

The Better Way

Volume XXXX, Issue 3

January 19, 2025

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

FORGIVENESS BEFORE THE CROSS

Roy H. Lanier, Sr.

From a preacher in Missouri comes this: "I have been taught all my life that sins under the Old Law were simply 'rolled forward' until Christ shed his blood." Now he wishes to know if sins were forgiven before Jesus died, and upon what conditions? and would that make the law of Moses a perfect law? From Acts 13:39 we learn that justification could not come from the law of Moses; and from Galatians 3:21 we learn that if the law of Moses could make alive, justification (righteousness) would have been by that law. Although it is true that God forgave sins before Jesus died on the cross, it is also true that these sins were not forgiven through law.

There are only two possible ways, or systems, by which sins can be forgiven: one is by works of man; the other is by the grace of God. Paul argues that if Abraham was justified by works, he has whereof to glory; but even Abraham had nothing whereof to glory toward God; therefore, he was not justified by works, but on account of his faith (Rom. 4:1-4). And he concludes with this statement, "**Now to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness.**" And the word *righteousness* is to be understood as right standing, or justification. To be justified by works, man would have to live a life of perfection. Paul tells us that those who would be justified by law are under a curse, because the law says, "**Cursed is everyone who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them**" (Gal. 3:10). And since all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, it follows that by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified (Rom. 3:20; Gal. 2:16).

Since no mere human being has ever lived without sin, and since the wages of sin is eternal death and destruction from God, and since there is no such thing as justification by works of law, it follows that the only way any one can be saved is *by the grace of God*. Since the time of Adam, no one has been saved by perfect law keeping. Every person who walks the streets of glory can say, I am a sinner saved by the grace of God. Every sin that has ever been forgiven, in every age of the world, has been forgiven by grace, not by law.

Next, no sin has ever been forgiven, in any age of the world, but on account of the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ, for "**apart from the shedding of blood there is no remission**" (Heb. 9:22). All men are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Rom. 3:24). The death of Jesus was for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant (Heb. 9:15) as well as for the sins committed under the new covenant. Jesus is the lamb of God to take away the sins of the world (John 1:29); He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2). And God set forth Jesus to

be the propitiation for our sins by the shedding of His blood on His part, and through faith on our part (Rom. 3:25). Here we have grace on the part of the Father, shedding of blood, sacrifice, on the part of Jesus, and faith on the part of man.

Though grace, sacrifice, and faith have always been the fundamental plan of salvation from sin, there have been different ways for man to manifest his faith in order to secure the remission of sins. During the patriarchal age animal sacrifice was necessary (Gen. 4:3f), but we know little else about what was required. During the Mosaic age, a great system of sacrifices was revealed through the law of Moses. In Leviticus, Moses details the law of offerings and follows each with the promise that **“he shall be forgiven”** (Lev. 4:20; 26, 31, 35; 5:10, 13, 16, 18). The offering was not the ground of forgiveness; it was the condition of forgiveness. The shedding of the blood of Jesus is the ground of forgiveness; what we do in faith, directed by the commandment of God, is the condition of forgiveness. Even today neither faith nor baptism is the meritorious ground of forgiveness; nothing we can do will merit forgiveness. If we could do something to merit forgiveness of our sins, we could be saved by works and would not need the grace of God.

But did God actually forgive sins before Jesus died on the cross? Yes, he did, if we can rely on scripture statements to be true. When the spies brought back their report of conditions in Canaan, the people rebelled; Moses prayed for the Lord to forgive them; **“And Jehovah said, I have pardoned according to thy word”** (Num. 14:20). Again, God is said to have forgiven His people, and covered their sin (Psa. 85:2). And God is said to have forgiven the sin of the people, though He took vengeance on their doings (Psa. 99:8). But we have New Testament proof that God forgave sins before the cross. In Romans 3:25, we are told that God set forth Jesus to be the propitiation for our sins, **“to show his righteousness because of the passing over (remission, A.V.) of sins done aforetime”** (Rom. 3:25). This verse tells us that God had been forgiving sins before the time of Jesus, so before propitiation, satisfaction, had been made for those sins; so there was a question as to whether God was righteous in doing so. And God set forth Jesus as the atoning sacrifice to show that He had been righteous in forgiving sins. If Jesus had never died for our sins, God would have been proved to be unrighteous. But God’s foreknowledge that

Jesus would die for our sins made Him righteous in forgiving sins before the cross; the actual death of Jesus for sins only showed Him to be righteous in that act.

