

One Heart



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Judging Righteous Judgment — Part 3



Graduate of the Elk City School of Preaching; over 36 years of preaching experience; A.S. from SWOSU; B.S. and Ed.D. from OSU; M.S. (1969) UI; author of several books.

by Marion R. Fox, director

beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? 4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me cast out the mote out of thine eye; and lo, the beam is in thine own eye? 5 Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

In our first two articles we determined the necessity of judging by the righteous standard of truth. We learned that it is wrong to be partial or to have prejudice in our judgment of others (1 Tim. 5:21). We learned the necessity of having sufficient evidence to convict a person of sin before we condemn them. We also learned the necessity of evaluating the evidence properly before making a decision of guilt or innocence.

What About the Prohibition of Matthew 7:1?

Few passages of Scripture are more well-known than this passage. Many people think it is wrong to judge under any circumstance because of their misunderstanding of this passage and its context. Some interpret this passage in a manner that contradicts other passages of Scripture (i.e. Jn. 7:24). Jesus said:

Mt. 7:1 Judge not, that ye be not judged. 2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you. 3 And why

Many people can quote Mt. 7:1 but few are aware of the four verses that follow verse 1. In verse 2 Jesus used the Greek word *gar* that means: "Gar may express: (1) a ground or reason, (b) an explanation, (c) a confirmation or assurance;" (Dana and Mantey, p. 242) It is evident that verse 2 begins an explanation or the reason for the words of verse 1. We ask the question: "Why did Jesus say: 'Judge not that ye be not judged.?' The answer is: "You will be judged by the same standard and by the same measure that you apply to those that you are judging." This passage is a warning about judging capriciously.

Jesus also warns about being a hypocrite in our judgment. He warns about judging others by a standard we are not willing to apply to ourselves. Note how

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the man judging has a beam in his eye but is trying to get the mote (small speck of wood) out of his brother's eye. Obviously he is not willing to live by the same standard he applies to others. He is a respecter of persons and is unrighteous because he has respect of persons. He respects himself more than he respects others.

Other Characteristics of Unrighteous People

Unrighteous people frequently follow the crowd (Ex. 23:1-3). There is a psychological phenomenon called: "Groupthink" that comes to bear in this matter. We see this occurring when the crowd cried out: "Crucify, crucify him" (Lk. 23:20). Note how the crowd moved like a herd of cattle to all shout the same thing (Lk. 23:20-23). Even Pilate (who knew Jesus was innocent – Lk. 23:14-15) was caught up in the frenzy (Lk. 23:20-24). Groupthink comes into play when a prominent person or group of people push a matter and the other people (frequently those who do not have the prestige of the group) go along with the wishes of the group rather than think for themselves. We see this occurring in the church today when a prominent clique of preachers or a school pushes a particular matter. Many jump on the bandwagon and get involved without even thinking for themselves.

Unrighteous men have an improper thought pattern (Isa. 55:6-8). The unjust (unrighteous) man has no shame (Zeph. 3:5). Unrighteousness even deceives men (2 Thess. 2:10). God is righteous in His thoughts (Isa. 55:8). Unrighteousness in little matters leads to unrighteousness in big matters (Lk. 16:10). Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness (1 Cor. 13:4-6).

Unrighteousness hinders the cause of the truth (Rom. 1:18). Unrighteousness among God's people becomes a stumblingblock to the conversion of aliens. Unrighteousness among alien sinners hardens the hearts of people and it makes them less receptive to the gospel. Those who live in sin are presenting themselves as instruments of unrighteousness (Rom. 6:12-13).

We must remember that every unrighteous thought, word, and/or act is sin (1 Jn. 5:17). When

our thoughts are unrighteous, we sin. When our words are unrighteous, we sin. When our actions are unrighteous, we sin.

The leaders of God's people must hate unjust (unrighteous) gain (Ex. 18:21). It is a sad day when the leaders of the people are unjust (unrighteous) in their decisions. It is indeed a dreadful thing to see men decide their stand on matters based entirely upon what they will gain by standing for a certain matter. (Will I be accepted by a lot of people? Will I retain my popularity? Will I be evil spoken of or will all men speak well of me [Lk. 6:26]?)

