

# The Better Way

Volume XXXIX, Issue 34

August 18, 2024

## SPRING CHURCH OF CHRIST

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### SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

#### SUNDAY

Bible Study.....9:00 a.m.  
Worship.....10:00 a.m.  
Afternoon Worship.....1:00 p.m.

#### WEDNESDAY

Bible Study.....7:30 p.m.  
(via Zoom Meetings)

#### ELDERS

David P. Brown  
Ken Cohn  
John West

#### DEACONS

Bret Bailey  
J. D. Gunter  
Eric Paluka

#### EVANGELIST

David P. Brown

#### SECRETARY

Sonya West

## WHAT DO I OWE LOST SOULS?

*Tim Smith*

This is a study of responsibility, or that which every person who is a faithful Christian owes every person who is not. We know that Jesus, our Lord and Savior, lived a life of sacrifice, laboring on behalf of others; but many fail to see that we have responsibilities to the lost as well. Just what do I owe the lost?

**I owe the lost an opportunity to hear the gospel of Christ.** In what is styled "The Great Commission," Jesus said, "...Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16). My duty to the lost in this commission is to teach them the gospel. Jesus said that apart from believing and obeying the gospel, salvation is unattainable; therefore, since hearing is necessary to believing (Rom. 10:17), I must teach them the gospel.

**I must be able to answer to the lost for the faith that I have in Christ.** Peter wrote:

**But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ (1 Pet. 3:15-16).**

When I am able to successfully defend my own faith in Christ it stands forth as an answer to my critics and an argument for faith on their part.

**I must be able to turn the lost from foolish inquiries and direct them toward matters of importance concerning the salvation of their soul.** Paul said, "**But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain**" (Tit. 3:9). Many times we are confronted with matters that don't matter; we must be able to direct people to a consideration of what does matter.

**I must lovingly point lost souls to Christ, overcoming the rashness of temperament.** Paul told the young evangelist:

**And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will (2 Tim. 2:24-26).**

I must know when to turn from one lost person to another, for the Lord said, "**Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you**" (Mat. 7:6). We pray never to have to turn from a lost soul.~

**Deceased**

# WHAT ABOUT DEMONS?

*J. Noel Merideth*

In the New Testament demons are spoken of as evil spirit beings, under Satan's control, at enmity with God and able to afflict man (Mat. 8:28-34; 12:24; Rev. 16:14). Some think the word *demons* referred to the departed spirits of wicked men; others think it referred to fallen angels; but, in either case the reference is to evil spirits which possessed, people in the times of the Bible, but which were cast out by Christ and the apostles.

The demons could give their name (Mark 5:9); recognize Jesus as the Son of God (Mat. 8:29; Luke 4:41); knew of the terror of judgment to come (Mat. 8:29); and, were cast out by Jesus (Mat. 8:16; Luke 9:41, 42).

A "demoniac" in the New Testament is a person who was possessed or seized by a demon or unclean spirit. The demons could enter into a person and cause dumbness (Mat. 9:32, 33); blindness (Mat. 12:22); insanity (Luke 8:26-36); personal injuries (Mark 9:18); and various physical defects and deformities (Luke 13:11-17). There was the maiden with the spirit of divination (Acts 16:16). And Luke 8:29 shows the titanic energy they could impart to the human body. Their affinity for bodies and deserted places is very evident (Mat. 12:43-45; Rev. 18:2; Mark 5:2-5). The distinction between demon possession and diseases ordinarily caused is clearly made.

The view that demons were merely ignorant terms for insanity will not square with the Biblical accounts. Did "insanity" ask permission to speak to Jesus, give its name as Legion, ask permission to leave the Gerasene demoniac and enter into two thousand swine on the mountain side, then enter into the swine which rushed down the steep into the sea? No! (Mark 5:1-13). But some say that the demons were simply Eastern metaphors. But if they were merely an Eastern metaphor then the swineherds of Gadara were overwhelmed by the Eastern metaphors as they rushed with such pathos into the deep waters of the Galilee. It is thus obvious they are not Eastern metaphors. When one reads of the number of demons in particular persons and sees their actions expressly distinguished from those of the man possessed; conversations held by the demons; accounts of their being cast out; when we find similitudes taken from their manners and cus-

toms, it is impossible for one to deny their existence in Bible times without denying the Bible.

