

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

THE LENEXA EDIFIER

John 8:32

“And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free”

APRIL 4, 2021

MIRACLES OF MIRACLES

by Jim Stauffer

God has proven Himself to be God over and over again as He has served as Creator, Teacher and Savior to mankind from the beginning.

It has now become apparent the world was created by a Deity that possesses power beyond the understanding of man. The only reason man will even debate the point is the overwhelming bias on the part of media, educational leaders and those who control the social influence of society. In other words, the judges of the debate are already biased without sufficient evidence to support their thesis.

The apostle Paul makes a claim in **Romans chapter 1** that the world in which we live serves as a sufficient testimony to the evidence of the power of God to convince any and all who possess an honest heart.

God demonstrated His power over everything man could muster when He delivered the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage. He overpowered a god of Egypt in each of the ten plagues he sent upon that nation when Pharaoh due to his pride refused to allow the Israelites to leave. By the time God sent the plague of the death of the firstborn upon the land, there was no doubt Who was in control of the land.

Jesus came to earth and in keeping with the prophecies of the men of the Old Testament days, performed many signs and miracles to demonstrate He was sent from God. He claimed to be the Son of God and then demonstrated it by the power He showed on many different occasions. In **John 5:24-47**, Jesus says His word comes from God above and if they believe it they will have eternal life. He goes on to cite John the Baptist as one who testified to Jesus's Deity and then follows that up with Moses as a prophet who spoke of Jesus. He then cites their inconsistency when He says, *“Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father;*

the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope. “For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me. “But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?”” **(John 5:45-47)**

Jesus then declares Himself to be the banner of truth when He speaks to Pilate, *“Therefore Pilate said to Him, “So You are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.””* **(John 18:37)** In spite of sufficient evidence to believe He was the Son of God, even the concerns of his own wife, Pilate allowed Jesus to be crucified.

In spite of all the mistreatment and disrespect from Romans and Jews alike, Jesus never lost sight of His purpose in going to the cross. *“For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.”* **(1 Peter 2:21-24 cf. 2 Cor. 5:21; Isa. 53:4-12)**

In His final act regarding His death for the sins of mankind, Jesus accomplished the greatest miracle of all. He raised from the grave. He said He would do this **(John 10:17,18)** and we learn His death was to pay the price for justification **(Rom. 3:24-26)** and His blood was the price of redemption **(1 Pet. 1:18,19)** in order for us to be reconciled to God and enter His kingdom **(Rom. 5:10; Col. 1:13,14)**. The death of His perfect Son was

God's requirement as payment for our sins, but the resurrection from the grave was God's demonstration that this was conducted in accordance with the will of God and would not in any way inhibit His plan, but on the contrary would show the world He had the power over all things including death (**Heb. 2:14,15**).

Because of this miracle of miracles, we now have a hope of eternity with the Father (**1 Cor. 15:12-23**). And the results of this miracle, that is the appearance of Jesus alive, was witnessed by many beginning with the guards over the grave (**Mat. 28:11-15**). Paul tells us Jesus was seen following His resurrection by many; even above 500 at one time (**1 Cor. 15:1-8**).

Many will spend this weekend in honor of the death and resurrection of Christ and then forget it for another year. But He calls us to offer our lives as a living sacrifice to God as He did for both us and the Father.

Take Up Your Cross

by **Shane Scott**

And he strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one, saying, *"The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised."* And he said to all, *"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."* (**Luke 9:21-23**)

Jesus predicted his death three times in the synoptic gospels (**Matthew, Mark, Luke**), and with each prediction Jesus also taught about the nature of discipleship – what it means to follow him. To follow Christ is to imitate Christ, to do what he did, to go where he went. And in this passage, Christ laid out the grim destination of this call to imitation – the cross.

Jesus came to do the Father's will, regardless of the cost to himself. And he invites us to follow him in the same self-denying journey of commitment to the Father's will. So that none of us would misunderstand the painful nature of this commitment, Jesus expressed it in the most graphically violent way imaginable in the first century. We are summoned to follow Jesus in the shameful procession to Golgotha, bearing our own cross on the march to the grisly execution called crucifixion.

This language is not to be pressed into crude literalism (although many Christians through the years have been put to death for their faith – even by crucifixion). But this language should not be diluted, either. Following Christ in absolute commitment to the will of the Father is very, very difficult.

It means surrendering your desires to God's. It means ignoring the jeers of the crowd to stay on the unpopular path of conviction. It means loving and forgiving those who are undeserving (though never as undeserving as you were of the Father's love). It means sacrifice, and some day it could even mean death.

But the final destination of the way of Christ is not the cross – it is an empty tomb and a glorious new life. Jesus promised. *"For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it"* (**Luke 9:24**). Following Christ means losing your life to save it, becoming first by becoming last, seeking greatness by serving others.

So take heart! Yes, those of us who have joined the procession of cross-bearers have chosen the most difficult path of all. But our Lord's resurrection guarantees that the journey will be worth it.

