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100th
ISSUE

VOLUME 14 NUMBER 4

House to House Heart to Heart

A publication of the... churches of CHRIST

Founder: Christ – Mt. 16:18

Place: Jerusalem – Isa. 2:1-3, Acts 2:5

Time: A.D. 33 – Dan. 2:44, Acts 2

Head: Christ – Eph. 1:22

Organization:

Christ as head – Eph. 5:23

Elders oversee local church –

Heb. 13:17, Titus 1:5

Deacons as servants –

Acts 6:1-6, 1 Tim. 3:8-13

Members compose body –

Col. 1:2

Name (group):

Church of God – Eph. 3:15

Body of Christ – Eph. 1:22-23

Churches of Christ – Rm. 16:16

Bride of Christ – Rm. 7:4

Name (individuals):

Disciples – John 15:8

Saints – Rm. 1:7

Brethren – Lk. 8:21

Children of God – Gal. 4:26

Christian – Acts 11:25-26

Creed: Jesus/Bible – Acts 8:37

Rule of Faith & Practice:

Word of God – 2 Tim. 3:16-17

Worship: Jn. 4:24

Sing – Eph. 5:19

Pray – Acts 2:42; 1 Thes. 5:17

Teach – Acts 5:42

Communion – 1 Cor. 1:23-26

Contribute – 1 Cor. 16:1-2

Mission: Save Souls – 1 Tim. 4:16

Warning: Be Faithful – 2 John 9

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A Farmer Who Never Plowed a Field



by Allen Webster

When He visited earth, Jesus laid aside His regal purple to don the coarse dress of the common man.

When Jesus laid down the scepter, He picked up a hammer. He gave up stardust for sawdust. He exchanged the singing of angels for the pounding of nails. He went from framing worlds to framing houses. If you had shaken His hand, you would have felt the calluses put there by countless hours of physical toil. If you had overheard His conversation, it would have been about square feet, plumb lines, and estimated dates of completion.

Yes, Jesus was a carpenter (Mark 6:3), but why? He could have been anything. Unlike us, He was not limited by natural

talent or opportunity. Nothing was beyond His capability or beyond His control. He was a jack-of-all-trades, ten-talent man, a prodigy, and a genius all rolled into one. He could have been born into any family circumstance He wanted or attended any educational institution He chose. He could have had any profession.

This line of reasoning presents some interesting possibilities.

Jesus did not choose to be a farmer, but He is the "Sower that went forth to sow." There would have been some logic in the Son of God coming as a farmer. He was the One who gave us "seedtime and harvest" in the first place (Genesis 8:22; John 1:3). He created the very earth itself and put life into the tiny seed (Genesis 1:11-12). He made the earth fertile, trees fruitful, and vegetables edible. >>



God's word is like a seed

quick [living] and powerful

watched as His crop brought forth three thousand souls (Acts 2:41).

What is involved in Jesus being the Sower?

JESUS PURCHASED A FARM

He has a big, expensive farm—the whole world (Psalm 24:1; Mark 16:15). Someone calculated that there are 1,486,471,876,165 acres in the world. The average cost is about \$1500/acre (in the U.S.), so using that as a base figure, one could theoretically purchase the surface of the earth for \$2,229,707,814,247,500. As much as a tad over two quadrillion is, it is not as much as the purchase price for Jesus' farm—it cost Him His own blood (Acts 20:28).

JESUS SOWS SEEDS

The seed of the kingdom still possesses life-generating power (Luke 8:11; Mark 4:14). The Holy Spirit works through that Word in conversion (Ephesians 6:17).

Why is the Word compared to seed? Both seem insignificant but possess great power (Genesis 1:11; Romans 1:16). A small acorn looks harmless enough, but given the right conditions it can grow large enough to remove a house from its foundations. God's Word, like a seed, is "quick [living], and powerful" (Hebrews 4:12; Galatians 6:7–8; cf. 2 Timothy 4:2). Unlike men's written words, God's Word has life in it; and that life can be imparted to those who believe and obey it. It can generate new life. No other book can do that.

