

# Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

“. . . Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body.” - Ephesians 5:23

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## GOD'S WAY VS. MAN'S WAY

### Part One

by Burl Curtis

### CONCERNING FORGIVENESS

Everyone needs to be forgiven of sins. Paul wrote, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Jesus said, "I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come" (John 8:21). Although the Lord is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9b), many will not be forgiven of their sins because they seek the wrong way (Matt. 7:21-23) or wait too late to seek (Luke 13:24,25).

1. **God's way** - humble ourselves, pray, seek God's face, turn from wicked ways. "The Lord appeared to Solomon by night and said, If my people, which are called by my name [will do the things listed here] then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (2 Chron 7:12-14). Paul wrote, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning" (Rom. 15:4a), so please note that these conditions and promises were made to those who were already the people of God, not those who had never been added to His family. **Man's way** - do part or none of these. Too many people, even departing brothers, stiffen their necks and refuse to turn from their wicked ways.
2. **God's way** - we must forgive to be forgiven. Matthew (6:15) and Mark (11:25,26) record the clear words of Jesus that when we pray, "forgive . . . But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive you your trespasses." **Man's way** - refuse to forgive. Oscar Wilde wrote, "Children

begin by loving their parents; after a time they judge them; rarely, if ever, do they forgive them." A general told John Wesley, "I never forgive and I never forget." Wesley replied, "Sir, pray that you never sin."

3. **God's way** - forgive repenting brother over and over. Peter asked Jesus, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus answered, I say not unto thee, until seven times: but Until seventy times seven" (Matt. 18:21,22). The Holy Spirit guided Luke to record these words of Jesus to his disciples, "Take heed unto yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him" (17:3,4). **Man's way** - forgive not at all, maybe once, or a few times at most. Many brothers feel you have done an awful thing to them if you rebuke them. We need more brothers like Jess Taylor, who said, "You show you love me when you correct me."
4. **God's way** - confess sins for forgiveness. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). "Confess your faults one to another" (James 5:19). **Man's way** - hide sins. This has been man's way since Adam and Eve sinned in the garden. Solomon reduced this to a proverb, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Prov. 28:13). Notice

forsaking sin is required before obtaining mercy. It seems to be popular among some brothers to confess sins but little emphasis is placed on forsaking sin. Grace is abused by claiming it will take care of failing to truly repent.

5. **God's way** - don't forget our forgiveness; be merciful. Jesus told a detailed parable about a servant who was forgiven a huge debt by a king and that servant refused to forgive a very small debt owed him by a fellow servant. Please read Matt. 18:23-25. When we consider all the sins the Lord has forgiven us, we have no right to be unmerciful. **Man's way** - forget we were purged; fail to show mercy. After listing the things we should add to our faith, Peter said, "But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins" (2 Peter 1:9). James informs us how we will be judged if we show no mercy, "For he shall have judgement without mercy, that showed no mercy" (2:13).

Everyone needs to be forgiven by the Lord. Every brother who repents needs to be forgiven by other brothers in Christ. But forgiveness by a brother will not save you if the Lord does not forgive you. A brother holding a grudge against you will not condemn you if the Lord forgives you. What should our attitude be? "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:31,32). Both Jesus and Stephen demonstrated this attitude for "the Lord is good, and ready to forgive" (Psa. 86:5).

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**THE FATHER GAVE,  
HIS SON OBEYED**

by Darrell Broking

The plea for obedience to the truth is at times countered with, "For by grace are ye saved" (Ephesians 2:8), or "Being justified freely by his grace" (Romans 3:24). Often the tactic is employed to discredit the Bible doctrine of adherence to matters of obligation. The quotation of scripture is commendable. However, failure to rightly divide the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15) has damning consequences.

The "faith only" advocate decries obligation to the specific pattern of New Testament Christianity, regarding such as voiding the grace of God. "Salvation is a free gift offered without any effort on man's part!", is extolled by some with the diligence and force of a speeding freight train. At times more energy is spent advocating this doctrine, than would be spent obeying the truth! After all Jesus said, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:30).

As one considers all that the Bible has to say about works, it is

evident that there is a type of work forbidden and a type commanded. As far as meritorious works are concerned, Paul said, "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10). He further recorded the zeal of national Israel in Romans 10:2-3: "For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God." Jesus said, "When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do" (Luke 17:10). Our righteousness fails, His avails.

Working in conjunction with the salvation by faith and faith alone doctrine, is the unscriptural idea that we are not under law today. When Paul said, "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Romans 3:28), he was comparing the New Testament law with the Old Testament law, respectively. Back in verse 27 the inspired apostle defined "the faith" as law. The works of the Old Testament law are forbidden in this dispensation. In fact, the Christian who engages in the works of the Old Testament law, is spiraling downward, slipping away from the Lord's good grace (Galatians 5:4).

As we examine James 2:24, it is evident that the Lord expects a certain type of work from man in conjunction with his "justification." Notice his inspired words. "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." Those running about removing the Bible doctrine of faith coupled with works must ignore the fact that the Scripture's sole reference to "faith only" is one of **condemnation**.

While discussing the gospel as God's power to save, Paul said, "therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith unto faith" (Romans 1:16-17). This is the righteousness that man must submit to, or obey. The first mention of "faith" in the aforementioned verse relates to faith in Romans 10:17. The revelation of God's will to man produces faith. "Unto faith" is

dealing with man's acceptance and submission to God's will. This is the faith discussed in Hebrews 11:16. "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Notice that the Hebrew writer discussed "coming" to God. Who can deny that his coming takes place with effort on man's part? Is one in the process of coming to work, while he is lounging on the sofa viewing television? Will such a one tell his employer that he was at work by faith alone? Will a paycheck be forthcoming? Neither will this work in God's spiritual realm.

