

The Better Way

Volume XXXIX, Issue 14

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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

THE LORD'S DAY

J. Roy Vaughan

John, the apostle, wrote, “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day” (Rev. 1:10). Commenting on this Scripture B. W. Johnson said:

The day of the Lord’s resurrection, the first day of the week. In the earlier apostolic writings the day was called “the first day of the week,” as here. Epistles of Barnabas, Ingatius and Dionysius, written near this time, so styled it, and the name is of common occurrence from this time onward, and is confined to Sunday (*People’s New Testament with Notes*, by B. W. Johnson.)

The first day of the week, which we often call the Lord’s day, was marked by many great events. First of all, this was the day the Lord arose from the grave. And between His resurrection and ascension, a period of forty days, he appeared to His disciples a number of times on the Lord’s day. Pentecost always fell on the first day of the week. On that day the apostles were baptized with the Holy Spirit and henceforth guided by the Holy Spirit in preaching the gospel. Peter preached his great sermon recorded in Acts 2 on the first day of the week. Salvation in the name of a crucified Lord was first proclaimed by the apostles on the Lord’s day. The terms of salvation to the alien sinner were first announced on the Lord’s day. For the first time men were baptized “in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of . . . sins,” on the first day of the week. And that means men were baptized by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, not by the authority of the law of Moses, or the Jewish Sanhedrin (Col. 3:17).

The first Pentecost after the resurrection of the Lord was the birthday of the church and on that day, the first day of the week, men for the first time were added to the church. And as we continue to read the book of Acts we find the church met for worship on the first day of the week, the Lord’s day. In Acts 20:7 we read, “**And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow; and prolonged his speech until midnight.**” To the Corinthians Paul wrote, “**Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collection be made when I come**” (1 Cor. 16:1, 2). The Hebrew Christians were exhorted, “**to provoke unto love and good works; not forsaking our own assembling together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more as ye see the day approaching**” (Heb. 10:24, 25). We may not agree what day they saw approaching, but it is certain that the day on which the early Christians assembled was the first day of the week, the Lord’s day.

The emperor, Constantine the Great, declared in A.D. 321 the first day of the week a holiday, especially for the cities and towns. Constantine realized that the Christian religion was fast becoming the predominant religion of the world, and doubtless to gain the favor of the Christians he made the first day of the week a holiday. This of course made it easier for Christians to assemble for worship on the first day of the week, especially the slaves, many of whom were Christians. But it should be emphasized that Constantine did not “change the sabbath,” as some claim. The first day of the week had been the day of worship for Christians since the earliest days of the church. (Acts 20:7). But Constantine made the first day of the week a holiday and it had been recognized since then until now among the nations that are strongly influenced by the Christian religion. Unfortunately because of lack of respect for God and the word of God, and the rise and influence of infidelity in the land today, many use the Lord’s day as a recreation day, or for some other purpose than to assemble with the saints to worship God. But to the devout child of God the first day of the week is still the Lord’s day when Christians assemble to worship God. It is not a sabbath day as was the seventh day under the law of Moses, but a day when the saints find joy in “going to worship.”

There is much wisdom in the admonition to **“not forsake our own assembling together, as the custom of some is.”** (Heb. 10:25.) First of all we forsake the worship of God, and no Christian can afford to allow anything to be put before his duty to worship God. We are not only robbed of spiritual values when we forsake our assembly on the Lord’s day, but we disobey God. The Lord could have as easily said through the apostle, “Do not forsake your assembling together, as some do,” as he said, **“Not forsaking our own assembling together.”** They mean the same thing, and they are both stating a commandment of the Lord. And when we forsake the worship on Lord’s day we disobey the Lord. and who among us can afford to disobey the Lord? Those who **“obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus ... shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might”** (2 The. 1: 8, 9.) Or do we, like the denominations, claim that there are some commandments of the Lord that are not essential to salvation?

Furthermore the items of Christian worship found in the New Testament are suited to our spiritual needs. To sing together, to give of our means together, to eat the Lord’s supper together in memory of the blessed Lord, to pray and study God’s word together, provide the edification every child of God sorely needs in his effort to be faithful to the Lord and in his constant battle with evil and the world. Men who are faithful in worship on Lord’s day do not often, if ever, leave the Lord and the church. Whereas one of the first steps away from the Lord is **“forsaking our own assembling”** as the manner of some is. The Lord knew the needs of the soul when He gave us the items of Christian worship.