When I was a boy attending school in a farming community, school teachers got their first check about the first to the middle of October, before crops were harvested and before the school board had any money in the bank, because farmers did not pay their taxes until after the first of the year. But the teachers had to have money, so they took their checks to the bank and the banker “carried” their checks, for a small fee, until the school board had money in the bank. It was real, spendable money the teachers got in spite of the fact the board had no money in the bank. So God forgave people their sins, on certain conditions, before there was any blood of Jesus in the bank of heaven. It was real forgiveness. God “carried” these sinners and their sins in His own person, on His own authority, knowing that the blood of Jesus would come and would be available for these people and their sins. If God had not forgiven, think what a place Paradise would have been—people defiled by murder, adultery, etc., in Paradise unforgiven until Jesus died.

But someone is sure Hebrews 10:1-4 teaches otherwise. If so, the Bible contradicts itself. Certainly the blood of animals could not take away sin; but the offering of them according to the law was a condition of forgiveness through the blood of Jesus yet to be offered. Water, nor the act of being immersed in water, can ever take away sins, but being immersed in water in obedience to the law of Christ is an indispensable condition of forgiveness to the alien sinner. But what about the teaching that sins were “rolled forward”? There is no such expression in the Bible, though some preachers use the expression as if it were in half the chapters of the New Testament. There was a remembrance made of sins once each year on the day of atonement. This means that once each year people were reminded that they were sinners and that atonement had to be made for their sins. Two goats were selected; over one all the sins of the people were confessed and that goat was sent away into the wilderness, denoting the removal of their sins. The other goat was killed and its blood used to make atonement for sins, and God promised, **“from all your sins shall ye be clean before Jehovah”** (Lev. 16:30).~

Spring Church Of Christ

Contending For The Faith Lectureship

Things Helpful To Becoming & Being A Christian

February 22, 2025

9:00 AM: *Integrity* (Psalms 26) – Jonathan West

10:00 AM: *Ahab, The Accuser* (1 Kings 16:29-33) – Jack Stephens

11:00 AM: *Courage* (Psalms 27) – Jose Gamez

LUNCH PROVIDED BY THE SPRING CONGREGATION

1:30 PM: *Kinds Of Fear* – Bruce Stulting

2:30 PM: *Let Brotherly Love Continue* (Hebrews 13:1) – Eric Paluka

3:30 PM: *OPEN FORUM* (All speakers)

LECTURESHIP DIRECTOR: David P. Brown

ELDERS: David P. Brown, Kenneth D. Cohn, John West

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LIVE VIEWING @ www.churchesofchrist.com

1ST PETER

Hope In Hard Times
(Lectureship: Part I)

January 25, 2025



Fish Hatchery Road Church Of Christ

These timely lessons will be presented at the church of Christ
Located at 1380 Fish Hatchery Road, Huntsville, Texas
Phone: 936-581-4346 Email: bruces_l@netzero.com

9:00 AM: "A Living Hope" (1 Peter 1:3-12)
Jack Stephens

10:00 AM: "Set Your Hope On His Grace" (1 Peter 1:13-19)
Eric Paluka

11:00 AM: "Love One Another Deeply" (1 Peter 1:20-2:3)
David P. Brown

LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED

1:30 PM: "Identifying God's People: A Spiritual House" (1 Peter 2:4-8)
Bruce Stulting

2:30 PM: "Identifying God's People: A Chosen People" (1 Peter 2:9-11)
Jose Gamez

3:30 PM: *Question & Answer Session*

VOLUNTEERS FOR DUTIES IN 2025

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

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

www.churchesofchrist.com

- Live broadcast
- Sermon videos
- Articles
- Lectureship videos
- Debates
- Bible Study Course
- Bible Reading Schedule
- Links to Faithful works

TEST YOUR BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

What did Pilate write and put on cross?

Answer to last week's question:
Cousins; Esther 2:15

THOSE TO SERVE

SUNDAY, JANUARY 19, 2025

Announcements Ken Cohn
Scripture Reading Stephen Cohn
Genesis 6:1-8
Song Leader Jonathan West
Prayer Gary Blasingame/Eric Paluka (AM)
John West/Joshua West (PM)
Speaker David Brown

Lord's Table (AM)
(Mark 14:55-62)

Joshua West Gary Blasingame
Stephen Cohn J.D. Gunter

Lord's Table (PM)

Andrew Paluka Steven Johnson

Audio/Video Monitor Joshua West
Camera/Door Monitor Bret Bailey

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22, 2025

(via Zoom Meeting)

Announcements J.D. Gunter
Speaker Jonathan West
Bible Class Teacher David Brown

FOR JANUARY

Prepare Communion Bailey
Lock Buildings Blasingame
Prepare Bulletin Board West

IN NEED OF PRAYERS

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

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- **Saturday, January 25th:** Fish Hatchery Road Lectureship.
- **Sunday, January 26th:** Monthly meal
- **Saturday, February 22th:** Spring CFTF lectureship.
- **Tuesday, March 25th:** Ladies' Bible Class. 1st class for 2025.