Both the just (righteous) and the unjust (unrighteous) shall be resurrected (Lk. 14:13-14 and Acts 24:15). Both will be resurrected, but both will not receive the same reward (Jn. 5:28-29 and Rev. 20:11-15). They will not receive the same reward because God is a righteous judge (Ps. 7:11, Ecc. 3:17, Jn. 5:30, 2 Tim. 4:8, and Rev. 19:11).

Questions for All to Answer

How do you make decisions on where you will stand on a doctrinal matter? Do you see which way the crowd is going (Eph. 4:14)? Do you follow the multitude (the crowd) in making your decisions (Ex. 23:2-3)? Do you see which way certain prominent men in the brotherhood are going? Do you see which way your favorite school is going? Do you see which way your parents are going? Do you see what many brethren (men born since the end of the age of miracles) taught and/or practiced in the recent past?

Are you on the strait and narrow way or are you on the broad way? (Mt. 7:13-14). Do you follow the Scriptures as your guide or do you follow men as your guide?

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LESSONS FROM RESTORATION HISTORY

by Frank R. Williams

Abner Jones

He was five years old in 1776, when George Washington was not yet the first President of the United States, and in the year in which he was born (1771), America was without a Constitution. He would be unknown to most of his contemporaries and he continues to be unknown even today.

Yet, he was to become a doctor, a school teacher, and a preacher. Who is this unknown man? His name was Abner Jones and within him lived “the spirit of restoration.” He was first baptized into the Baptist Church, as one cannot be a Baptist without being baptized into the Baptist Church. However, after a study of the teaching of Christ, he came to reject Calvinism which runs through Baptist teaching. By the year 1801, he also rejected human names, and there went the Baptist Church as there is no New Testament authority for such.

At Granville, New York, he taught school. In the year 1797, he was practicing medicine in Lyndon, Vermont. It was about this time that he married Demaris Prior, and Lyndon became their permanent home. During these years religious revivals were taking place in a young America. Abner Jones had thoughts of preaching the gospel of Christ, and prior to the year 1801, he stopped his practice of medicine and was giving full time to preaching.

Thomas Jefferson won the election of 1800 and was the third President of the United States. On March 4, 1801, Jefferson gave “The Inaugural Address” and Abner Jones was preaching the soul saving gospel of Christ. In 1802, he organized churches at Hanover and Piermont, New Hampshire. It is interesting to note, Jones was connected with Elias Smith from about this time in establishing what were called, “free” churches in New England. Smith said of Jones, “The first free man I had ever seen; and admitted Jones had gone beyond him in his thinking.” (*THE TRAIL BLAZERS*, p. 18, J. Porter Wilhite). One might ask, “Free” from what? It was freedom from sectarianism and the doctrines of the sectarian churches. Clearly they were searching for the church of the New Testament.

Earl West writes in *The Search For The Ancient Order*, “This New England movement, as we have said, owes its primary significance to the fact that men and women were looking in the direction of the New Testament order of things, and away from sectarianism. That they did not go far enough is only to be expected when one considers the natural tendency. For those days they were traveling an uncharted course. They were thinking their way along. It was to take time to get those thoughts developed, and for the most part, it remained for others to carry on with them from here.” (p. 17).

The question may be asked, “Where was the church of Christ in these early years?” It was in the New Testament, and these truth loving souls were searching through the pages of the New Testament; they were looking for the church revealed upon those pages. They were coming out of sectarianism; they were learning what the authority of Christ authorized and putting away what was not authorized. Thus, they were traveling an uncharted course as they swept away the teaching of men and kept the teaching of Christ. It was learn and remove, it was learn and keep, and it was learn and add. Their knowledge was imperfect, and the opposition, being filled with a party spirit, was determined to resist all change. Their cry was loud and clear: “Back to the Bible!” The churches of Christ of today must not forget the efforts of the largely unknown Abner Jones. For without his love for the truth and his efforts to get others to obey the truth, it would have taken longer to have the churches of Christ springing up throughout a young America.

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Of Convincing the World of Sin

by Walter Scott, from A Discourse on the Holy Spirit, 2nd Ed., p. 13-15 (1831)

At the coming of Christ, sin and righteousness (i. e. good and evil) were wholly confounded in the Jewish nation; so that the tithing of mint, anise, and cummin, was substituted for the weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy, and the love of God. The Sadducees, comprehending the wealthy and the great in the nation, denied the resurrection, and of course were wholly uninfluenced by the higher considerations of a final judgment. And as to the Pharisees they were so filled with religious pride, that they did not conceive themselves chargeable with sin, even in the presence of the Almighty, as may be seen from the parable of the Publican and the Pharisee.