*Must Jesus bear the cross alone,
and all the world go free?
No, there's a cross for everyone,
and there's a cross for me.
How happy are the saints above,
who once went sorrowing here!
But now they taste unmingled love
and joy without a tear.
The consecrated cross I'll bear
till death shall set me free;
and then go home my crown to wear,
for there's a crown for me.
Upon the crystal pavement down,
at Jesus' pierced feet,
joyful I'll cast my golden crown
and His dear name repeat.
O precious cross! O glorious crown!
O resurrection day!
When Christ the Lord from heaven comes down
and bears my soul away.
**Must Jesus Bear the Cross Alone by Thomas
Shepherd (1693)***

"Placing Local Church Membership"

by **Wayne Goff**

Occasionally you will find a Christian who *complains* about "placing membership" in a local congregation, citing the fact that such a phrase does not appear in the New Testament. Yes, they are correct that "placing membership" is not a biblical term, but I would strongly argue that it is a **biblical concept!**

Other Christians *confuse* the **concept** of the universal church versus the local church, and simply say

that Jesus Christ *“adds”* us to the church, **Acts 2:47**. Yes, Jesus adds us to the “universal church,” but that does not suffice for membership in a “local congregation.”

We see an example of Saul of Tarsus attempting to *“join”* (“place membership in”?) the local church in Jerusalem, **Acts 9:26**. We know that he was saved in Damascus when Ananias taught and baptized him, **Acts 9:17-18**. We know that the Lord recognized him as a Christian and added him to the church. But when he came to Jerusalem, the disciples were afraid of him because of his reputation of being one who brought threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, **Acts 9:1**! But once Barnabas confirmed that Saul was indeed no longer a persecutor, but a believer, they accepted him into their fellowship, **Acts 9:27-28**. All of this illustrates the process of what we call today “placing membership” in a local congregation. The idea is simply that each local congregation must determine for itself *who* is in fellowship with the Lord, and *who* is not, and thus extend fellowship to the one the Lord fellowships! Read **1 John 1:1-3**.

Corinth was in fellowship with one who was *not* in fellowship with the Lord, **1 Cor. 5**. This person was living with his father’s wife, and thus living in a state of adultery! God does not tolerate such behavior and sin, and neither should the local church! Paul’s apostolic instruction corrected the matter, and the erring church repented and corrected its mistake.

A local church with a brother named Diotrephes *refused* to extend fellowship to the apostle John himself, **3 John 9-10**! Thus that church was refusing a brother whom Christ accepted and approved! John said that he would deal with this issue when he arrived there. So you see the issue with each local congregation. The eldership must decide to the best of their ability who is in fellowship with the Lord, who is not, and extend fellowship accordingly.

The Remedy For Sin

What should a person do who feels they are in sin? First, they need to realize that it is God who determines what is sin and that He will be the judge in the last day (**Romans 2:16**). So, anyone who is feeling guilty needs to find out from God’s word whether they have committed sin or not. Next, even if the person is not in sin, but they still have a burden of guilt, we tend to tell them that they didn’t do anything wrong. Often, the person still feels guilty because *“...whatever is not from faith is sin.”* (**Romans 14:23**).

The remedy for a guilty conscience is to repent

before God and to commit to living right for God in the future (**1 John 1:9**). This is also commanded in **Acts 8:21-22**: *“...your heart is not right in the sight of God. (22) Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you.”* Both of these verses were written to Christians who had already surrendered their lives to God. If you have never become a child of God, then you need to be inside of Christ first to have your sins forgiven (**John 14:6, Romans 8:1**). To come into Christ, you need to be baptized (**Romans 6:3**). And **Galatians 3:27** says *“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”* This is why **1 Peter 3:21** says *“There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism...”*

To know you are free from guilt before God, the Creator, is so clean and refreshing! To know that you are an heir of Heaven makes all the other problems of life seem a little more manageable. If there’s anything we at Brentwood can do to answer any questions or help you come closer to God, don’t hesitate to contact us at the info listed here in the paper, or on Facebook. May God bless you as you seek Him diligently.

Matt Hodge

“If you want to find God ... look inside your own heart.” Really?

It is often suggested that the path to truth and knowing God is to look deep within yourself, to search your own mind and feelings. I believe it is important for us to know ourselves and be honest about what we find when we search our hearts. However, the Bible never indicates that my own heart, mind or feelings is the source of or path to Truth and God.

We do not know what is in the mind of another person, unless they tell us. So what makes me think I know what is in the mind and will of God, unless He tells (reveals) that to us?! (**1 Corinthians 2:10-13**).

What I really find when I look deep in my own heart is what I know, what I want and what I feel. I do not find what God wants. I do not find God’s (spiritual) truth. That is the reason I urge people to get serious about studying the Bible -- the word of God, where He reveals His will and His truth!

Getting in touch with yourself may be a healthy practice in some respects, but it does not show us *“the way, the truth and the life.”* Knowing Jesus (who is the way, the truth and the life) is accomplished by studying God’s word and conforming our will to His will -- changing our heart.

Would you like some direction in where to start? Give me a call, text or email.

May God bless you in your search for His Truth.

Don Bunting

Psa. 1:1 *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.*

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What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10