

# The Better Way

Volume XXXIX, Issue 52

December 22, 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

## CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

*Ken Chumbley*

Recently, while traveling in my car, it was announced that they were presenting three carols performed by the choir of King's College, Cambridge, England. What caught my attention were the titles of two of the carols. The first, "See Amid the Winters Snows," and the second, "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks By Night." As I pondered this, I wondered why people would sing carols that convey conflicting messages. What good shepherds in Palestine are out in winter snows, keeping watch over their sheep when they should have them safely in the sheepfolds? Other carols mention snow, such as "In The Bleak Mid-Winter." Where do people get the idea that the birth of Jesus came in December? Certainly not from the Bible! Scripture clearly teaches that the shepherds were abiding in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks (Luke 2:8-12). However, when we see pictures on television from Bethlehem over the "Christmas season," the city is often covered with snow, and the weather conditions such that no self-respecting shepherd, who was genuinely concerned about his sheep, would have them out in the fields and not in the fold.

Again, around this time of year, we see "Nativity Scenes" that show not only the shepherds around the manger where the newborn baby Jesus lay but also wise men, three in number. Where do people get the idea of three wise men? Three types of gifts were indeed brought—gold, frankincense, and myrrh—but nothing is said about the number of wise men (Mat. 2:1-12). Also, the passage clearly indicates that they did not go to the stable behind the inn, as did the shepherds, but they went into the "house" where the "young child" was with Mary, His mother. When the wise men (however many there were) arrived on the scene, Jesus was no longer in the "manger" and no longer a babe but a "young child." Why do you think Herod ordered the death of all the children in Bethlehem and the surrounding area two years of age and younger in accordance with the time that he had inquired of the wise men (2:16)?

Where did these ideas and traditions come from? They come from Roman Catholicism—"Christ Mass." Further, Roman Catholicism brought into the "Christ Mass" pagan traditions concerning the winter solstice festivities. These traditions are of men and have no Biblical basis. What happens when men incorporate traditions of men into their worship activities? Jesus tells us, "**But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men**" (15:9). Does this mean that, as families, we cannot enjoy this holiday time? No. However, it does mean that they have no place in the worship of the church. The Bible does not give us a date to celebrate the birth of Christ. However, we should always keep His birth in mind, for He came into this world to be our Savior (Luke 2:11). Without His birth, there could not have been His death on the cross, His burial, His resurrection, and His ascension to the Father's right hand to reign on David's throne, and to be our Savior. Enjoying a time of celebration and giving of gifts, etc., as a family is fine, provided we do not show by our activities that we are celebrating the birth of Christ. **Deceased**

# ATTEND TO READING

*W. L. Totty*

Reading is an important aspect in the lives of all of us for through that medium we attain knowledge. Someone said the fountain of knowledge flows through books. That is largely true, even though in our age there are other channels through which we may obtain secular knowledge.

Of all the printed material in the world, the Bible is supreme. There is no other book which equals it. We all should read the Bible regularly and carefully, with a determination to learn what the Lord would have us do. In our age, when there are so many things happening around us, too many people—even members of the body of Christ—neglect to read the Bible. It is evident that there is not as much sincere, profound reading of the Bible today as there was in the days of our forefathers. However, this is not to say that there are not many people who read it diligently and study it prayerfully.

One may learn much about the importance of reading the Bible by considering the exhortation which the apostle Paul gave to Timothy, his son in the gospel: **“Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine”** (1 Tim. 4:13) Even though Timothy had spiritual gifts, which he received by the laying on of Paul’s hands (2 Tim. 1:6), he still was admonished to read the word of God. If it were necessary for Timothy to read, it surely is necessary that we read the word of God today.

Again, the apostle told Timothy, **“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”** (2 Tim. 2:15). *Study* referred to reading. Through that, he could show himself approved unto God. The man who does not study the Bible today certainly cannot show himself approved unto God. Neither can he be a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, for he has no knowledge of how to divide the word of truth.

