

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

Established 1953

November 2004

Vol. 38 / No. 11

TWO THINGS I KNOW FOR SURE

by Chris Perry

I am appalled, as any faithful follower of God should be, at the blatant disregard so many seem to have for the truth today. Any who have been in a college setting recently have likely recognized that the doubt of any sort of objective standard runs rampant. In fact, it often seems as if the only ideas many are willing to reject are the ones espoused by Bible-believing Christians. Such can be discouraging – I know first-hand the doubts and fears that can befall those who attempt to stand up for what is right in the sight of God. “Am I right?” one might ask; “Can I **really** know anything for certain?” Pilate asked, whether sincerely or not, “*What is truth?*” (John 18:38).

With the above questions in mind, it would behoove every New Testament Christian, as well as all who desire to know the truth, to examine 1 John 5:18-20. The phrase “we know” or some variation of it occurs six times in the immediate context of this passage, and 27 times in 1 John. Interestingly, at John’s disposal are several different Greek words which can be translated “know.” He could have used, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the word which carries with it the idea of “knowledge gained through experience.” Or, he could have chosen to use a general word relating to “understanding.” However, in the passage under consideration, John chose neither of these, opting instead for a Greek word indicating

“full persuasion and complete confidence.”¹ Thus, from 1 John 5:18-20, I can discover two very important facts that every person should know for sure.

First, **I know there is a Savior who desires to save me.** 1 John 5:20 states, “*And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is True, and we are in Him who is True, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.*” It is a certain historical fact that Jesus of Nazareth walked upon the earth. It is even seldom disputed that He was crucified just outside the city of Jerusalem. And friend, no fact can be more certain than the fact that the same Jesus is “*both Lord and Christ*”! (Acts 2:36). The prophecies of the Old Testament stand as a testimony to Jesus’ part in the Divine purpose, foretelling of His birthplace (Bethlehem—Micah 5:2), the time in which He would be born (“in the days of these [Roman, CP] kings”—Daniel 2:44), and the events surrounding His death (Psalm 22), all hundreds of years prior to His birth. And the witness of the New Testament to the empty tomb is no less profound—He showed Himself some nine times after His resurrection, including to a group of over 500! (1 Corinthians 15:6).

On top of all this, each person should be aware that the Savior desires to save mankind! Paul describes to Timothy a God who

“*will have all men to be saved, and to come to a knowledge of the truth*” (1 Timothy 2:4). Jesus describes Himself as coming so “*that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly*” (John 10:10). The abundant life is offered to all who will receive it; it does not matter what sins lie in our past, what guilt might weigh us down. I have met individuals from time to time who viewed themselves as “unsavable.” Their sins weighed so heavily upon them that they were convinced nothing could remove the crimson stain. Through Christ, however, we can be made alive “*who were dead in trespasses and sins*” (Ephesians 2:1; compare with 1 Corinthians 6:10-11). Through His blood, contacted at baptism (Revelation 1:5; Acts 22:16), we can be “*cleansed from all sin*” (1 John 1:7) and “*raised to walk in newness of life*” (Romans 6:3-4); we can have our spiritual garments made “*white in the blood of the Lamb*” (Revelation 7:14, emphases added). Indeed, it is a wonderful thing to know there is a Savior who desires to save us!

Along with this knowledge, however, comes a more disturbing but no less important assurance: **I know that being a Christian means the sinful world must not take me.** John informs us that the battle ground is clearly divided, for in verse 19 he writes, “*And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.*” He expounds upon this idea by commanding us to “*love not the world, neither the things that are in*

FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

USPS Publication #211780

... is a Periodical publication issued monthly by the Church of Christ at Third and Bethel (P.O. Box 251), Mammoth Spring, AR 72554-0251. **POSTMASTER: Please mail all changes of address to the above address.**

FCGN is mailed free of charge to any who care to receive it. We will be happy to add any names to the regular mailing list. If you send in a name we must have a complete address, including number and street name, or R.R. or HCR number, plus box number, or a P.O. Box number and the **NINE DIGIT ZIP CODE**. This paper is supported by voluntary contributions for which we are grateful. Financial information will be furnished upon request. **Mail all address corrections or manuscripts to:**

FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

P.O. Box 251

Mammoth Spring, AR 72554

Lee MosesEDITOR
Phone(870) 625-3217
E-Mailcocfcgn@centurytel.net

continued from page 1

the world" (1 John 2:15), and provides this reason: "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (v. 16).

If the world is indeed wicked, and if all sin is rooted in the world, what are we to do? The answer is just as certain to John: "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not" (1 John 5:18). If a person is to receive the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ, and if that person is to remain in a saved condition, he must "sin not." "But," many might interject, "don't we all sin from time to time?" To be sure, "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). However, the Greek word translated "sinneth" indicates "action in progress contemporary with the time of speaking."² In plain terms, then, John is saying, "Whosoever is born

of God does not and cannot keep on sinning, that is, continue in a life of habitual sin." The remedy for individual, momentary acts of sin, of which every Christian who is blessed with life is guilty from time to time, is found in 1 John 1:9—penitent confession to God.