The seed only grows in one place: the human heart (Luke 8:15). There are four kinds of soil (hearts):

- **Wayside soil**—the hardhearted hearer (Matthew 13:19; Luke 8:11–12). If a person continues in this hardened condition, he will never be saved (2 Corinthians 4:3). This is one reason it is important to reach young people before they become hardened in sin.

- **Shallow soil**—the stony place hearer (Matthew 13:20; Luke 8:13). We are warned, "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:22).

- **Divided soil**—the thorny place hearers (Matthew 13:22; Luke 8:14). Just as weeds grow in a field, weeds such as selfishness, lust, dishonesty, relativism, ungodly tolerance, and immorality can grow in our hearts. We can ignore them and let them choke the Word or pull them out and save our souls.

- **Receptive soil**—the good ground hearers (Matthew 13:23; Luke 8:15).

The seeds in the parable are all of the same nature, sown from the same bag by the same sower. The only variable is the type of soil they encounter.

JESUS PRUNES VINES

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit" (John 15:1–2). Jesus stays involved in the lives of His followers, operating through His providence to better prepare us for the transplanting into the heavenly garden.

JESUS HARVESTS FRUIT

Jesus wants to pick you and me as choice fruit and store us forever in His celestial barn (Matthew 13:30). Sure, most folks want to live in a mansion, but a barn will satisfy me—but not just any barn. I want to live in God's barn! In the Parable of the Tares, Jesus pictures the end of the world as a harvest when weeds and wheat are separated. The tares (representing the ungodly) will be bundled and burned (be lost in the lake of fire). The wheat will be gathered "into my barn"—heaven (Matthew 13:30).

For someone who never plowed a field, Jesus surely has done a lot of farming. ❀

He invented the water cycle and gave the former and latter rain in time for harvest (Ecclesiastes 1:7; Jeremiah 5:24; Matthew 5:45). To be the provider for man's basic needs would be appropriate for the One who had given His people manna from heaven (Exodus 16), Israel a land that flowed with milk and honey (Exodus 3:8; 13:5), and Elijah and the widow a constantly full flour barrel and oil cruse (1 Kings 17:14).

Nonetheless, so far as we know Jesus never pushed a plow nor picked a tomato. He never inhaled the scent of newly turned earth nor felt the sweat run down His back as He picked beans under a hot July sun. He never smiled as he saw the first bud breaking the ground in the spring, or sighed as the last wagonload of produce came out of the field in the fall.

This is all true, but He was still the "Sower that went forth to sow" (Matthew 13:3). His seed brought forth thirtyfold, sixtyfold, and a hundredfold (Mark 4:8). He "filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away" (Luke 1:53). And on Pentecost, He

Correction: Volume 14 Number 2 incorrectly identified Mary Magdalene as a prostitute before she met Jesus. If you save back issues, please make this correction to Volume 14 Number 2 (next to last paragraph). Thanks to Don Rhul of Grants Pass, Oregon, for bringing this to our attention.



Good and Perfect Gifts

James explained, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17).

Some are deceived into thinking that the temporary gratification of sin is a "good and perfect gift." The pleasures of adultery are undeniable. Revenge can bring quick and cheap gratification. Crushing another's feelings by cruel words and gossip can bring a warped kind of pleasure.

But these are not gifts from above. They are not "good and perfect gifts." They are tainted, tarnished, and temporary.

Then there are those blessings that don't immediately appear to be blessings. James has already pointed out how trials can bring blessings such as faith and perseverance and spiritual maturity (James 1:3-4).

- The gift of loneliness makes us seek the fellowship of God.
- The gift of failure makes us more understanding of those who fail.
- The gift of erring gives us the ability to forgive those who err against us.
- The gift of sorrow makes us better qualified to sympathize with those who grieve.

Not every gift looks like one. Don't be deceived. Trust the Father, who is not capricious, who does not lash out because He's "having a bad day." He doesn't; and even heartache may be a gift of love.

—Stan Mitchell, Henderson, Tennessee

A Recipe for Happiness

Happiness is something we create in our mind, It's not something you search for and so seldom find— It's just waking up and beginning the day By counting blessings and kneeling to pray— It's giving up thoughts that breed discontent And accepting what comes as "heaven sent"— It's giving up wishing for things we have not And making the best of whatever we've got— It's knowing that the future is secure for us, And pursuing our tasks without fret or fuss— For it's by completing what God gives us to do That we find contentment and happiness, too.