The lover of truth realizes that obedience to the Lord's teaching is essential to one's salvation. Denial of such is evidence of hatred toward the Lord (John 14:15). It is positioning one's self as an enemy of the Lord (John 15:14). Regardless of the attempts by the "faith alone" proponents, their efforts actually negate God's gifts of grace and mercy. May we never be guilty of this abominable sin!

The faith is to be obeyed (Acts 6:7). Then and only then is man's soul purified (1 Peter 1:22). Again it is written, "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but **ye have obeyed from the heart** that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Romans 6:17-18). Serving God's righteousness is the work we must be involved in.

Isn't this the lesson we have learned from Christ Himself? "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son" (John 3:16). Does the fact that God gave His Son, mean that His gift was effortless on the part of His Son? John 10:17-18 will answer that question with a resounding no! Remember friends, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." (Hebrews 5:8-9). The Father gave, the Son obeyed! To receive God's gifts, we must do likewise.

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## SILENCE OF THE SCRIPTURES: Noah, A Case In Point

By Tracy Dugger

*"Not that argument again. You people have wore out poor ole' Noah in trying to sustain your 'Silence of the Scriptures' argument. I wish you would at least use something fresh."* This is what is sometimes heard from the lips of those attempting to defend mechanical instruments of music in worship. However, is it not still true that God commanded Noah to build an ark from gopher wood? Was Noah permitted to use another kind of wood? If he would have used cedar, would God have considered that obedience or disobedience to the divine directive? By God specifying to Noah what kind of wood to use did this not exclude all other kinds? If Noah had chosen to use another kind of wood, would Moses have been inspired to write, **"Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he."** (Genesis 6:22)? Would Peter have written that Noah was **"a preacher of righteousness"** (2 Peter 2:5)? Would he have recorded for us, **"Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."** (1 Peter 3:20)?

Yes friends, this account perfectly illustrates the hermeneutical principle of the silence of the Scriptures. By God's silence regarding oak, cedar, or any other kind of wood, these are excluded. When God told Noah what to use (gopher wood), all other types were ruled out!

To use a "traditional" or "old" argument against a false position is nothing to be ashamed about. Paul argues for the existence of God through the creation in Romans 1. Because David did the same a thousand years before in Psalms 19, are we to conclude that such is unacceptable? Do not our opposers often use the wonderful story of Noah to encourage faithfulness in others? Is not this story told numerous times to our children? Does its frequency make it untrue? On

many occasions Bible writers use the story of Noah to teach a lesson (Ezekial, Jesus, Peter, etc).

Do those who oppose our continual use of Noah tire of hearing the numerous lessons of Old Testament characters presented by new Testament writers (Romans 4-5; James 2; Hebrews 11; Galatians)? Are there no lessons we can learn from the Old Testament (Romans 15:4)?

We will quit using *"that same ole argument"* as soon as it is answered. Just as Old Testament principles are recorded for our learning (Romans 15:4), Paul still stated, **"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And 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"** (Colossians 3: 16-17).

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## IF IT WEREN'T SO SERIOUS, IT WOULD BE FUNNY

By Eddy Gilpin

Recently I read an article in which comparisons were made with how man deals with certain problems. For example, the article revealed that in dealing with malaria we kill the mosquito. In dealing with diseases involving germs we kill the germs. Also, in dealing with the carcinogen asbestos, it was removed from all public facilities. Other hazardous materials are dealt with in similar fashions.

However, when it comes to alcohol-related problems, it is considered illogical and unethical to annihilate the cause of it - alcohol itself. Why? Because it is said that to destroy beverage alcohol is to infringe upon personal liberties. Thousands of people are killed as a result of it each year, but it is viewed as an "infringement upon personal liberties." How does such "reasoning" appear to one who

has lost an innocent child to a drunk driver?

In recent years great attempts have been made to punish tobacco companies for diseases which their products cause and to force them to pay for programs aimed at reducing the number of minors using their products. While I am not sympathetic to tobacco use in any form, I do wonder why the tobacco companies are targeted when alcohol is the greater killer of innocent people. Alcohol kills about 100,000 people annually at a cost to taxpayers of about \$99 billion a year. Eighty percent of this cost is health related. Nearly 2,000 Americans were killed by teenage drunken drivers last year. In Virginia, there were 934 fatalities due to automobile accidents in 1998. Of these, 336 involved alcohol (that's 36%). Why is it then that the mosquito is killed to combat the malaria, the cigarette is attacked to combat the cancer, but the alcohol is seen as a "liberty" in light of all the problems it causes?

The Bible is clear regarding its use. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Prov. 20:1). "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder" (Prov. 23: 29-32). "Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:21). It is indeed one of the scourges of the ages, and its prohibition by Scripture is not an "infringement upon personal liberties," but rather a warning to safeguard life - both physically and spiritually.

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## GOD'S AUTHORIZED WORSHIP - COLOSSIANS 3:17

- LORD'S SUPPER** - The New Testament and early church history record that Christians met on the first day of every week (Sunday) to worship God and remember Christ (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:23-34; 16:1-2).
- PRAYERS** - (Acts 2:42; Philippians 4:6-7; I Thessalonians 5:17-18).
- SINGING** - God's word authorizes only vocal music and specifically singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12). The New Testament shows no use of mechanical instruments of music in worship to God by the church Christ established. Church history notes no such use for nearly 700 years after the New Testament was completed. It is an innovation of men, not of God.
- GIVING** - Free-willed, cheerful, generous, and every week (Acts 20:35; I Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8 & 9).
- PREACHING OF THE WORD** - The gospel of Christ, not men's doctrines nor entertainment, saves and strengthens us (Acts 2:42; 20:7; Romans 10:17; I Corinthians 1:18-23).

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