him acceptably. Though the Grecians were considered to be "civilized" and educated for their time, they were uninformed and unlearned when it came to their soul's salvation. Paul said there was a time when God "winked" at (endured) such ignorance, but now he required repentance from "**all men everywhere.**" That means that no one, regardless of who or where they are, how educated or uneducated they may be, whether they live in a civilized country or a third world nation, **NO ONE** is exempt, excused or released from his obligation to Christ and his Word. Jesus himself said, "he that

rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words; hath one that judgeth him: the words that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48).

Were all men everywhere not amenable to the law of Christ, it would make little or no sense to take the Great Commission seriously. Jesus instructed the disciples to, “Go...and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matt. 28:18-20).

Reason tells us that if those who have never heard the Gospel are “safe” in their unlearned state, it would be detrimental to their souls to take the chance of preaching the Gospel to them and then having them reject it. Under such circumstances they would undoubtedly be lost, making it better to leave them alone in their unknowing condition rather than preach the saving Gospel to them. Those who taught the truth would become responsible for their being lost.

Jesus died on the cross and gave the Great Commission because all men

are sinners (Rom. 3:23), and in a lost condition (Rom. 6:23). The only hope of man is redemption through the blood of Christ which is contacted in obedience to the Gospel in baptism (Rom. 6:3-4). Those who have become Christians have an urgent obligation to reach as many lost souls as possible before they die in sin.

It should be pointed out in view of this discussion, that young children who are incapable of hearing (Rom. 10:17), believing (John 8:24; Acts 8:37), and obeying (Heb. 5:8, 9) are not counted as “men” by God. These are not chargeable for their actions and therefore not responsible before God until they reach an age (state) of accountability. Infants are not born with original sin, nor do they inherit sin from their parents in conception (Ezek. 18:20). In addition, those who are mentally impaired from birth to the extent they, for all intents and purposes, are “babes” would not be judged as men. Those who lose their mental faculties at some time after adulthood would obviously be amendable for their actions before they became incognizant.

If you are capable of understanding this article **you are amenable to the law of**

Christ! If you are not a Christian you need to become one (Rom. 10:17; John 8:24; Luke 13:3; Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 2:38). If you are one, you must teach others using whatever talents and abilities God has given you (I Tim. 2:2). May He say to you and me, “well done, thou good and faithful servant...enter ye into the joy of the Lord” (Matt. 25:21).

—Dan Sikes³

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

1. *Old Paths*, North Amarillo church of Christ, 801 N.E. 15th Street, Amarillo, TX 79107
2. *Bible Light*, Sunny Slope church of Christ, 6465 Old Mayfield Road, Paducah, KY 42003
3. *Seek The Old Paths*, East End church of Christ, 102 Edison Street, McMinnville, TN 37110

POINTS TO PONDER

Life is an echo — What you send out comes back.

Worry never robs tomorrow of its sorrows, but only saps today of its strength.