It seems fairly simple, then. If one is to be a Christian, he must separate himself from the world, become "sanctified" or "set apart" from the sinful influences of the world (Exodus 13:2, 12; Ephesians 5:26). However, friends, this is the single-most difficult command to follow, as evidenced by the myriads who are swept away by worldliness. Love for the world causes many never to obey the Gospel—many Pharisees stumbled because they "loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:43), and the rich young ruler, devout as he was, went away lost because of his riches (Matthew 19:22). Love for the world causes many never to grow—the "thorny-ground" hearers in Jesus' parable of the soils "are

choked with the cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection" (Luke 8:14). In short, love for the world will cause countless souls to be lost for eternity.

Friend, do not allow the world to fool you—there is an objective standard for truth. And that standard, the inspired Word of God, tells me that I can know there is a Savior that wants to save me. That same standard also reveals that God's expectation and demand is that I separate myself from the world, devote myself to Him as a "living sacrifice" (Romans 12:1) and vow that the world will not take me! Are you willing to learn and apply these two important facts? Hear the words of Christ: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

303 Dekalb St.

McMinnville, TN 37110

1. Guy N. Woods, *Commentary on Peter, John, and Jude* (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Co., 1991), p.323. This information is consistent with other Greek sources, such as *Strong's Complete Dictionary of Bible Words*.

2. *Ibid*, p.265.

"MASTER, THUS SAYING THOU REPROACHEST US ALSO"

by Lee Moses

The Lord has certainly never been a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34-35). Upon one occasion, Jesus Christ accepted an invitation to dine with a Pharisee, a highly respected member of the community (Luke 11:37; compare with Acts 5:34). But upon reclining to dine, being aware of the false doctrine held by this Pharisee, Christ presented a caustic rebuke of the man's sect (Luke 11:39-44). There was also a lawyer present at the occasion; and the lawyers, holding the responsibility of interpreting, teaching, and

making decisions based on the Law of Moses, were closely associated with the Pharisees. As such, the lawyer took offense at Christ's rebuke of the Pharisees, and responded, "Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also" (v. 45).

The lawyer demonstrated a certain amount of perceptiveness in this observation. Jesus had rebuked the Pharisees for specific charges, including hypocrisy, misplaced priorities, self-exaltation, and causing others to stumble. But though the charges were fairly

specific, the application was not limited to those to whom the charges were specifically made – The application was to any and all who were guilty of those charges.

God has provided mankind with the Bible. Contrary to the assertions of some, the Bible is a book that is relevant, necessary, and applicable to each man and woman who has lived or is yet living today. Some people read the epistles of Paul and assume that the instructions therein apply only to the churches or individuals to whom they were directly addressed. However, neither Paul nor the Holy Spirit who inspired him intended that his instructions be limited to the churches to whom they were directly addressed. God commanded that the epistles were to be circulated among the different churches: *“And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea”* (Colossians 4:16). Paul taught the same doctrine *“every where in every church”* (1 Corinthians 4:17). So all the churches were bound by the instructions given to other churches. This is yet true of the church today. The church is built upon the foundation of the doctrine taught by the apostles and prophets (Ephesians 2:19-20; 1 Timothy 3:14-15). Does it not then follow that all who seek to be a part of the church of Christ, the body of the saved (Acts 2:47; Ephesians 5:23; 1:22-23), must be built upon the doctrine that includes Paul’s epistles? (1 Corinthians 3:10-11; 1 Peter 2:5).

Some read the seven letters to the churches of Asia (Revelation 2-3) and see that very specific problems were being addressed. Thus some might once again conclude that the application of these letters is limited to those churches. But note that each letter concludes with the admonition,

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches” (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). Do you have an ear? That is, do you have the capacity to hear or read these things Divinely revealed to the seven churches of Asia, and to understand them? Then you are commanded to **hear** them. And this hearing is not limited to perceiving what someone else’s problem is. The beatitudes are pronounced regarding the book of Revelation, *“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and **keep** those things which are written therein”*; and, *“Blessed is he that **keepeth** the sayings of the prophecy of this book”* (1:3; 22:7; emphases added). When anyone **hears** the word of God, he also has the responsibility of applying that word to himself. James warned,

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed (James 1:22-25).

Jesus spoke of the secure salvation of *“whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them”* (Luke 6:47-48). “Whosoever” means anyone in anyplace and anytime. But one who does not hear and do Jesus’ sayings cannot have the solid rock of salvation as his foundation (v. 49). Jesus’ “sayings” obviously includes

His teaching done while on earth (Matthew-John), but it also includes His teaching done through His apostles and the few other Divinely-inspired writers (John 16:12-13; 1 Corinthians 2:16). It is each person’s responsibility to hear, apply, and obey the New Testament. Jesus said, *“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). From the time His word was given until the last day the earth shall stand, His word is the one unchanging standard to which all men and women must conform their lives. Even in the Old Testament can lessons be found that need to be applied today (Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:6, 11).

