

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”

JUNE 1, 2014

HAVE YOU INVESTED WISELY?

Jim Stauffer

Most people today either contemplate or already have retirement plans in effect. If you are like me you have vacillated over the years over how and with whom to invest and trust those assets.

I certainly want someone who is knowledgeable of the various markets and assets available for investment. An even more important requirement is that your investor be a person or persons of integrity. Some have been swindled and lost their assets. (Remember Bernie Madoff?)

When deciding how to invest and with whom we trust our assets we need someone with the necessary knowledge and experience who is also honest. Not always an easy thing to find.

It is surprising then to see folks with so little concern over an asset of even greater value than financial assets.

Jesus placed a value on the soul of man. **Matt. 16:26** *For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?* He did not leave us there to sink or swim. He offered this bit of warning. **Matt. 12:30** *Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.* The first choice we must make is whether to stand with the Lord or against Him.

Jesus insists His message is that of the Father Who sent Him. **John 5:30** *I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.* Also, when He recommends the proper choice, He provides the cost/reward benefit to help us decide. **Matt. 7:21** *Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' 23 And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'* The place to which they depart is no mystery. According to Jesus it is 'eternal punishment'. **(Mat. 25:46; John 5:28,29)**

Just as we seek wisdom in the proper care of temporal assets, we must do likewise with the more valuable spiritual asset, our souls.

The wise man of the Bible has advised us, **Prov. 3:7** *Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil. Prov. 12:15* *The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice.*

In light of this many need to reassess their spiritual investments. One of the errors most often made is measuring all success by viewing the material successes we see around us. We tend to value the advice of men successful in worldly ventures more than the advice of those with spiritual wisdom.

Paul warns us that those who are most respected in worldly matters are not usually good examples to follow if we wish to be on the side of the Lord. **1 Cor. 1:26** *For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. 30 And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, 31 so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."*

This offers a clear choice. Do we wish to be on the side of the Lord, who "has nowhere to lay his head"? **(Lk. 9:58)** His material condition was by design. He chose to serve the Father's will. **(John 4:34)** As a result, He gave up His place next to the Father in heaven, *by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (Phil. 2:7,8)*

How will you invest your greatest asset? Will you deny yourself and take up your cross and follow Jesus? **(Mat. 16:24)** This was the decision of the Apostles who were with Christ on the earth. Their belief was so strong all but one died the painful death of a martyr. Men who had every opportunity, just as you and I to devote their efforts to saving and investing in life here, but chose to give their lives (denying themselves) for His cause as an investment in their eternal future. And now they rest in the bosom of Abraham. Will we be wise or foolish?

Not Forsaking The Assembly

(Hebrews 10:25)

Patrick Chaddick

"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. " So spake the Psalmist, David, in his gladness to be in God's house, and with God's people. (Psalm 122:1). He also said, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts...." "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord."...."For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to sit in the tents of wickedness." (Psalm 84:1, 4, 10). Again, David proclaimed: "I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people. In the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem." (Psalm 116:18, 19).

The Hebrew writer said: *"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." (Hebrews 10:25).* This is a commandment of God, that we should not willfully stay away from church services, but should encourage one another more and more.

The early disciples came together on the first day of the week to break bread, (partake of the Lord's Supper), and the Apostle Paul preached to them: *"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight." (Acts 20:7).* The early disciples left a good example for their assembling together, to us today. We must assemble together upon the first day of the week to partake of the Lord's Supper, to give of our means as God has prospered us, and to worship God in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; to petition God in prayer through His Son, Jesus Christ; and to be builded up in the faith through a minister of the Gospel, proclaiming God's Word. We are, therefore, to worship God in spirit and in truth: *"God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24).* The Psalmist declared: *"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Psalm 133:1).* But how can brethren dwell together unified, if some of them do not even assemble with the saints?