Now to convince a people of sin, who did not know it from righteousness, who did not know good from evil, who had confounded light and darkness, had put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter--must have been a very hard task it must be granted. Where then, reader, was the Spirit to begin? Where was to be the starting point? Where would you have begun? Where would you have started? At Adam--at the Law--at John--or where? Until you have made at least one conjecture on this matter, pray stop; try your skill in the learning of the New Testament. How would you have convinced the Jews of sin at this crisis?

There was one thing on which the whole nation were agreed, both Pharisees and Sadducees. All parties concurred, all sects were unanimous in this--that the ancient Scriptures promised a Messiah. Now, then, if the Holy Spirit in the Apostles proved by the ancient Scriptures, and by gifts of power, &c. that Jesus of Nazareth was the very identical person for whom they looked, then he at the same time convinced them of sin for not having believed on him; and this was just what the Spirit did, and also what he was to do when he came: "He shall convince the world of sin, because they believe not on me," said Jesus.

On the day of Pentecost all the Apostles were accordingly filled with all the gifts of wisdom, in order that by suitable arguments drawn from the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, the Jewish nation, who believed in these oracles as divine, might be convinced that Jesus whom they had crucified was the Messiah. This was the means used by the Holy Spirit for convincing the Jews of sin in not believing on Jesus, he having said during his public ministry that if they

would not believe Moses and the Prophets they would not believe if one arose from the dead. After quoting from the Law and the Psalms, Peter cried out, "Let all the house of Israel know, therefore, that God has made that Jesus whom you have crucified both the Lord and the Christ."

The proof drawn from the ancient Scriptures relative to the conception, birthplace, life, trial, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, is, with great elegance, styled "the demonstration of the Spirit;" and Paul calls it this because, like a skillful geometrician, who first states his proposition, and afterwards proceeds step by step in the proof of it, from its simplest to its most involved properties, from its immediate to its most remote relations, until all its powers are fully developed; so the Holy Spirit speaking in the Apostles, first sets down the great proposition revealed at Jordan to the Jews, (viz. that Jesus was the Christ,) and then proceeded step by step in the proof of it, unfolding its simplest and most complex relations--its immediate and remote relations, until by the most ancient and involved, and the latest and clearest of the Jewish Prophecies, in the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, he proved that, in regard to his conception, birth, life, ministry, poverty, character, descent, trial, condemnation, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and reign, Jesus of Nazareth was the very person promised to the nation; and we have only to make a reference to the Apostles in the Acts to see how perfectly these remarks harmonize with the word of God. Acts ii. Three thousand on the day of Pentecost were convinced of sin, confessed Christ, and were baptized for the remission of sins that they might receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. To convince a person of a fault we first prove him guilty. The Spirit first shewed that Jesus was Messiah, and then proved them guilty by calling it to their recollection that they had murdered him. This cut them to the heart, and they cried, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter gave then a certain and a celebrated answer: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

But, reader, is there any thing in all this like the

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There Is Just One Way

by Ivie Powell

One of my favorite songs is entitled, “Just One Way To The Gate” written in 1920 by James Rowe and James D. Vaughan. The third stanza and chorus are as follows:

*Others risk their souls on some new-made way,
Thinking they will come to the gate some day;
Oh, may they find out, err their lives are done,
That the old Cross Road is the only one.
There is just one way to the pearly gate.
There is just one way to the pearly gate,
To the crown of life and the friends who wait.
Tis the old Cross Road, or the way called “Straight,”
There is just one way to the pearly gate.*

That the denominational world is having a great impact on the Lord's church cannot be successfully denied. It isn't unusual to hear of congregations of the Lord's church having joint worship services with the denominational world. More and more have accepted the false premise that instrumental music is not a salvation issue. In addition to this, an all out move is being pushed to practice open membership. Testimonials, baby dedications, and communion on Saturday have also been added to the list of departures from the faith. Instead of examining these and other practices in light biblical authority (Col.3:17; I Pet 4:11), the cry of “What is wrong with it?” “We like it” and “Look at our success” are the basis of accepting these and other practices! As a result of this, we are losing our distinctiveness as the one body of Jesus Christ! And with

tears in our heart, we have to report, that many have so merged with the denominational world in philosophy and practice that they have become a denomination among denominations!!!