The apostle charged Timothy to preach the word; and in preaching the word, he said to reprove, rebuke and exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine (2 Tim. 4:2). So, when one preaches the whole word today, he is going to reprove, rebuke and exhort; and it must be according to the doctrine. We do not have any direct operation of the Holy Spirit today; therefore, we must

read the word of God in order to know His will. Paul, in a letter to Timothy, said:

**That from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works** (2 Tim. 3:15-17.)

From a child, Timothy had been taught the holy scriptures by his grandmother and mother. A child is fortunate, indeed, who has parents who will teach him the importance of reading and studying God’s word.

The Bible is that which makes a man of God perfect. It thoroughly furnishes him unto every good work. Without the Bible, he cannot have those blessings. An imperfect book could not make a perfect man. Neither could an imperfect book furnish a person unto all good works.

There is also much good literature in print today which will help us to understand the Bible. Sermons by some of the greatest preachers since the Restoration Movement are available today. The sermons which our beloved late N. B. Hardeman preached during his Tabernacle Meetings in Nashville, Tennessee, have been published in five volumes by the Gospel Advocate Company. There are no better sermons in existence today than those preached by Brother Hardeman in those meetings. Those, and many others, will help anyone in studying the Bible.

There are also many valuable commentaries which have been written by our brethren that are very helpful in studying God’s word. The Gospel Advocate Company has published a set of commentaries which covers the entire New Testament, written by some of the greatest men since the days of the Restoration Movement. This is not to rule out many good books written by preachers today who are standing firmly for the truth. It isn’t the age that is important but whether or not it is the truth.

But some among us today are advocating that we should not go out reading the Bible to folk for that is old-fashioned, neither should they read books written by the pioneer preachers but should listen to the “intellectuals” of our time. A

preacher told me during the life of F.B. Srygley, one of the greatest preachers of his time, that the church in Nashville, Tennessee, would never do anything until Srygley died. He thought that Brother Srygley's contending for the faith was outdated and would retard the church. Brother Srygley has been dead for many years, but his work still follows him, and his name is highly respected among those who love the truth. Yet, the preacher who made that statement, though he is living, is hardly known among the churches today. Another preacher

told me recently that he was going to preach Christ and say nothing about the church for people would not come to hear one if one preaches the church. He had not read enough of the word of God to learn that one cannot preach Christ without preaching the church. That preacher has left the church and is now preaching for a denomination.

Yes, let us heed the admonition of the apostle Paul and give attendance to reading.~

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## THE ETERNAL WORD

*G. K. Wallace*

A word is a sign of an idea. The Word of God is the expression of the mind of Jehovah toward man. A word is apparently the most feeble and vanishing of all things. Yet it cannot be recalled. A word has great love and power. A word spoken, it is said, would have prevented the last great world wars. A word, a confession, often preserves a family. It is a badge of our superiority—it makes man a being of heavenly origin.

Jesus recognized the power of words. He said to Satan, "**It is written**" (Mat. 4:4). It is said of Jesus that He was "**mighty in deed and word**" (Luke 24:19). He *taught* as one having authority (Matt. 7: 29.) Never did any one speak as did Christ. The world (*cosmos*) and all it contains was created by the word of God (Gen. 1:1; Psa. 33:6). The clause "**and God said**" is found nine times in the first chapter of Genesis and it occurred just as God said. The worlds were formed by the word of God (Heb. 11:3). These *words* from the Bible leave no room for either organic or theistic evolution. The worlds were created (not evolved) by the *word* of God.

The world is sustained in its course by the word of God. The order and precision of the universe are maintained by the word of God (Heb. 11:1-3; 2 Pet. 3:5-7; 3:8-13).

Miracles were performed by the word of God. Moses *spoke* to the rock, and it brought forth water (Num. 20:7-13). Joshua spoke at the direction of Jehovah and the day was prolonged (Jos. 10:12-13). Jesus rebuked the winds (storm), and there was a great calm (Mat. 8:26). Jesus said to the leper, "be thou clean," and it was so (Mat. 8:3). The word of Christ raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11:43). Peter told the lame man to walk, and he was healed (Acts 3:1-9). Peter raised Dorcas from the dead by

saying, "Arise" (Acts 9:40). There is power in the *word* of God.