"I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."

PHILIPPIANS 4:11

God's Plan for Saving Man

God's Grace	— Ephesians 2:8
Christ's Blood	— Romans 5:9
The Holy Spirit's Gospel	— Romans 1:16
Sinner's Faith	— Acts 16:31
Sinner's Repentance	— Luke 13:3
Sinner's Confession	— Romans 10:10
Sinner's Baptism	— 1 Peter 3:21
Christian's Work	— James 2:24
Christian's Hope	— Romans 8:24
Christian's Endurance	— Revelation 2:10



At Day's End

Is anybody happier because you passed this way?
Does anybody remember that you spoke to them today?
The day is almost over and its toiling time is through;
Is there anyone to utter now a kindly word of you?

Can you say tonight in parting with the day that's dipping fast,
That you helped a single person of the many that you passed?
Is a single heart rejoicing over what you did or said;
Does the person whose hopes were fading now with courage
look ahead?

Did you waste the day or lose it?
Was it well or sorely spent?
Did you leave a trail of kindness, or a scar of discontent?
As you close your eyes in slumber, do you think that God
will say
"You have earned one more tomorrow by the work you
did today."

—Author Unknown

"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men."

GALATIANS 6:10

Life Observations from Little Ones



STEVEN (3) hugged and kissed his Mom good-night, saying: "I love you so much, that when you die I'm going to bury you outside my bedroom window."

BRITTANY (4) couldn't get a bottle lid off. Her Mom explained it was a childproof cap and she'd have to open it. Shocked, she asked: "How does it know it's me?"

SUSAN (4) was drinking juice when she got the hiccups. "Please don't give me this juice again," she said. "It makes my teeth cough."

DIANA (4) stepped onto the bathroom scale and asked: "So how much do I cost?"

Home PAGE



Carve Out Couple Time

Does your relationship with your spouse fall to the bottom of your to-do list? Consider:

Schedule special rituals. Devote a certain time of the day to just the two of you. Mark it on your calendar if necessary.

Write love letters. Send a romantic e-mail. Tuck a card in her purse or his pocket.

Shake up your lunchtime routine. Set up a card table for two in your office and order take-out. Share a blanket picnic on the floor.

Turn downtime into dates. If both are heading off, leave a few minutes early and detour for a quick cup of coffee.

Pour passion into the mundane. Cooking can be soothing and sensual. Folding laundry together can give you a chance to catch up. Once you start devoting ordinary moments to each other, every day can be a honeymoon.

—Source: *MSN.com* (10/18/05)

"Redeeming the time"

EPHESIANS 5:16

Got It Right. Wrong?

While attending a Marriage Seminar dealing with communication, Tom and his wife, Grace, listened to the instructor say, "It is essential that husbands and wives know each other's likes and dislikes." He addressed the man, "Can you name your wife's favorite flower?"

Tom leaned over, touched her arm gently and whispered, "It's Pillsbury, isn't it?"

"A merry heart doeth good."

PROVERBS 17:22



For more material on the home and family, fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, grandparents, and family finances, go to www.housetohouse.com.

To My Child: Things I Can and Cannot Do

I can share your life,
But I cannot live it for you.
I can teach you things,
But I cannot make you learn.
I can give you directions,
But I cannot always lead you.
I can allow you freedom,
But I cannot account for it.
I can take you to worship,
But I cannot make you believe.
I can teach you right from wrong,
But I cannot decide for you.
I can give you love,
But I cannot force it upon you.
I can teach you to share,
But I cannot make you unselfish.
I can teach you to respect,
But I cannot force you to show honor.
I can tell you the facts of life,
But I cannot build your reputation.
I can tell you about lofty goals,
But I cannot achieve them for you.
I can teach you to obey,
But I cannot answer for your actions.
I can warn about your sins,
But I cannot make your morals.
I can love you as my child,
But I cannot place you in God's family.
I can teach you about Jesus,
But I cannot make Him your Savior.
I can teach you about prayer,
But I cannot make you pray.
I can tell you how to live,
But I cannot give you eternal life.

