



One Heart

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Inside this issue:

Judging Righteous Judgment—Part 1 1-2
Marion R. Fox

Restoration History: 3
The Spirit of Restoration
Frank R. Williams

Is the Church Entering a Dark Age? 4-5
Benjamin J. Williams

Voices From the Past: 6
J.W. McGarvey and a Very Dark Spot
James A Harding

Yesterday's Glasses 7
Frank R. Williams

18th Annual Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies Lectures 8

Restoration in the Old Testament 9
Marion R. Fox

School News & Outlook 10
Benjamin J. Williams

Course Offerings for Fall 2006 11

Judging Righteous Judgment — Part 1

by Marion R. Fox, director

Introduction

Perhaps few passages of Scripture are known more than Mt. 7:1: "Judge not, that ye be not judged." But few people know that Jesus said: "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment." (Jn. 7:24) How can these two passages be reconciled? Remember that the immediate context of Jn. 7:24 is found in Jn. 7:14-24. In this article, I will deal with Jn. 7:24 and reserve Mt. 7:1 for a later article.

Definitions of the Words "Righteous" and "Judgment"

Jesus is preaching to the Jews who at that time were under the Law of Moses. Therefore, the words "righteous" and "judgment" are defined both by the Law of Moses and by the context of John 7. In fact, the children of Israel were to judge righteous judgment (Deut. 16:18-20).

Each city was to have judges who would judge at the gates of the city (Deut. 16:18). This means that the judgment was public. These city judges were to: "[J]udge the people with righteous judgment" (Deut. 16:18). These judges were not to have: "[R]espect of persons" (Deut. 16:19, Lev. 19:15, etc).

These judges were not to allow themselves to be influenced by bribes (Deut. 16:19). A bribe does not always have to be in the form of money, it could be: "If you do this for me, I will do such and such for you." The bribe might even be implicit and not explicit. Just the knowledge that

one of the persons being judged can affect his life, might prejudice the judge. These judges were not to allow the words of the righteous to be perverted (Deut. 16:19). The judges were to do that which is altogether just (Deut. 16:20). The judges were to condemn the wicked and justify the righteous (Deut. 25:1). Judges must neither justify the wicked nor condemn the just (Pro. 17:15). There are two ways that one might be unrighteous in his judgment set forth in this passage. First, one might justify the wicked and second, one might condemn the just.

The Lord defined "righteous judgment" for the children of Israel in many passages of Scripture. The Lord defined the word "righteous" (or "just") when He declared that they were not to have diverse weights (Lev. 19:33-37, Deut. 25:13-16, Pro. 11:1, 20:23, Mic. 6:11, etc.). The word "righteous" is also defined in the New Testament (Lk. 1:6). The participle translated "walking" explains how they were righteous. We are righteous when we walk in the commandments and ordinances of God blameless. A man is not blameless, if he is not righteous.

Justice comes from God (Pro. 16:11, Ezek. 45:10, etc.). Without knowledge of God, man will not be just (righteous) in his dealings with other men. We can see injustice in the world because man refuses to have God in his knowledge (Rom. 1:18-23, 28-29, etc.). God serves as our example of true righteousness.

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The *a fortiori* Principle Applies This Principle to Christians

Jesus used a principle of Bible interpretation where He argued that whatever is true of the lesser is true of the greater. He used this principle in Mt. 12:9-12, Lk. 13:10-17, and 14:1-6. This principle was also used by Peter in Acts 10:27-28 (God has cleansed animals, men are greater than animals; therefore God has cleansed men). One cannot understand the book of Hebrews without using this principle. The *a fortiori* principle explains how the just balance and scales applies to us in the Christian dispensation. The following argument establishes the point being made by Jesus in Jn. 7:14-24: If the Jews were required to use a just balance and just scales in secular matters, then the Jews were required to use just measurements in determining spiritual matters (matters of right and wrong or good and evil).