The days of miracles have closed, but the power God uses to convert and lead man is still with us. It is in the gospel (Rom. 1:16). The gospel was given to the apostles (Mat. 29:19-20; Mark 16:15, 16; Luke 24:45-47; Acts 2:1-4). The apostles embodied their gospel in the New Testament (Gal. 1:1-12; Eph. 6:17; 1 Cor. 14:37; 1 Cor. 2:6-13; Rev. 22:18,19). The gospel is God's power to save (Rom. 1:16; Luke 8:11; 1 Pet. 1:22,23; Jam. 1:18). The gospel **was preached in every case of conversion recorded** in the book of Acts. This is the word that produces faith (Rom. 10:17; Acts 15:7). The Word of God is eternal (Mat. 24:35).

The Word of God should be preached (orally) and written constantly. Words live; often men die. Someone said:

Two thousand years ago a little old man, physically deformed, sat in a cold Roman dungeon, writing some words on parchment. The government which had imprisoned him was the most powerful in the world. It ruled from Indus to Hispania, and from Sahara to distant Britain. One day there was a knock at the prison door; the executioner entered, bound the apostle, led him out the Appian Way, placed his head upon the block, and the head was severed from the body. Thus died the great apostle to the Gentiles. The name of the executioner is unknown today. The prison in which he was confined is in ashes and dust. But the words which Paul wrote on that piece of parchment still live and, during the centuries, have brought peace to countless souls.~

**Deceased**

## LAST EDITION FOR 2025

This will be the last edition of *The Better Way* for 2024. We pray that all of our readers will have a safe and Happy Holiday Season and a Happy New Year! We also pray that this publication has been a benefit to you and your friends and family and will continue to do so.

We have recently learned that one of our readers from Michigan passed from this life at the age of 101 (just a few weeks shy of 102). She had been receiving the bulletin for several years and had made it clear that she was reading it and then passing it on so others could benefit. We also received a request for an extra copy of one of the bulletins from someone in another state who had read a copy while they were visiting in Michigan.

We wanted to pass this information along so that others might follow her example and pass along these timely articles—we try to include in this publication—so that others might benefit from its teaching. You never know how far and wide the word can travel by just one person sharing the gospel of Christ.

Again, we wish you all a very happy and safe holiday season and prosperous 2025!



**VOLUNTEERS  
FOR  
DUTIES IN  
2025**

**Sign-up sheets  
are in the foyer**

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE**

[www.churchesofchrist.com](http://www.churchesofchrist.com)

### TEST YOUR BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

Who “looked this way and that way” before he slew a man?

**Answer to last week’s question:**  
Pilate’s wife; Matthew 27:19

## THOSE TO SERVE

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2024

<b>Announcements</b>	J.D. Gunter
<b>Scripture Reading</b>	J.D. Gunter <i>Genesis 4:16-26</i>
<b>Song Leader</b>	Gary Blasingame
<b>Prayer</b>	Jonathan West/Bret Bailey (AM) Bret Bailey/Ken Cohn (PM)
<b>Speaker</b>	David Brown
<b>Lord’s Table (AM)</b> <i>(Luke 23:13-25)</i>	
Bret Bailey	Steven Johnson
Andrew Paluka	J.D. Gunter
<b>Lord’s Table (PM)</b>	
Jonathan West	Eric Paluka
<b>Audio/Video Monitor</b>	Steven Johnson
<b>Camera/Door Monitor</b>	Bret Bailey

### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2024

*(via Zoom Meeting)*

<b>Announcements</b>	J.D. Gunter
<b>Speaker</b>	Ken Cohn
<b>Bible Class Teacher</b>	David Brown

### FOR DECEMBER

Prepare Communion	West
Lock Buildings	West
Prepare Bulletin Board	West

### IN NEED OF PRAYERS

John West, Emma Gomez, Glenn Kryszak, Barbara Perkins, April McCain, Gayle Barnett, Noah & Glenda Hackworth, Tania Turcios, Robbie Kirby, Edith Young, Zack Nero, Debbie Brannon, Cynthia Jackson, Elnora Oxendine, Charles & Ann Nero, Chuck & Nancy Verkist, Freda Smith, Orlinda Chumbley, and Roelf & Janice Ruffner.

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- **Saturday, January 25, 2025:** Fish Hatchery Road Lectureship.
- **Sunday, January 26, 2025:** Monthly meal
- **Saturday, February 22, 2025:** Spring CFTF lectureship.