—Author Unknown

*Hear thou, my son, and be wise,
and guide thine heart in the way.*

PROVERBS 23:19



Put Some Aside

Philip Humbert recently observed, "The financial news reported that Americans are saving at the lowest rate since the Great Depression in 1933. We are actually saving a negative 0.5 percent of our income!

"Instead of investing for the future, we are dipping into our savings to buy cars, vacations, and appliances. What struck me is that we aren't spending our money to buy assets like real estate, stocks, or antiques. We're spending it on depreciating items like cars.

"The last time Americans dipped into their savings at this rate (in 1933), the money went for food, clothing, and shelter. Today, it goes for a vacation or a new television."

—TIPS Newsletter

"A foolish man spendeth it up."

PROVERBS 21:20

What Is the Gospel of Christ?



The theme of all the New Testament is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Practically every page provides information on the topic. In its simplest terms, the gospel of Jesus is the “good news” concerning Him. In a day when there is so little good news, it is important to spread the good news of Jesus.

The gospel message is that although man is a sinner, deserving of death, God loved mankind enough to provide salvation. Paul warned that “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23), and “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). Comfort comes, however, in knowing that “the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23). Christians are “justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:24). The amazing grace of God is truly good news.

At the gospel’s heart is Christ’s death,

burial, and resurrection. As Peter preached the first “gospel sermon” on Pentecost, he spoke of “Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs” (Acts 2:22). Although put to death, death could not hold Him: “This Jesus hath God raised up” (Acts 2:32). “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). The people were pricked in their heart, and said, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). Peter told them how to accept the good news: “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). The gospel is for “all that are afar off” (Acts 2:39). The church would include the Gentiles as well as the Jews.

Faith moved many to obey: “They that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41). The church grew rapidly as many were added to the church (Acts 2:47).

Christ commands: “Go ye therefore, 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” (Matthew 28:19–20).

—Bob Prichard, P.O. Box 3071, Oxford, AL 36203

To ask a Bible question or view previously answered questions, go to www.HouseToHouse.com.

Bible QUIZ

Send us your answers (address on front). We'll grade and return all entries and randomly select one to receive a Bible, New Testament audios, or Bible Dictionary.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Directions: Without opening your Bible, fill in all the missing words and verse references you can. When you do all you can from memory, use these Scriptures to complete the exercise: Genesis 2:24; Proverbs 5:18; Matthew 19:6, 9; 1 Corinthians 7:4; 13:13; Galatians 6:2; Ephesians 5:24–25; Colossians 3:9; Titus 2:4; Hebrews 13:4 (not in order). Finally, memorize the verses together.

Questions Taken from the King James Version

One Dozen Scriptures for Couples

- Joy:** “Let thy fountain be blessed: and _____ with the wife of thy youth” (Proverbs 5:18).
- Sacrifice:** “Bear ye one another’s _____, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (_____).
- Authority:** “Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the _____ be to their own _____ in every thing” (_____).
- Togetherness:** “Therefore shall a man _____ his father and his mother, and shall _____ unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (_____).
- Perseverance:** “What therefore _____ hath _____ together, let not man put asunder” (_____).
- Honesty:** “_____ not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds” (_____).
- Husbands:** “Husbands, _____ your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and _____ himself for it” (_____).
- Sex:** “The wife hath not power of her own _____, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the _____” (_____).
- Faithfulness:** “Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for _____, and shall marry another, committeth _____: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery” (_____).
- Honor:** “Marriage is _____ in all, and the _____ undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (_____).
- Wives:** “That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their _____, to love their _____” (_____).
- Love:** “And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is _____” (_____).

Answers to Last Issue: *One Dozen Scriptures to Learn with Your Teen:* 1. Creator, youth; 2. Example, faith; 3. Entice; 4. Honor; 5. Lusts; 6. Renew, eagles; 7. Pray; 8. Sober; 9. Modest; 10. Humble; 11. Devil; 12. Mock, wise; *Plus Three Bonus:* 1. Hard; 2. All; 3. Pure.

A Home Without a Bible?