The root cause is at least three fold: 1) A lack of teaching in the home, 2) A lack of teaching in the classroom, and 3) A lack of boldly preaching the old Jerusalem Gospel in the pulpit! As a direct result of this, we have raised at least two generations of people that know not the truth! We need to frequently remind brethren that there is truly “Just One Way!” Let us once again, with great love in our hearts for Christ and His glorious church, the church of Christ “ring out the message”: THERE IS JUST ONE CHURCH!

It was our Lord that announced, “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock, I will build my church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18). The observant student will quickly see that the Lord did NOT say, “I will build my churches” rather “I will build my church!” There is only ONE church, one body of Christ! The fulfillment of our Lord's promise came to pass on the first Pentecost following His resurrection when the church came into being, “Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47). Paul wrote, “There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling” (Eph.4:4). That “one body” is identified in Ephesians

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Sunday is the same day of every week. It never moves on the calendar. Yet each week, some people are surprised by Sunday. I know they must be, because they saunter into services ten minutes late and sleep through the sermon or don't show up at all.

Our Lord made a sacred appointment on a Sunday long ago. He promised that He would return from among the dead on the third day—Sunday. Shouldn't we treat each Sunday as a sacred appointment as well? Where would we be if Jesus had forgotten about that Sunday like we have tried to forget every-one since?!

Benjamin J. Williams

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See page 11 for class schedule.

School News & Outlook

by Benjamin J. Williams

Another successful year of classes has ended, and it is time to look forward to the next. This year we have had students from the Garden Oaks congregation, the Nicoma Park congregation, the Ridgecrest congregation, the Grand Boulevard congregation, and of course the Barnes congregation. Next year, we hope to add more!

In addition to our standard introductory courses, this Fall will begin an interesting series of Upper Division courses. The series includes a survey of the Old Testament period that begins with the captivity of the Northern Kingdom in Babylon and ends at the birth of Christ. The series has a heavy emphasis on prophetic books, including the Minor Prophets and Jeremiah in the Fall, and Ezekiel, Daniel, and the book of Revelation in the Spring. A proper understanding of these books is essential to dealing with the popular current of millennial theology that is prevalent in the denominational world and, to my amazement, that is increasingly popular among some of our own brethren. Fur-

thermore, understanding the Old Testament prophecies of the kingdom are paramount to getting the most out of Christ's teaching on the kingdom in the New Testament.

Finally, this year will have classes on the books of First & Second Corinthians. These books contain discussions on almost every kind of problem the church will ever face. Corinth was a true testing ground for the New Testament church, so we can be better prepared for the problems we will all face some day by seeing the solutions that Paul offers in the two epistles to those congregations.

If you are looking for the right time to start sharpening your Bible knowledge, that time is now!

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Excerpt from *The Name Christian*

by Alexander Campbell, from The Name Christian, in The Millennial Harbinger, Vol. I, No. VIII (1830)

As to the name Christian, I have always, since I knew any thing of christianity, given it the approbation of my heart. It is a name which we can legitimately assume. But unfortunately some have assumed it as a name only. Suppose, for example, that these reforming Baptists who contend for the ancient gospel and the ancient order of things, should assume to be called Christians, how would they be distinguished from those who call themselves Christians, who neither immerse for the remission of sins, show forth the Lord's death weekly, nor keep the institutions, manners, and customs of those called "Christians first at Antioch?" If our friends who assume this good name, never had gone into a crusade in favor of opinions, nor had laid so much stress upon them; fighting for years about their peculiar views of the Deity, and other abstractions which I need not name; and if they had given to their churches the institutions of christians, we should

have rejoiced that the name Christian did not now designate a sect, instead of the body of Christ. As it is, however, we choose the name Christian, with all its abuses, and have not for many years ever called the particular congregation to which we belong by another name than the Church of Christ. But if any one shall suppose that the term "Christian" denotes a Unitarian, or Trinitarian, in its appropriated sense, we shall choose the older name, "disciple;" and recommend to all the brotherhood to be called not "Christians," but "the disciples of Christ."