Furthermore there is the Christian fellowship we all sorely need, found in the assembly of the saints on Lord’s day. Man was made to enjoy fellowship with his fellowman. All of us need encouragement from one another. Every normal man finds strength and joy in the fellowship of his neighbors and brethren in the Lord. And there is no occasion in the life of the Christian when he can enjoy more the fellowship of his brethren than “at church” on the Lord’s day. Doubtless all of us have noticed on many occasions how a good rural church as well as a city church, serves as a magnet to draw together and to hold together the people of a community. They go about their duties day by day, often not seeing or hearing from one another all the week. But what a joy and a strength they find on the Lord’s day when they come together at the little meeting house to sing and pray together, give together and eat the Lord’s supper together and study the Bible with one another. And even after the services this fellowship often continues as they stand around together and exchange the news of the week, and some time to laugh and cry together. There is no society of man, no lodge of any kind, that binds men together as does the faithful local congregation of the people of God. As John Fawcett so beautifully said:

Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love;

The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.

Before our Father’s throne, we pour our ardent prayers;

Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our comforts and our cares.

We share our mutual woes; our mutual burdens bear;

And often for each other flows the sympathizing tear.

When we asunder part, it gives us inward pain;

But we shall still be joined in heart, and hope to meet again.

Can any child of God afford to be robbed of the Christian fellowship found in the assembly

of the saints on the Lord's day? The man without friend, robbed of the warm fellowship of good neighbors and brethren is not a happy man. And there is no substitute for Christian fellowship. The Lord knew that all of us need Christian fellowship, without which we are miserable and unhappy, and he provided it for us when we forsake not **"our own assembling together, as the custom of some is."** ~

Deceased

ABUSING THE LORD'S SUPPER

Bill Jackson

In looking into 1 Corinthians 11, we have these words from the apostle to help us see Corinth's condition as regards to worship:

1. Coming together for the worse (v.17)
2. Coming together in a divided state (v.18)
3. Coming together with an allegiance to men (v.19)
4. Coming together with no thought as to the significance of the supper (v.20)
5. Coming together in mixing their common meal items in with worship (vv. 21-22)
6. Coming together with no discernment of the body of the Lord, and thus their participation was in an unworthy manner (vv. 27-29).

The apostle indicates a great spiritual sickness in their midst, with some of them actually **"in death"** (v.30). The wonderful privilege of worship was being abused, perverted, and mishandled. We must continually examine ourselves (2 Cor. 13:5) in this and in every way, that we insure that our worship will be in spirit and in truth (John 4:24).

But we want to speak of the abuse of the Lord's Supper in our own time, and in some particular ways wherein we should now stop and examine ourselves with a determination to improve. We make mention of these points regarding the abuse just noted:

1. We abuse the Lord's Supper when there is no anticipation of worship. The Christian is a worshipper, and worship is to be a great and continual part of his life. Yes, **"exhorting one another"** (Heb. 10:25). The Supper is mentioned as a rallying cause of the saints on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). If the Supper is meaningless to us as we think of it and as we approach the observance of it, it will be meaningless as we partake as well.

2. We abuse the Supper if we have the view that "this is all that matters." There are five avenues of worship, and if five are necessary, then all five are important. There has been too much of an attitude that says, "Just so I get the Lord's Supper!" For all its importance, it is not all important! It is fruitless to be half-hearted in all other worship, and then try to be of a spiritual mind when it is time to observe the Supper.

3. We abuse the Supper if we think that observance somehow makes up for the time misspent in sin, indifference, and carelessness. Not one word is said in the New Testament about the Lord's Supper affecting "cleansing" for the disobedient child of God! If he is unfaithful to God, he is in no better position to partake of the Lord's Supper than he is to sing or pray. Without making proper correction in life, he only adds sin to sin in going through the motions of Lord's Supper observance.