Can one not look at the letters written to first century churches, and see that the same issues need to be addressed today? The spectre of denominationalism, which hangs over the religious world today, was addressed by Paul (1 Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:3-4). As homosexuals today attempt to thrust their agenda upon this country’s population, the Scriptures remain that address this subject (Romans 1:26-27, 32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11). Although materialism continues to claim souls, this was a problem Christ addressed in the first century (Revelation 3:16-18). As television and other media sources attempt to bombard our senses with sensual images, the Christian’s defense is found in the New Testament (Ephesians 6:11-17; Philippians 4:8). And the greatest problem that has ever beset mankind still exists today – how one can be saved from his sins. The answer is to be found only in the New Testament of Jesus Christ (Romans 1:16; 6:16-18).

Many rebukes are found in the New Testament. Although they may

continued from page 3

be directly addressed to other churches or individuals, one must examine his own life as he reads the Scriptures. The word of God is intended to prick the heart of each man and woman that he might correct that which is amiss in his life (Psalm 119:59-60; 2 Corinthians 13:5; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:3-4). As Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for several sins of which they were guilty, the lawyer saw that he was guilty of the same sins, and thus stood rebuked as well. In this sense, the lawyer demonstrated a perceptiveness which it would serve us well to emulate.

But while the lawyer in a sense demonstrated his perceptiveness, he in another sense demonstrated his naïveté and ignorance by attempting to correct Jesus: *“Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also”* (Luke 10:45). The lawyer perhaps expected a retraction or apology from Jesus, but there was none forthcoming. Instead, Jesus rebuked the lawyers even more scathingly than He did the Pharisees (vv. 46-52). Each man or woman living today needs to be perceptive enough to realize when a Biblical rebuke applies to him. However, he must not be so naïve as to think that the Lord will change His mind with regard to applying either the application or the punishment to anyone.

For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you (1 Peter 1:24-25).

TEN THINGS WE WILL NEVER REGRET

1. Showing kindness to an aged person.
2. Destroying a letter written in anger.
3. Offering an apology that will save a friendship.
4. Stopping a scandal that was ruining a reputation.
5. Helping a boy or girl find themselves.
6. Taking time to show consideration to parents, friends, brothers and sisters.
7. Refraining from gossip when others around us delight in it.
8. Refusing to do a thing which is wrong, although others do it.
9. Living according to our convictions.
10. Accepting the judgment of God on any question.

OCTOBER CONTRIBUTIONS

CHURCHES

Church of Christ (Clarkridge, AR) . . . . .	.75.00
Lowell Church of Christ (Springdale, AR) . . . . .	.50.00
Church of Christ (Agnos, AR) . . . . .	.50.00
Pilot Church of Christ (Mammoth Spring, AR) . . . . .	.40.00
Church of Christ (Moody, MO) . . . . .	.50.00
Church of Christ (Viola, AR) . . . . .	.25.00
Dellhalf Church of Christ (Myrtle, MO) . . . . .	.30.00
Church of Christ (Moko, AR) . . . . .	.50.00
Crossroads Church of Christ (Gepp, AR)	100.00
Church of Christ (Camp, AR) . . . . .	.25.00
Gospel Hill Church of Christ (Pottersville, MO)	100.00
Church of Christ (Elizabeth, AR)	25.00
Church of Christ (Bakersfield, MO)	50.00
Oak Grove Church of Christ (Walnut Ridge, AR)	25.00
West 160 Church of Christ (West Plains, MO)	200.00

INDIVIDUALS

Ola Mae Simpson (Mount Pleasant, TX) . . . . .	.25.00
James D & Wanda Cox (Tustin, CA)	100.00
Gary & Ann Wilson (Hot Springs, AR) . . . . .	.50.00
Hazel Stokes (West Plains, MO) . . . . .	.10.00
Carroll P. Bennett (Camden, AR) . . . . .	.20.00
Clauzelle Reynolds (Camden, AR) . . . . .	.20.00
Jina Daniel (Mc Crory, AR) . . . . .	.25.00

GOD'S AUTHORIZED WORSHIP

- COLOSSIANS 3:17

1. **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).
2. **PRAYERS** - (Acts 2:42; Philippians 4:6-7; I Thessalonians 5:17-18).
3. **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.
4. **GIVING** - Free-willed, cheerful, generous, and every week (Acts 20:35; I Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8 & 9).
5. **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).

CHURCH OF CHRIST
 P.O. BOX 251
 MAMMOTH SPRING, AR 72554
 ADDRESS
 SERVICE
 REQUESTED

MOVING? CHANGING TO 911?

Be sure to send us your change of address.



Periodical Postage
 Paid At
 Mammoth Spring, AR
 72554-9998
 Publication #211780