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“Of Convincing the World of Sin” ... continued from page 4

Spirit entering the souls of these sinners in order to produce faith, repentance, or any thing else? Not a semblance of such a thing! The Spirit was in the Apostles, who spoke as he gave them utterance. The Devil was in the people. In all subsequent addresses Peter and all others proceeded in the same manner, reasoning from the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, great additions in this way being made to the church. Stephen cut the members of the Sanhedrim to the heart; and all the Jews and proselytes, such as the Eunuch, Cornelius, Lydia, &c. were in this way convinced of the truth; Samaritans and Idolators were convinced chiefly by miracles, because they knew but little, and many of them nothing at all of the ancient Scriptures. The miracles, signs, wonders, and gifts of

the Holy Spirit, were called the powers of the Spirit of God, and conferred on the church for the purpose of converting the nations; concerning which the Apostle speaks thus: “I will not dare to speak of any thing which Christ has not wrought, but of what he has wrought by me in order to the obedience of the Gentiles, in word and deed, by the power of signs and wonders, and by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about as far as Illyricum, I have fully declared the gospel of Christ.” The word of God is the great organ of conversion in the hand of the Spirit, whether he stir up a Prophet, an Apostle, Evangelist, Martyr, or Saint to declare it—now or formerly.

1:22-23, “And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.

“Beloved, the church of the New Testament is NOT a denomination nor do the denominations make up the one church! Through the years, I have had relatives as well as friends, ask me not to mention the word denomination in lessons. And absolutely never, never, never identify a specific religious group, even if done in a kind, loving manner. Why? Because it is offensive to their friends and to them as well! Having carefully considered their request, I would like to know how these brethren expect to convert their friends to Christ, and His church without showing the difference in the Lord's church, and denominationalism! I submit to you my friends, their problem is they are not converted to Christ and His church! The words of our Lord are very fitting, “But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not: and when thou art con-

“There Is Just One Way” ... continued from page 5

verted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22:32)! Anyone that would reprimand a preacher for exposing the sin of denominationalism places himself in the category of Matthew 15:14, “Let them alone; they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.” Furthermore, for one to be ashamed of the Lord's church, the church of Christ, is paramount to being ashamed of Jesus Himself, “Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels” (Mark 8:38)!

Let us love the Lord, His church, and the souls of all men that we so speak, that people will see the difference in the New Testament church, and denominationalism. Otherwise, why would anyone want to become a member of the church of Christ? While many may deny it, “There is still just one way to the pearly gate!”

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An Open Letter from Nadab & Abihu

by David Brassfield

Brethren,

It is with the utmost humility that we inform you of a change of worship practices in your normal sacrificing. Be assured that we are bringing about this change only after much prayer and study.

We have recently concluded an in-depth study of the Law as delivered by our brother Moses that covered 400 days. (We might note that is ten times the length of time it took the Lord to impart this Law.)

We have decided to bring about a change in the type of fire used in worship. We are aware that there is a standing tradition of using only one source of fire, but we, as holy priests, do not feel obligated to blindly follow tradition. Numerous polls of our worshipping clientele indicate the overwhelming opinion that they do not care where we get the fire used for their sacrifices just as long as the service is conducted in a respectful and meaningful way.

We were in agreement with this growing majority, as we cannot see how a change in fire will affect anything in the least about our sacrifices. The animal is still properly cooked, the incense burned. We are of the mind that were we to secretly substitute a different fire it would be impossible for any of the worshippers to know a change had taken place.

Besides all this, we became aware of the fact that nowhere in the Law does the Lord forbid the use of what some of our detractors have referred to as "strange fire." We feel that the lack of such a restriction was meant to give us freedom. For those who disagree, we would ask you to show us any place in the Law that tells us we cannot do something the Lord has not seen fit to condemn.

We also wish to point out that the congregation of Israel is the only religious group in the known world that willingly limits itself to only one kind of fire. We have become the laughingstock of the land of Canaan and have been ridiculed openly by many groups. This "only-one-fire" self-righteous policy has alienated us from everyone else. We believe this change will open up many fellowship opportunities.

Now, to set the minds of some of you at ease, we will continue to offer a traditional service using the old-fashioned fire as well as this progressive service with the new fire. As a matter of fact, we may occasionally use the old fire in our progressive service for

special feast days. In this way we hope that our older citizens are still comfortable even though they dogmatically insist on a worship style which is declining and we believe to be stunting our growth.

Consider the freedom this new practice affords us! We will no longer have the expense of maintaining a constant fire in one location. This will also make it possible to appeal to a younger audience as we discover more entertaining ways to "light the fire" of our assemblies. (We hope you caught the little play on words there!)