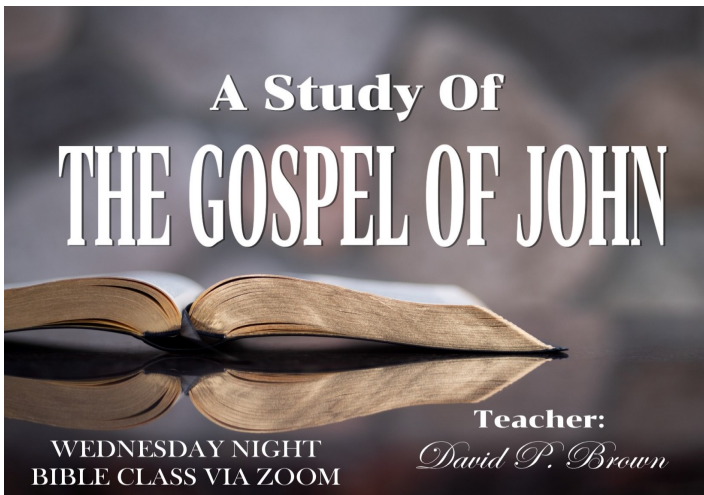
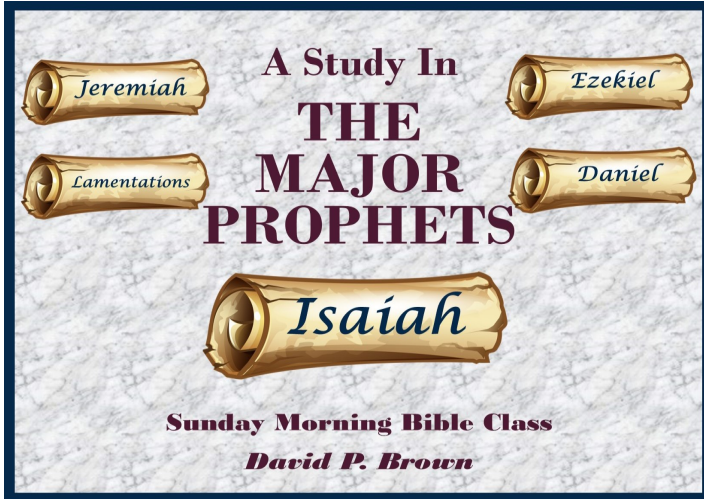
4. We abuse the Supper if we spend the week or weekend in fun and games, perhaps on vacation, and just barely squeeze in time to make a service, arriving late and nearly to the point of exhaustion, and we do manage to "get the Supper." Body and mind in such shape for worship is needed to worship **"in spirit"**—with spirit and understanding (1Cor. 14:15). It is an abuse of all worship, and not just the Supper, when I can barely find an hour to give to God!

5. Finally, one of the most flagrant abuses is on the part of those who willfully absent themselves on Sunday mornings, and then will rise to partake on Sunday evenings as if some matter beyond their control blocked them that morning. We know that sicknesses

and emergencies arise, but we are thinking of the willful absence, and then the Sunday evening partaking, as if God would subsidize the negligence. This is an abuse of the purpose and intent of the Lord's Supper—a memorial with significance for spiritual people!

May we examine ourselves in this avenue of worship, and in all others, that we truly worship God in spirit and truth (John 4:24), and that our coming together be for the better (1 Cor. 11:17).~

Deceased



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- **Sunday, April 28th:** Monthly meal
- **Tuesday, April 30th:** Ladies' Bible Class
- **Saturday, May 11th:** Graduation Banquet
- **Saturday, May 25th:** Fish Hatchery Rd Lectureship (Part #2)
- **Mon-Wed, July 15th-17th:** VBS at Spring
- **Saturday, September 28th:** Fall Fellowship
- **Saturday, October 26th:** Fish Hatchery Rd. Lectureship (Part #3)

THOSE TO SERVE

SUNDAY, MARCH 31, 2024

Announcements	Ken Cohn
Scripture Reading	Stephen Cohn <i>Rev. 12:1-6</i>
Song Leader	Jonathan West
Prayer	David Brown/John West (AM) J.D. Gunter/Stephen Cohn (PM)
Speakers	Eric Paluka
Lord's Table (AM) (John 19:16-19)	
Joshua West	Bret Bailey
Zack Nero	Eric Paluka
Lord's Table (PM)	
J.D. Gunter	Ben Gunter
Audio/Video Monitor	Zack Nero
Camera/Door Monitor	Joshua West

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3, 2024

(via Zoom Meetings)

Announcements	Ken Cohn
Speaker	Andrew Paluka
Bible Class Teacher	David Brown

FOR MARCH

Prepare Communion	L. Paluka
Lock Buildings	Nero
Prepare Bulletin Board	TBA

IN NEED OF PRAYERS

Noah Hackworth, Daughter of Dr. Kathryn Ziegler, Josie Contreras, Maddie & Cohen Young, Edith Young, Bob Terry, Glenda Hackworth, Zack Nero, Cynthia Jackson, Elnora Oxendine, Bernice Hastings, Charles & Ann Nero, Nathaniel Rimmer, Chuck & Nancy Verkist, Freda Smith, Orlinda Chumbley, Carmen Hardy, and Roelf & Janice Ruffner.

TEST YOUR BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

Who was Eliseus?

Answer to last week's question:
Mary, Mother of Jesus; Luke 2:35