The Context of John 7:24

Jesus went up into the temple to teach (Jn. 7:14) and the Jews marveled because he had not gone to the right schools (Jn. 7:15). That is, Jesus had not studied under any prominent rabbi. In fact, He had not studied under any rabbi. They seemed to forget that Jesus had understanding without studying under a rabbi (Lk. 2:46-47). Jesus responded that His teaching was not His own, but that it came from God (Jn. 7:16). The point here is that the Scriptures (the Word of God) are the standard, not what some rabbi teaches. Jesus informed them that one must "will to do his will" in order to know of the doctrine (Jn. 7:17). It is the aim of The Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies where I serve as director that honest students (cf. Acts 17:11) should be helped to learn how to understand the Scriptures for themselves. It is our goal to make our students into independent students of the Word of God and send them forth with the injunction to study the Word for themselves.

Jesus informs them that one who speaks from himself seeks his own glory, but if one seeks the glory of Him (God) that sent him, he is true and there is no unrighteousness in Him (Jn. 7:18). A man who seeks his own glory will elevate his will above the Will of God and will interpret the Scriptures incorrectly.

Jesus points out to them that they were not following the Law of Moses because they were rejecting Him and seeking to kill Him (Jn. 7:19). The Jews claimed that Jesus had a demon and asked: "[W]ho seeketh to kill thee?" (Jn. 7:20) Some in the audience knew that the Lord's charge was true (Jn. 7:25).

Jesus pointed out that they marveled at one work (Jn. 7:21), but the miracles that He worked proved Him to be "approved of God" (Acts 2:22). He is almost certainly referring to His healing on the Sabbath (Mt. 12:9-14). This event is one event for which they sought to kill him (Mt. 12:14). This is where the Lord introduces the *a fortiori* principle of biblical interpretation.

Jesus proves that they are unrighteous in their judgment,

because Moses had instructed the priests to circumcise a boy on the eighth day even if it fell on the Sabbath day (Jn. 7:22-23; Lev. 12:1-3). With this background, Jesus commands them to judge righteous judgment (Jn. 7:24).

Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment. (John 7:24)

They were judging according to appearance of the eye, not according to the reasoning of the heart. They should have reasoned from the Scriptures that such an act would not be sinful, but they were so blinded by their traditions and unsound interpretations of the Scriptures that they falsely accused a righteous person (Jesus) of sin.

Righteous judgment demands that we apply the same standard to all persons that we judge. The Jews did not condemn the priests for circumcising a boy on the Sabbath day. However, they condemned Jesus for healing on the Sabbath day. Therefore they were unrighteous in their judgment. They were unrighteous because both acts were acts that were enjoined by God. First, the children of Israel were commanded to circumcise every male child on the eighth day (Gen. 17:12, Lev. 12:1-3, etc.). Second, the children of Israel were commanded to love their neighbor (Lev. 19:18). Love for our neighbor entails helping him in his time of need. Jesus was displaying His love and compassion for people by healing their diseases. We must also judge righteous judgment.

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LESSONS FROM RESTORATION HISTORY

by Frank R. Williams

The Spirit of Restoration



Martin Luther

The year 1517 may not be one you remember. Yet, during that year on October 31st, Martin Luther nailed his 96 theses to the church door in Wittenberg, Germany. It was that act of courage and expression of desire that changed the face of "Christendom" and it has never been the same. However, out of it came division not restoration. In fact, Luther desired to reform the Roman Catholic Church not restore the church of the New Testament.

The years before and after Luther people desired to have a copy of the Bible and this dominated the minds of many. People wanted to know what the Bible really said, not just what church leaders reported that it said. The desire to read the word of God first hand, rather than hearing it second hand burned within the hearts of humble minded.

John Wycliffe was called "The Morning Star of the Reformation," and translated the Bible into English in 1382. He set forth fifty changes against the Roman Church and made many enemies of their "spiritual leaders." He was excommunicated but died before the sentence of execution was carried out. His enemies were so bitter that this body was taken from the grave and burned.



John Wycliffe

It was John Wyclif, Martin Luther, then, William Tyndale who was styled "The Great English Reformer." His first edition of the New Testament was burnt by the bishops of the Roman Catholic Church (1530) and he was seized and burned. His dying words were, "Lord, open the eyes of the king of England."