In the Old Testament we read of the people of Israel coming together, "as one man," seeking to hear, and understand the law of God, which Moses gave them. The people listened attentively to the words which Ezra, the priest, read to them, and worshipped God with heads bowed in humbleness. They were read unto by Levites and others who gave the "sense" of the reading, and caused the people to understand the reading of God's law. This was a momentous occasion for Israel; how then could all these things have happened if the people had not first assembled themselves together, "as one man," and then to listen attentively, through much of the day, the reading, and explaining of God's law? (Nehemiah 8:1-8).

How important and profound was the Day of

Pentecost, A.D.33, when Jews and proselytes from many nations had assembled together to observe Pentecost. We can only imagine all the great and wondrous things that took place that day: The twelve Apostles received the outpouring of the Holy Ghost through a miracle, and spoke in other tongues, and declared the wonderful works of God to the people there in their own tongue, and performed many wonders and signs before all the people. A great and powerful sermon was preached that day by the Apostle Peter, convicting the House of Israel of the crucifixion of the Son of God, and causing them to repent and be baptized in His name, and for the remission of their sins. As a result, three thousand souls were added to the Lord that day. That day was a fulfillment of **Isaiah 2:1-4**, **Micah 4:1-4**, and **Joel 2:28-32**. The church of the Lord was established on that day; it was the first day of the week, and the resurrection day; God's plan of salvation was established for all future generations, and that day was the culmination of all things written about Christ and His kingdom, in the Old Testament, and their coming to fruition in the New Testament. Christians today come together to observe the Lord's Supper, to study from the Bible, to sing, and pray, and give as they have been prospered, and worship God, upon the first day of the week. Thus, we see what an historical day this was, and how important the assembly was.

The church is referred to as *"the general assembly and church of the firstborn".... (Hebrews 12:23).* The word "assembly" implies that the members of the church are all assembled together as the church. However, if there are those who do not assemble together with the saints because of willful neglect, lack of love for the Lord, indifference, or because of cares of the world, how then can they be part of the general assembly, and church of the firstborn? They cannot.

We have the commandment to *"give diligence to make your calling and election sure".... (II Peter 1:10).* This command includes being faithful in our coming together for Bible study, and worship service at each appointed time. There are exceptions, of course, which prevents us from assembling, such as sickness.

When parents bring their children with them to Bible class, and worship service, they are not only setting a good example to their children, but to other brethren, to other children, and to outsiders in the world. It has been said that when others around us see us with a Bible under our arms, and on the way to church service, we have preached a sermon unto them.

We remember the commandment, *"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Galatians 6:7).* And again, God *"is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." (Hebrews 11:6).* Are we diligently seeking God through our assembling together? If not, then let us resolve to do so.

JESUS, A MAN APPROVED OF GOD BY SIGNS AND WONDERS

by Kenneth Chumbley

Christianity is no mere philosophical view of life but a system of redemption grounded and validated in miraculous deeds.

In George MacDonald's novel, *The Curate of Glaston*, Thomas Wingfold, the Anglican preacher in the small village of Glaston, was a preacher with no real conviction about the message he preached. In his journey to faith, which the story recounts, there comes a point where he asks the question which is eventually asked by all who seriously ponder the validity of Christianity: "why should the weight of the story...rest upon...miracles?" (67).

The relevance of this question is evident for at least two reasons. First, there's the fact that Christianity is the only religion that bases itself upon the occurrence of certain historical events. If these happened, Christianity is validated; if they didn't, it is worthless (**1 Cor. 15:12-19**). Second, is the claim that Christianity's foundational events are miraculous (supernatural) in nature. But to note this still begs the question as to why "the weight of the story should rest upon miracles." For an answer, I would ask you to consider the Old Testament accounts of Gideon (**Jdgs. 6**) and Elijah (**1 Kgs. 18**).

Gideon recognized how easy it is to deceive oneself in matters of subjective religious assurance. To ensure that he wasn't engaged in an act of self-delusion, he sought objective evidence from God by which he could know that the Lord really intended to use him to deliver Israel from the enemy. And God complied, not once, but twice. First, the dew fell on Gideon's fleece, but not on the surrounding ground; then the dew fell on the ground, but not on the fleece. Here's how J.W. Montgomery explained the point: "Gideon, like any spatio-temporally bound member of the human race, was incapable of knowing by subjective, existential immediacy that the voice within him was God's voice; yet he had to know, for the lives of others as well as his own safety depended upon his ability to make a true religious judgment. In this quandary, God provided Gideon with external evidence--in concrete, empirical terms--showing that it was indeed He who spoke within Gideon's heart" (*The Suicide of Christian Theology, Bethany Fellowship 1971, 343*).