For those who still oppose the use of new fire, we ask you not to be judgmental of new ideas. We also hope you will not use this change as a excuse to divide our people or stir up trouble within the congregation. We remind you that this has been well thought out and the majority of elders have signed on with us. It is true we have not included our father Aaron in this deliberation; but we were well aware of his tradition-bound views and still plan to leave him in charge of doing the traditional service anyway. We also have not consulted Moses, but his humility is well known and we are confident he will want to uphold the majority decision in this effort to improve our worship.

We are very much looking forward to our first new fire service. We hope you will make a special effort to be present to witness a new age of enlightenment in the church of Israel. We know God will be watching and we anticipate that his joy over seeing his people take a great step toward throwing off the burden of binding tradition will be an electrifying experience.

See you there. Bring some extra barbecue sauce, for we think this new practice is going to spread like wildfire!

For freedom's sake!

Nadab & Abihu, DDLP

Doctors of Divine Law and Progress

P.S. After the successful changeover in this part of our worship, future plans include the ordination of women priests, inter-idol fellowship activities with the various pagan groups nearby, and a special service called, "It doesn't have to be Passover to celebrate Passover anymore."

The Beautiful Bride of Christ

by Frank R. Williams

In the opening years of the twenty-first century, the King of kings and the Lord of lords looks upon the bride of his youth (Rev. 21:2), the bride for which he shed his precious blood (1 Pet. 1:19; Acts 20:28). He “gave himself for her; that he might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word. That he might present her to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, any such thing; but that she should be holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:25-27). This is what our Lord expects to find each time his eyes look upon the church of Christ in all her locations throughout the earth.

All those who make up the one body of Christ first had to demonstrate the humble state of being poor in spirit. They were able to mourn over their sinful state, being separated from God. They were in full and complete possession of all the faculties of their being, having the quality of meekness (Matt. 5:3-5). Then, within the heart they hungered and thirsted after righteousness and would not let up until filled with God’s power of justification (Rom. 1:16-17). Having received God’s mercies, these were fully capable of being merciful to all those whom God loves (Matt. 5:6-7; John 3:16). These are the beauty marks of the beautiful bride of Christ by which every member was added to the one church of Christ (Acts 2:36-47).

If memory serves me well, Thomas B. Warren and Garland Elkins among others were preparing the theme for the Fifth Annual Spiritual Sword Lectureship for year 1980. The decision had been made that the theme would be “The Church.” E. R. Harper (1897-1986) was present when brethren were talking of the theme and said something like, “The church is a great and needed theme, but it would be even better if the words ‘the beautiful bride of Christ’ were added;” thus, “The Church – The Beautiful Bride of Christ” became the theme of the Fifth Annual Spiritual Sword Lectureship. As I write these words, I have before me a copy of that lectureship book, signed by both Warren and Elkins. It is interesting to notice the names of those men who spoke on this lectureship who have now departed this life: Rex A. Turner, Andrew M. Connally, Joe Gilmore, Max R. Miller, Wendell Winkler, Emerson J. Estes, Willard Collins, J. Noel Merideth, Johnny Ramsey, Roy C. Deaver, Thomas

B. Warren, Bill Jackson, and Hugo McCord (There may be others of which I am not aware.) These names are given because they represent a unity that then existed among us that no longer does. Unity is the mark of identity for which our Lord prayed only hours before his death upon the cross: “Neither pray I for these (the apostles, frw) alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word: That they all may be one as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (John 17:20-21). These words, that may be described as coming from the deepest part of our Lord’s heart, must burn in the hearts and minds of all those who love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30). They must be imbedded in the very character of the beautiful bride of Christ, for without them she does not possess the image of her King.

It is so obvious in these opening years of the twenty-first century that unquestionably the beautiful bride of Christ has lost her adorning robe of white, the pure innocence of unity. It is true this is not the first time her garments have been stained by those “who loveth to have the preeminence among” us (3 John 9), but for many of us, it is the worst we have seen. Our hearts cry out in the words of our redeemer: “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). In destroying the unity of the Lord’s called out, her purity has been soiled, and her strength has been weakened. She struggles to stand upon her feet, and the sword within her hand tilts toward the ground unprepared for battle. At a time when the enemies of truth are staging a battle for the every identity of the beautiful bride, she is giving forth a most “uncertain sound” (I Cor. 14:8) and few are prepared to stand in battle arrayed in truth. Fellowship among the churches of Christ is so low that few ever enter the doors of the meeting houses of their brethren. What once we so boldly proclaimed of the denominations now is true of so many of us: each congregation has her own doctrine by which fellowship is destroyed. Name the subject and it divides us!