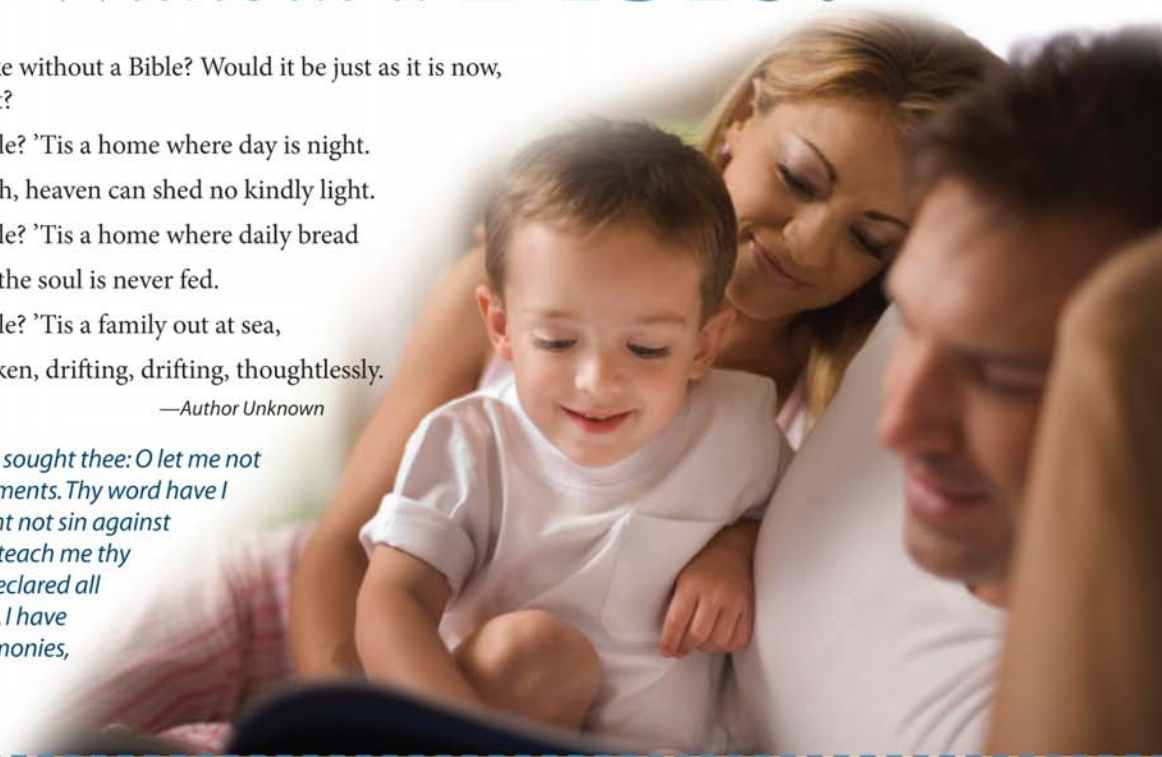
What would your home be like without a Bible? Would it be just as it is now, or would it be very different?

What is a home without a Bible? 'Tis a home where day is night.
Starless night, for o'er life's path, heaven can shed no kindly light.
What is a home without a Bible? 'Tis a home where daily bread
For the body is provided, but the soul is never fed.
What is a home without a Bible? 'Tis a family out at sea,
Compass lost and rudder broken, drifting, drifting, thoughtlessly.

—Author Unknown

"With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. Blessed art thou, O Lord: teach me thy statutes. With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth. I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches."

PSALM 119:10-14



Free Audio Lessons!



- ▶ A New Covenant —Tom Holland
- ▶ Are You Safe in Jesus? —David Shannon
- ▶ Sing On Ye Joyful Pilgrims —Wendell Winkler
- ▶ Prove It! —Wade Webster
- ▶ Where is God in Times of Grief? —Don Williams
- ▶ Sitting Under the Juniper Tree (Depression) —Allen Webster

To listen to these and more than 500 others, go to www.HouseToHouse.com/mediaplayer.aspx



Recommended Viewing

We recommend *Getting to Know Your Bible* with Billy Lambert, well-respected gospel preacher. The program can be seen on DirectTV Channel 367 WHT Sunday, 6:30 p.m. / 8:30 p.m., and on Channel 377 TCT Sunday, 8:30 p.m.; Monday-Friday 9:30 p.m. Open your Bible and tune in each week.