Martin Luther, may be the better known, was not alone in the effort to reform. John Huss, who was tried for heresy and his

books publicly burnt (1415). While the flames gathered about him a hymn could be heard coming from his lips, "with so loud and cheerful a voice that he was distinctly heard through all the noise of the combustibles and of the multitude." His last words were, "Jesus Christ, thou Son of the living God, have mercy upon me."

There were others, John Calvin (1500) who discovered inconsistencies in popery and the Catholic religion when compared to the New Testament. He studied the scriptures for himself and found the differences between the Bible and the teaching of the Roman church. There was also Ulrich Zwingli (1484) who desired to have only what the Bible allowed in worship and practice. He like his fellows, his body was burned to ashes by his enemies.



John Calvin

The year was 1599, the place was Wales and the event was the birth of "the forerunner of religious freedom in America:" Roger Williams. His opposition to the laws requiring conformity to the established church caused him to be driven out of England. He came to the "new land," the land of the free: America! Through a study of the Scripture he learned that immersion was the baptism of the New Testament and that it was for believers. He, therefore, rejected infant baptism!

Remember, it was in 1611 that the King James Version of the Bible was published. The common people had the word of God in a translation true to the Greek text. With this translation America was settled (Jamestown, 1607) but these settlers also brought their creeds, confessions of faith, and their loyalties to these man made doctrines.

Religious division came to America, but a different breed of men would arise through the years and having the courage of the reformers, they desired to restore the church of the New Testament. As this desire was made known "the spirit of restoration" was born n America!

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Is The Church Entering a Dark Age?

by Benjamin J. Williams

What should the church look like? Should we expect phenomenal growth as the honest masses obey the gospel? Should we expect dismal membership in an evil age? How should we react when our expectations are not met? In the grand scheme of things, what should we expect as fruits from our evangelism?

As a rule, everyone thinks they have an answer to these questions. They have a semi-intuitive view of the “big picture”, usually laced with unhealthy doses of pessimism. I have been told with equal certainty by preachers, elders, and members alike that the “real problem” in the church is one thing or another. Everyone seems to be pretty certain that there are problems in the church, but there is little or no consensus on the specifics of that problem, let alone what the solution might be.

**“Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way,
which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”**

Matthew 7:14

Some have adopted a “few there be that find it” theology. They quote that famous passage from our Lord and use it as an excuse to justify their dying congregations and failed evangelistic attempts. After all, if Jesus said that the church would be small, who are we to argue? Didn't Noah manage only to convert his own family, similarly called a “few” (1 Pet. 3:20)? However, neither of these passages of Scripture were ever intended by Christ to be used by His disciples as a catch-all scapegoat for failure. Consider the expression “few”. While it is hard to accurately estimate the total number of humans to have lived since Adam and Eve, do we really believe that converting every person in our local community would make the saved any less “few” in the grand scheme of things? Do we really believe that local success would make Christians a majority? Surely not! I think we can safely say that if you converted every person you had ever met, the Lord's prophetic claim of “few there be that find it” would still be statistically sound.

**“In those days there was no king in Israel: every man
did that which was right in his own eyes.”**

Judges 21:25

Others have adopted a theology of innovation. Patterning themselves after the business community, these concerned members believe that we must push the church to the cutting edge of popular culture to save it from decay. While I certainly believe that every modern advancement should be used for the cause of our Master, who do we think we are to even suggest that a divine plan would need human innovation? How dare we suggest that the infinite wisdom of God needs the finite wisdom of man to

succeed? Do we really believe that the Kingdom of Heaven will overcome the world through imitating it? Surely not! I think that we can safely say that trying to use worldliness to convert the world is path to failure.

Thrown into the mix of honest members trying to help the church succeed are the various dishonest crooks and deceivers trying to make a name and dollar off the little demographic labeled “churches of Christ.” They sell thousands of books each year and hold up their own mega-congregations as models for success. However, their pattern for success is also flawed. Their congregations are large in most cases because they have made their congregations personality cults designed to function around the success of their next book. The only book that will save the church has already been written and the only personality that should be the center of our churches is that of Jesus the Christ. No strategy based on personal satisfaction or gain will ever do God's will. If you need convincing, ask yourself if that is the path that led Christ to the cross or the apostles to their own painful deaths.