On Mount Carmel, Elijah faced the problem of conflicting religious claims. Since the prophets of Baal said one thing and he said another, how were the people to know who (if either) was telling the truth? The solution was an objective test. "So Elijah gave the false prophets the opportunity to demonstrate the 'reality' of their god through his ability to perform an act of divine power on earth. The inability of the false prophets' truth-claim to hold up under such a test (fire from heaven, **1 Kgs. 18:24**), when coupled with Yahweh's positive response to the identical test, provided the needed ground for belief in the true God" (ibid).

In the New Testament, the situation is no different. How were people to know which men claiming to speak for God actually spoke for God? More specifically, how

were people to know that Jesus of Nazareth was who He claimed to be; namely, Emmanuel, God with us? Here's how: "*Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know*" (**Acts 2:22**). Miracles were the means by which God chose to "approve" (point out, show off, demonstrate) Jesus as His Son. Their suitability as a means to this end is obvious. There are some things men cannot do. Therefore, if a man appears doing what men cannot do, it is reasonable to believe that something "super" human is at work (**Jno. 3:2**). And speaking for myself, any man who can cure the incurable (**Matt. 8: 3**), stop the unstoppable (**Matt. 8:26**), predict the unpredictable (**Matt. 17:27**), do what can't be done (**Matt. 14:25**), and raise the dead (**Matt. 9:25**), is one to whom I'm going to listen.

Very simply, a miracle is an extraordinary event that could never have occurred without special divine intervention. Some of the salient characteristics of Christ's miracles have been aptly summarized by Norman Geisler in his work *Signs and Wonders* (Tyndale House 1988).

Their extent included power over every disease and demon (**Matt. 4:23,24**) over nature (for example, **Matt. 21:18-20**), and raising the dead (**Jno. 11:43,44**). They were always successful. The results were immediate. No one Jesus healed ever suffered a relapse. They confirmed Jesus and His message as God's Son (**Jno. 10:36-38**).

God never performed miracles arbitrarily, but always purposefully. And His most singular purpose was that miracles confirmed (authenticated) some individual as His spokesman or representative (**Mk. 16:17-20; Heb. 2:3,4; see Exo. 4:5**). Through the means of objective, historical, verifiable miracles Jesus was "designated beyond all question the Son of God" (**Rom. 1:4**, Barclay). Had He not done what no one else ever did, we would be justified in ignoring His claims to deity (**Jno. 15:24**). But in doing what mere man can never do, He removed every excuse for unbelief.

We need always, therefore, to remember "that to hold aloof from Christianity is not simply rejecting some creed, or system of opinion, it is rejecting Jesus Christ Himself, the Son of God, the Savior of men" (*John Broadus, Jesus of Nazareth, Baker 1962, 104-05*). When fully impressed with the unparalleled magnitude of Christ's miraculous power (**Matt. 9:33**), we will have all the proof we need of His identity, and will marvel and confess, "*What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him!*"? (**Matt. 8:27**).

John 1:1 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.*

Eph. 2:19 So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;

1Pet. 2:9 But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

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.

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

We conduct in home Bible Studies

We offer Correspondence Courses

Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer

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NEWS AND NOTES:

SICK IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

J.R. DANIEL REMAINS AT HOME. LILLIE KEECH IS RECUPERATING FROM ADDITIONAL SURGERY. PAT CLOTHIER HAS RETURNED HOME FROM THERAPY. SURGERY SHOULD BE IN ABOUT ONE MONTH.

OUR BIBLE CLASS ON SUNDAY AND WEDNESDAY IS IN MALACHI

SUNDAY MORNING SERMON:
A STUDY OF ROM. 9-11



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