Featured Web Sites:

For free in-depth Bible study material, we recommend:
www.housetohouse.com
www.thebible.net
www.gbntv.net



More!

- I want to better understand the church of Christ.
- I want to receive your weekly newsletter/bulletin.
- Quiero Recibir *Casa a Casa* en Español.
- I want to learn more about your Bible school and programs.
- I have a prayer request: _____
- I have a Bible question: _____
- I want to know more about what God requires for salvation. Please have someone schedule a personal visit with me.

I want to learn more about the Bible!

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____

Bible Study Helps:

- Enroll me in a Free Survey of the Bible Home Study Course. *Pressure-free . . . work on your own at home.*
- I want to see the *Visualized Bible Study* series (an in-home personal study). *These popular videos have been seen by people of all religions all over the world.*
- I would like a daily Bible reading schedule.

Request FREE Tracts:

- NEW! Does Jesus Love Poor People?
- NEW! Glorifying God as Women—Young and Old
- Christian Soldiers
- Where to Turn When There Is Nowhere to Turn
- Asleep in the Storm. *Lessons from the time Jesus fell asleep.*
- How to Get Ahead by Not Getting Even
- Five Animals You Won't Meet in Heaven
- Why Not Be a Prodigal? Part 1 (Teens/young adult)
- Abortion Wrongs. *Arguments for abortion considered.*
- Was Joan of Arc Really Noah's Wife?
- A Proud Look. *Part of series on Proverbs 6:16-19.*
- A Thief Who Has Robbed Us All
- You Can't Get to Heaven Alone
- How to Get More Time Out of Your Day
- Let Every Man Be Slow to Speak
- When I Survey the Wondrous Cross
- Married for Life. *How Five Couples Reached Fifty Years.*
- When Jesus Was a Boy
- Can God Really Forgive Me?
- Investing Time Wisely
- Next Week's Best Seller
- Que es la Iglesia de Cristo
- Church. Why Bother?
- God's Lamb in the Devil's Zoo
- Lonely?
- Why I Quit Going to the Beach
- Back issues of *House to House/Heart to Heart*

The Cross

by the Numbers



ZERO

Sins; bones broken

ONE

Sovereign Lord; atoning death

TWO

Natures (mortal and divine)

THREE

Days; crosses (one died in sin, one died to sin, and one died for sin)

FOUR

-way division of His garments

FIVE

Major wounds (back, head, hands, feet, and side)

SIX

Unmerciful hours

SEVEN

Sayings on the cross

EIGHT

Days after the resurrection
(John 20:26-31)

NINE

Gifts given by Christ after His ascension
(1 Corinthians 12)

TEN

Days between His ascension
and Pentecost

ELEVEN

Apostles who waited in Jerusalem
(Acts 1)

TWELVE

Apostles who turned the world
upside down (Acts 17:6)

—Stephen Bradd

"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

GALATIANS 6:14

The Church in the New Testament ... Today?

We all agree that the right church is the church that existed in the first century, the church of which Peter, John, James, and Paul were members. If we can find that same church existing in our day, it will still be the right church.

How do we know when we find it? We must ascertain its essential identifying features. We then need to search for the church today that has the same features. When we find it, we will have found the right church. As we open our New Testaments, what essential identifying features do we find?

- The church was guided solely by the apostles' doctrine, the church having no man-made creed, discipline, confession of faith, or catechism (Acts 2:42; Philippians 1:27; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3).
- The church worshipped on the first day of the week (1 Corinthians 16:2), upon which day they sang a capella (Ephesians 5:19), gave of their means (1 Corinthians 16:2), observed the Lord's supper weekly (Acts 20:7), prayed (1 Corinthians 14:15), and studied God's word (Acts 2:42; 20:7).
- The church was organized on a local, autonomous, congregational level (Acts 14:23), the church having elders, deacons, evangelists, and members (Philippians 1:1).
- The church was designated "the church" (Colossians 1:18), "the church of Christ" (Romans 16:16), "the church of the Lord" (Acts 20:28 ASV), and "the church of God" (1 Corinthians 1:2).
- The church was entered as a result of people becoming baptized, penitent believers (Acts 2:36-47).