All in all, the church seems to have little notion about the nature of its problem or the means of solution. In fact, the only common theme scattered out in every version of this story is the steadfast belief that our problems are the result of wicked, secular culture. We have come to believe that we have fallen from a golden age of wholesome values. We have even come to believe that our age may be the most wicked generation of all time. I am not surprised that our problems are not being resolved when I realize that everyone's view of this problem is based on this simple falsehood. Brethren, we do not live in a uniquely wicked age.

**“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were
written for our learning, that we through patience and
comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”**

Romans 15:4

The simple fact is that our age is not uniquely evil. The sin of our era is not the sign of a certain apocalypse or the herald of the “last days”. Instead, this post-modern world is simply repeating the ageless cycle of history. The cycle of good and evil is one of the strongest lessons conveyed in the Old Testament.

The lesson begins in Eden — a pristine time of innocence and purity, undefiled by even the knowledge of good and evil. Humanity existed precisely as it was intended by the Father. Then, through the insidious lies of the serpent and the failure of Adam to protect his family from harm, Eve was deceived and sinned. Adam, not deceived as Eve but instead deliberately choosing to follow his wife into death, ate also of the forbidden fruit, meriting

the promise certain death. Their banishment from that earthly paradise stands as a figure for all future failures of mankind. This is the cycle of history. From that day forward, man would continue to rise and fall in the likeness of father Adam and mother Eve.

“And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”

Genesis 6:5

Move forward to the prosperous society of the days of Noah. If we interpret the earliest portions of Genesis in a mostly literal way, it is easy to believe that the culture of Noah’s day demonstrated all the greatness and weakness of an advanced culture. How much stronger and smarter was post-Adamic man, so recently descended from the perfect gene pool of God’s perfect man? What could a culture accomplish whose great thinkers and leaders enjoyed healthy, useful life for eight or nine centuries instead of a mere four score and ten? However, we must also ask what terrible evil and pride could they muster in that same time? In our age, men who live less than a century still act as though they will never die or face judgment. How would men behave if they knew their typical lifespan was nine hundred years? Would they believe themselves to be gods? This is the world that God beholds and describes as having their thoughts on evil continually. The crushing waters of Noah’s deluge purged the world of wicked man and humanity began again in the righteous eight saved by water.

Leap ahead again to the period of the Hebrew redeemers, called judges. Is not every Bible student taught the pattern of this age? The Hebrew children would rise to faithfully serve the God that led them by the hand out of Egypt, only to turn to Baal in the next generation. They would depart from the God of their exodus and forsake the strength of their people. Conquerors would spoil them and subjugate them until they cried again to the One God Moses showed them in the land of Pharaoh. God, ever merciful and ever faithful to the promise made to Abraham, would send them deliverers like Gideon, Debra, and Samson. The people, restored to their lands and their freedom, would pledge eternal loyalty to the God of deliverance. How many eternal pledges did the Hebrews break? How many times was the cycle repeated?

In the age of kings, the Jews repeated this cycle. They reached great heights of spirituality and equally terrible depths of decadence. We see their greatness in restoring the Law under Ezra. We see their gross iniquity as they offer their children as burnt offerings to the pagan God Moloch. In the time of our Lord, they were at a particularly low point in their history, provoking Jesus to often decry them as a wicked and crooked generation. In anticipation of this sinful state, the messenger of the Lord, John the Baptizer, was sent to prepare the people — to make a highway for the Lord through a treacherous terrain fraught with sin. This last cycle climaxed in two acts: first in the murder of the Son of God, and finally in the annihilation of every vestige of the Old

Testament order in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

“Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?” Matthew 23:33

However, do not allow yourself to believe that this only a Jewish cycle or a Hebrew weakness. This is the natural cycle of humanity. Consider the Assyrians and in particular the citizens of Nineveh. In Jonah, we see God sending his prophet to Nineveh with great results (even against the wishes of Jonah himself!). They fast by royal decree from king to peasant. The king of Assyria, applying a little pagan reasoning, even commands the cattle to fast in hopes of deliverance from the God of all creation. How great a repentance this is for the same people that would stack the skulls of their conquered adversaries as a ghastly warning to others! But these Gentiles would follow the same pattern that all humanity tends toward, returning to their sin and provoking the final wrath of God revealed against them by the prophet Nahum.