New Testament teaching on demonology does not have the exaggerated features, exuberance of fancy and wild speculation that runs wild in the non-canonical writings. The Babylonians felt that demons were everywhere, that they lurked in every corner, watching for their prey. They felt they might appear as serpents gliding noiselessly upon their victims, as birds horrid of mien flying resistlessly to destroy or afflict, as beings in human forms, grotesque, malformed, awe-inspiring through their hideousness. The Rabbinical writings were often far fetched. Some said they could take any form but the reflection of their likeness is not the same as that of a man, that they have wings, and that the backbone of a person who did not bend or bow down in worship to God becomes a demon. Some said they were produced by a process of transformation from vipers, which, in the course of four times seven years, successively pass through the forms of vampires, thistles, and thorns into demons. They said they had cock's feet and to see their marks in the morning, straw ashes by the side of one's bed before retiring. To see them one was supposed to take the afterbirth of a black cat which was the daughter of a black cat—both mother and daughter being firstborn—burn it in the fire, and put some of the ashes in your eyes. Before using them, the ashes must be put into an iron tube and sealed with an iron signet. It was claimed that Rabbi Bibi successfully tried this experiment, but was hurt by the demons. The contrast is at once clear between such wild speculation and the Bible.

The study of demonology brings some important lessons to our attention. (1) Demons prove a spirit world, thus denying materialism. (2) Demons recognize Jesus and speak of his deity, thus we have another testimony that Jesus is the Son of God. (3) That evil beings were real, that they were under the power of Satan, and that there are real spiritual enemies. (4) That Jesus, the apostles, and those who had miraculous gifts could cast out demons (Mat. 8; Acts 5:16; 8:7; 16:16-18; 19:12). (5) That Jesus broke the power of Satan. In this we can see the power and grace of God.

It is obvious that the claims of demon possession today do not match the cases of actual demon possession in the Bible. The alleged demon possession today is not real. The prophets predicted that the unclean spirit would pass out of the land at the close of the miraculous age (Zec. 13:2). Jesus came to the earth with the mission of saving the obedient and destroying the works of the Devil (Mat. 12:28, 29; 10:1; 1 John 3:8; Col. 2:15). Jesus said He beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven when the seventy returned with joy, saying, “**Lord, even the demons are subject unto us in thy**

**name”** (Luke 10:17-19). Satan lost his power in the area of demon possession. When the Lord ascended to heaven He gave the necessary gifts for the early church to deal with cases of demon possession (Mark 16:15-18). It is reasonable to believe that with the passing of the apostles and their power, passed also the age of demon possession. Many of our questions on this subject will have to wait unto the next world in the land that is fairer than day. Let us here be content to hear and obey His will.~

**Deceased**

## LIBERTY

*G. C. Brewer*

All men love liberty, but there are many men who would promptly and vehemently resent the suggestion that they are slaves or servants of anybody, who are the most ignoble and servile slaves to their own passions and lusts. Not infrequently do we see the drunken debauchee fighting moral prohibitory laws under the sacred plea of personal liberty. Again, there are men who contend and even fight for liberty, who would, if they could, bind their fellow men and make slaves of them. In other words, they are opposed to despotism or slavery as long as they are the subjects of such power; but if they could be the despot or controlling power, their convictions in the matter would be different. Even in this there is much that borders on autocracy. Every form of centralization or usurpation or monopoly in politics, or priestly power in religion, is opposed to and ruinous to either political or religious liberty. Voltaire is the reputed author of the following paradox, which seems to be true even in this age: “All men love liberty, and seem bent on destroying her.”

The only true liberty is that which Christ gives. God created us free moral agents, and placed good and evil before us, or allowed evil to be placed before us, and left us to make the choice.