This was the church as it existed in the first century, the church of which Peter, James, John, and Paul were members. Now, my friends, with no intent at all to be boastful, but to be kindly clear, we affirm that the church of Christ in your community is the same church. The church of Christ in this century has the same essential identifying features:

- We have no man-made creed, discipline, confession of faith, or catechism. We are governed solely by the apostles' doctrine, by the New Testament.
- We worship on the first day of the week by engaging in a capella singing, praying, studying God's word, giving of our means, and observing the Lord's supper.
- Each congregation is local, independent, autonomous or self-governing, having elders, deacons, evangelists, and members.
- We are designated as "the church of Christ" or by an equivalent.
- If you were to ask, "How do I become a member of the church of Christ today?" you would be kindly instructed that you must become a baptized, penitent believer.

We plead for the church now (this century) as then (first century). Such is pure, simple, and beautiful New Testament Christianity!

—Wendell Winkler, *The Church Everybody Is Asking About*

Thoughts from the HEART

"Prepare to meet thy God"
AMOS 4:12

Prepare to meet God



Why Should One Prepare?

Because meeting God is inevitable: "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:10–12). Meeting God is just as certain as death (Hebrews 9:27).

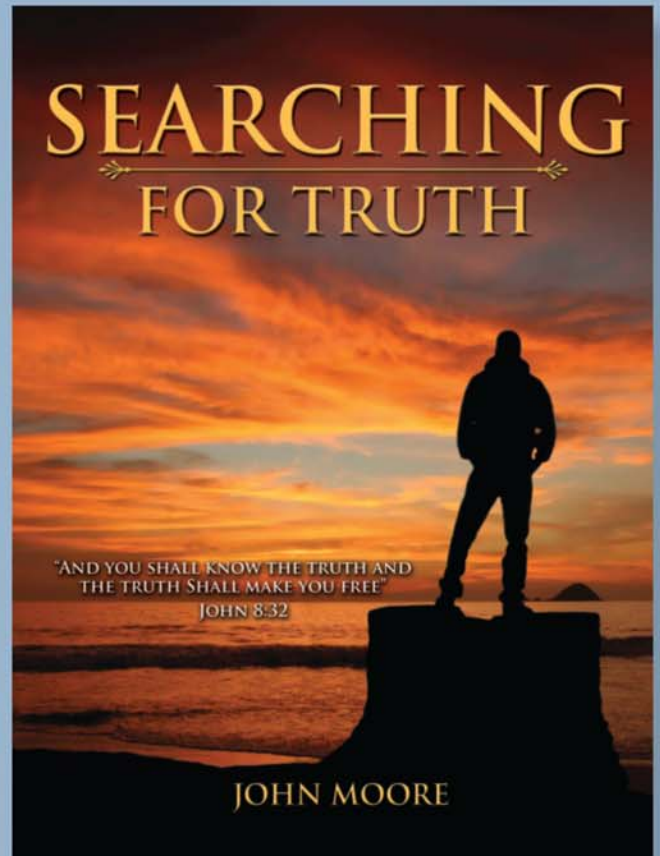
Because heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people: "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2–3).

How Should One Prepare? We are not left to wonder what one must do to be prepared to meet God. God has "given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (2 Peter 1:3). Preparing to meet God involves: hearing (Acts 10:33); believing (Acts 16:31; Hebrews 11:6); repenting of sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38); confessing faith in Christ as the Son of God (Matthew 10:32; Acts 8:37); being baptized (Mark 16:15–16); adding Christian graces (2 Peter 1:5–8); and being faithful unto death (Matthew 10:22; Revelation 2:10).

When Should One Prepare? The time to prepare is now, in this life. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2). Once the rich man died and was in torment, it was too late for him to prepare (Luke 16:19–31). Preparation must be made while one has opportunity (Matthew 25:1–13).

Salvation does not just happen. One must prepare, and one must prepare according to the why, the how, and the when that God has put forth.

—Kevin D. Smith, Anniston, Alabama



Questions?

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