“To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:”

Ecclesiastes 3:1

When we look at these examples, how can we not detect a pattern? This is how humanity tends to behave, always and forever. People born in hardship and turmoil turn to their God to find peace and mercy. Their children grow weary of bridling their lusts and choose to exchange the perfect law of liberty for the shackles of sin and pleasure. Sin brings death in this life and the next. Sin always brings misery in the long run, and after enough time, humanity yearns to be free from the yoke of Satan. This is the cycle. Why then does every age filled with iniquity also believe that they are uniquely wicked? Why do we have the arrogance to believe that our generation has surpassed the Assyrians? I am ashamed of our cultures fondness for abortion, but are we any worse than the Hebrews dumping their babies into the fiery arms of Moloch?

The wise man Solomon recognized the powerful truth of human seasons. Truly there is a time for everything. Humans have continued this cycle since Adam and show no signs of stopping. However, this is not a lesson of gloom and doom. In the season of sin and spiritual weakness, we can remember that the Word of God is likened to a seed. Surely the kingdom is a perennial plant. After every winter of sin the kingdom of God returns to blossom in the hearts of men.

With this in mind, consider both our future and our past. As the churches of Christ try to find a path through the 21st Century, they need to remember the lessons of the past and prepare themselves for the seasons to come.

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J.W. McGarvey and a Very Dark Spot

by James A Harding, from Christian Leader and The Way, Vol. 25, No. 49 (1911)

{The following was written by brother Harding about the beloved brother McGarvey, but the principle of fellowship discussed in the article is so pertinent to our own time, we decided to include this article in this edition of One Heart for your consideration.}

One of the greatest Bible teachers of post-apostolic times left us when J. W. McGarvey died. I doubt if there has lived on the earth since the Apostle John a man who more thoroughly understood the two covenants of the Divine Word and their relations to each other; who could handle with such clearness, ease and vigor, the facts and truths of inspiration. No advocate of error was a match for him in discussing the truthfulness of the Bible records; no man among us so ready, clear and powerful in crushing the false doctrines of infidels and atheists. I shall never forget the eagerness and delight with which I read his first Commentary on Acts. I think it ought to be reprinted. I have loved J. W. McGarvey with a grateful heart from that day to this hour. Sometime after I had read his first commentary we became personally acquainted. He was nineteen years older than I. He was preaching regularly for the Bethlehem congregation in Clark County, Kentucky, when I was called to hold a meeting for the church. This was the beginning of our personal acquaintance. The more intimately I knew him the more I loved and admired him. He was very great, very gentle, very unostentatious. During the excitement, bitterness, hate and turmoil of the Civil War, Brother McGarvey never forgot that he was a Christian — and that a Christian's duty, first, last and all the time, is the upbuilding of his Master's kingdom. Other preachers in Lexington in those days were full of the war; but J. W. McGarvey was full of his Master's business. They were eager for the latest news from the front, from Lee, or Grant, or Johnson; but McGarvey would inquire: "How is the church at Winchester doing now?" "When will your protracted meeting begin?" "How is the cause prospering in your region?" I remember very well how my father used to contrast Brother McGarvey's interest in the cause with the interest of other preachers in the war.

But with all of his greatness and goodness, and he was very great and very good, there is one passage of Scripture that, I think, he neglected. He knew it very well, and quoted it often; but, it seems to me, he did not put it into practice. He did not impress it upon the minds and hearts of the brethren as he could have done, as he ought to have done. So, at least, it seems to me. The passage to which I refer reads as follows: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly; and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent." (Romans 16: 17, 18).

In this paragraph it is boldly and strongly affirmed that we

are to mark and turn away from "them that are causing divisions and occasions of stumbling," contrary to the doctrine we learned. The inspired apostle says they who cause these divisions serve not our Lord Christ. He affirms that they serve their own bellies, and beguile the hearts of the innocent.