But to what extent are we free? Is there no limit to our freedom? We are not wholly immune to sin. Then, are we left free to commit sin without receiving the punishment? God regarded the free will He gave man in the beginning and provided a way for man's freedom through Christ. Man must accept and appropriate the means. Christ, the Physician, has prescribed; man must apply. As we become free, then, by

compliance with the conditions or laws of Christ, so we are kept free by complying with His laws.

But someone is ready to ask: “Free and yet under laws?” There is no such thing as liberty or freedom except as guarded by just laws. Liberty is a misnomer outside law and morality. We boast of our free country, yet are governed by laws. Without laws we would go to the other extreme from despotism, which is anarchy. The civil rights and moral dignity of the people must be protected by law. Liberty ceases when it infringes upon the rights of another. The law allows me to fire a gun if I choose, but not if another man is in front of it. I may exercise my vocal chords by hallooing at my utmost capacity, but it would hardly be thought proper for me to arise in the assembly of worship and begin such an exercise.

So our freedom in Christ is governed by law. Paul calls it the “**law of faith**” (Rom. 3:27), and James speaks of the “**law of liberty**” (Jam. 1:25; 2:12). When a question as to the propriety of anything arises, it must be settled by that law. To what else can we appeal? Our opinions will always differ. But if the law says nothing about the things in dispute, then stay within the limits of the law. That is the only way to have peace; for when we get beyond, we will differ, and who will settle the dispute? A man may legitimately hold an opinion about a thing not revealed; but when he forces it upon others, it ceases to be an opinion and becomes a law. The man who enforces it is an autocrat and the others his subjects. Thus liberty is destroyed.~

**Deceased**

A Study In  
**THE MAJOR PROPHETS**

Jeremiah Ezekiel  
Lamentations Daniel  
Isaiah

Sunday Morning Bible Class  
*David P. Brown*

A Study Of  
**1ST JOHN**

Teacher:  
*David P. Brown*

WEDNESDAY NIGHT  
BIBLE CLASS VIA ZOOM

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- **Sunday, August 25th:** Monthly meal & afternoon singing service.
- **Tuesday, August 27th:** Ladies' Bible Class.
- **Saturday, September 14th:** Baby Girl Shower honoring Devon & Andrew Paluka.
- **Saturday, September 28th:** Fall Fellowship at Walker County Fairgrounds, Huntsville, TX.
- **Saturday, October 26th:** Fish Hatchery Road Lectureship. "James: Practical Christianity Part 3."
- **Saturday, November 23rd:** Chili Cook-off at Burroughs Park.

## THOSE TO SERVE

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 18, 2024**

**Announcements** John West  
**Scripture Reading** Stephen Cohn  
Rev. 20:1-6

**Song Leader** Gary Blasingame  
**Prayer** Gary Blasingame/Eric Paluka (AM)  
Zack Nero/Steven Johnson (PM)

**Speaker** David Brown

**Lord's Table (AM)**  
(Isaiah 53:6-9)

J.D. Gunter Andrew Paluka  
Steven Johnson Gary Blasingame

**Lord's Table (PM)**

Joshua West Stephen Cohn

**Audio/Video Monitor** Jonathan West  
**Camera/Door Monitor** Stephen Cohn

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21, 2024**

*(via Zoom Meetings)*

**Announcements** Eric Paluka  
**Speaker** Steven Johnson  
**Bible Class Teacher** David Brown

**FOR AUGUST**

**Prepare Communion** L. Paluka  
**Lock Buildings** Bailey  
**Prepare Bulletin Board** N. Cohn

## IN NEED OF PRAYERS

Gayle Barnett, Josie Contreras, Edith Young, Janie Tatum, Joe Blau, Zack Nero, April McCain, Tim Orbison, Debbie Brannon, Noah & Glenda Hackworth, Cynthia Jackson, Elnora Oxendine, Charles & Ann Nero, Nathaniel Rimmer, Chuck & Nancy Verkist, Freda Smith, Orlinda Chumbley, and Roelf & Janice Ruffner.

## TEST YOUR BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

What were Bul and Zif?

**Answer to last week's question:**  
David; 2 Samuel 24:24