As the sun is rising upon the twenty-first century, the beautiful bride of Christ is unprepared to proclaim

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“The Beautiful Bride of Christ” ... continued from page 9

the soul saving gospel of her redeemer to a lost world. The words of our Lord used to describe the physical family now describe the spiritual family: “...a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household” (Matt. 10:35-36). There is a “civil war” within the church. Words have become bitter and the venom of the serpent is sent forth at the drop of a thought. Preachers are now afraid to express what their study has led them to conclude, for fear of being attacked by a closed mind, unwilling to study, but always ready for a debate. Those subjects that will change the nature and character of the beautiful bride of Christ must be debated; but it must be done among brethren who are sober minded, willing to deal with brethren as brethren in love of truth and each other.

At the dawn of nineteenth century, when light was beginning to shine out of darkness, brethren were heard to say, “In faith, unity; in opinion, liberty; and in all things, charity.” Yes, these were the mere words of men, but they expressed biblical truth. They did not short change Jude’s exhortation that we “should earnestly contend for the faith” (Jude 3); for they stood against the enemies of truth upon the floor of debate and truth shined as never before in this land. But low the day arose when brethren were not content to dwell in truth. Men arose who were determined to change the garments of the beautiful bride of Christ and thereby cause her to lose her purity, to lose her marks of identity. And so it is today! Brethren who love the truth must come together in unity for the sake of the beautiful bride of Christ. Do we have the meekness required to answer such a call?

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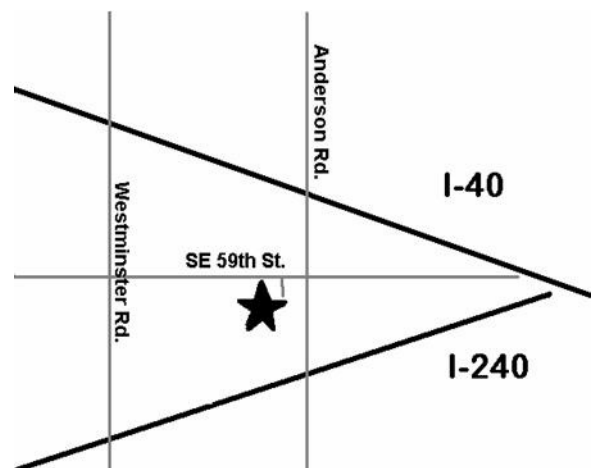
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Course Schedule for Fall '07

First Quarter: August 21 & 23 — October 9 & 11
 Second Quarter: October 16 & 18 — December 11 & 13
 (No Classes, November 20 & 22)

First Year Courses: Required prerequisites for second year courses except by special arrangement

1st Quarter	Tuesday Night	Thursday Night	2nd Quarter	Tuesday Night	Thursday Night
1st Hour 6:15-7:00 PM	Fundamentals of the Faith Course #102	New Testament Church Course #112	1st Hour 6:15-7:00 PM	Fundamentals of the Faith Course #102	New Testament Church Course #102
2nd Hour 7:30-9:00 PM	General Biblical Introduction Course #122	Hermeneutics Course #132	2nd Hour 7:30-9:00 PM	Applied English Grammar Course #142	Logic & the Bible Course #152

Upper Division Courses

1st Quarter	Tuesday Night	Thursday Night	2nd Quarter	Tuesday Night	Thursday Night
1st Hour 6:15-7:00 PM	OT Survey: Post-Exilic Course #402	Minor Prophets Course #412	1st Hour 6:15-7:00 PM	OT Survey: Post-Exilic Course #402	Minor Prophets Course #412
2nd Hour 7:30-9:00 PM	I Corinthians Course #404	Jeremiah Course #414	2nd Hour 7:30-9:00 PM	I Corinthians Course #404	Jeremiah Course #414

SCHEDULE NOTES:

- A meal will be offered on Tuesday nights from 7:00-7:30 PM.
- A short snack break will be held on Thursday nights from 7:00-7:30 PM.

Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies

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One Heart & OKCSBS are works of the Barnes church of Christ and supported by individual Christians and sister congregations

FALL SEMESTER

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