Among us, who profess to take the Bible and the Bible alone as our rule of faith and practice, who and what have caused the divisions that have occurred in our churches? There is no room for a doubtful answer to this question. For fifty years I have been deeply, personally interested in the Church, and an eager reader of its literature; and I know that more congregations have been divided among us by pressing instrumental music into them than by all other causes. Next to the organ, the missionary societies have been our greatest causes of division and strife.

There are few of the great and good whose lives are not marked by some serious blemish, some dark spot, a spot that seems all the darker because of the brightness and beauty that shine around it. And, it seems to me, our beloved brother, although so wise and great and good, did not escape the common lot of frail humanity. Brother McGarvey was bold and strong in declaring his opposition to the use of an organ in the worship of the church. He would not abide in a congregation that regularly used instrumental music in its worship. When the Broadway Church, Lexington, Ky., introduced instrumental music into its worship, he withdrew from the congregation, and worshiped with another which had not departed from the divine rule in this respect. And here arises the matter in which, it seems to me, he failed: while he would not abide in a church that regularly used the instrument, it was not at all uncommon for him to accept an invitation to preach for a congregation that regularly used it. He often did this. And herein, it seems to me, is the dark spot in this wonderfully bright life. If Lard, McGarvey, Graham, Grubbs, and men of like faith, had resolutely marked and turned away from them that were causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling contrary to the doctrine they learned; if they had resolutely turned away from them, if they had marked them as they really are—as men who do not serve the Lord Christ, as men who serve their own bellies, as men who are enemies to God and his Church, who by their smooth and fair speech beguile the hearts of the innocent—if the brethren I have mentioned had resolutely refused to have any fellowship whatever with these dividers of churches, these lovers of their own bellies, we would have had a very different story to tell now. What they ought to have done then, we ought to do now. We ought to have no fellowship whatever, religiously, with those who have divided, or are dividing churches. Unless they repent, confess their sins, and turn resolutely from them, all Christians must mark and avoid them — or bring upon themselves the curse of an outraged God. — Potter Bible College, Bowling Green, Ky., November 28, 1911.

Yesterday's Glasses

by Frank R. Williams

The Bible, the Word of God, is God's book of life, not only for the life that now is but that which is to come. The apostle affirms this truth, when contrasting "bodily exercise" with "godliness," Paul wrote: "For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:8). The need to study the Book is without question.

The value of Bible study is revealed in the following: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Ti. 2:15). It is not just study that is needed but profitable study. There is a great danger of opening the pages of the Bible seeking to prove what we believe; in so doing we run the risk of not seeing the truth. In other words, we find in the Bible what we desired to find, all the while missing the truth. Peter wrote of some that "wrest" the scriptures "unto their own destruction" (2 Pet. 3:16). The word "wrest" (the Greek, *streblōō*) means "to torture, put to the rack" (Thayer, p. 590). Think with me for a moment about the idea of "the rack." The "rack" was an instrument of torture. It was used in some cases to get a person to confess to a crime that he did not commit; thus, truth was not the aim. We can see this word refers to people who put the Word of God to the "rack of torture" with the idea of making it "confess" to what it does not teach. If we stretch the word beyond the truth; we come away with what we desired but not the truth.

There is also the danger of studying the Bible with yesterday's glasses on. By this we mean that a person may read the Bible seeing only what he saw yesterday. He may be a person who simply confirms what he thought he knew yesterday but never sees the truth, never learning more than he knew yesterday. If he was wrong yesterday, then he is wrong today, tomorrow, and forever. Truth must always be our aim in studying the Bible. Truth never changes! However, if I study with "yesterday's glasses" on, then I am missing the opportunity of learning; I am missing what I did not see yesterday. Think about it, we all know and freely confess that we knew little or nothing the first time we read the Bible; all we learned was new. Do we not understand that the same principle was true the second time read the Bible? We knew a little more, but as we studied we learned more; the pages of the Bible came alive as truth built upon truth and our understanding increased. Reading the Bible through yesterday's glasses means that we only know what we knew yesterday and no more. If I was wrong yesterday, then, when reading with yesterday's glasses I will continue to be wrong today, tomorrow and forever. Thus, I have wrested the scriptures to my own destruction (2 Pet. 3:16).

It is a good idea to read the Bible as though we have never read it before; that is, read each time as though we are reading for the first time. The truth learned in yesterday's reading will

still be there every time it is read. However, if I read it wrong yesterday but today I have read correctly, then my soul is blessed. My mind has been illuminated with the beauty of God's truth: the word of my salvation! Luke noted the "noble" manner those of Berea who "searched the scriptures daily" (Acts 17:11). What made them "noble" in their testing of Paul's preaching? Luke said that they sought to determine "whether those things were so." Truth was their aim and it was their desire for truth and their willingness to receive the truth that made them "more noble than those in Thessalonica." Thus, a good student, one who desires the truth, will not read through "yesterday's glasses." That is, he will not read the Bible today with the prejudiced views of yesterday. Those "prejudiced glasses" will close his eyes to what he may have missed yesterday.

In looking at the "noble" example of those of Berea, there is a second lesson to be learned. Paul was preaching what would be the New Testament — the gospel of Christ. He was inspired and able to confirm his preaching with miracles; yet, those of Berea "searched the scriptures." They were searching the Old Testament to prove or disprove the teaching of the apostle. The point is that all new revelation, in this case the New Testament, must be in harmony with all previous inspired revelation. Had Paul preached something not in harmony with the Old Testament, these "noble" people would have rejected it as being false. Therefore, we must make sure as we read and study the Bible that the "prejudiced glasses" of yesterday do not allow us to believe something in either the Old Testament or in the New Testament that is not in harmony with each other.

The more we know the Word of God, the better we are prepared to give to our fellowman the greatest good that one person is able to give to another. The gospel being God's only power unto salvation (Rom. 1:16), the better our understanding of it, the better we are able to teach others its soul saving truth. Let us always keep in mind that the gospel is profitable in this life and that which is to come. Therefore, having the gospel in our hands, we are ready to travel. Having the gospel in our minds, we are ready to teach it to others. In so doing, we are prepared to give to our fellowman that which is for his greatest good. The gospel is the means of our own salvation; therefore, we must know it. The gospel is also the means of salvation to all mankind; therefore, we must be prepared to teach it.

Read, study, but do so seeking the truth the Holy Spirit reveals in each word, in each phrase, in each verse, in each chapter and in the whole Book. For your own salvation and that of others, be careful with "yesterday's glasses."

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18th Annual Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies Lectures

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THEME:

Precious Passages

Our faculty, current & former students, and others will deliver lessons on a selection of the Bible's most beloved passages, including ...

In the Beginning, God ...

Genesis 1

I AM THAT I AM

Exodus 3:14

The LORD Said Unto My Lord

Psalms 110

As a Lamb To The Slaughter

Isaiah 53

In the Days of These Kings ...

Daniel 2

*Our Father Which Art In
Heaven*

Matthew 6:6-13

The Greatest Commandment

Matthew 22:34-40

For God So Loved the World

John 3:16

*All Things Work Together For
Good*

Romans 8:28-32

Our School Motto

II Timothy 2:2

By Inspiration of God

II Timothy 3:16-17

These All Died In Faith

Hebrews 11

Q&A Forum with OKCSBS Faculty

Full Schedules Available Soon!

Restoration in the Old Testament

By Marion R. Fox, director

The nature of both God and the Old Testament are important matters that help the Christian to understand the attitude of God to apostasy. In addition the need to return to God is also evident from the Old Testament.

Malachi reveals that God is changeless (Mal. 3:6) so does the writer of Hebrews (Heb. 13:8). If God does not change and the nature of man has not changed, it is evident that there is no need for truth to change (truth relative so man's salvation).

This changeless God works today as he once did (Heb. 2:2-3). This is why the Old Testament can serve as a record of things that are examples to us (1 Cor. 10:6). The Old Testament serves as a negative example (of what not to do). The Old Testament also serves as a positive example (of what to do). But one may say "the Scriptures are not able to deal with modern day problems." There is no new thing under the sun (Ecc. 1:9). Our technology has just enabled us to commit the same sins more rapidly and more efficiently (by our communication and transportation systems). However men are still committing the same sins.

The logical conclusion of these points is that the things that pleased God in principle in the Old Testament, will still please God today, i. e. love, obedience, etc. (This applies to all things not changed from the Old Testament to the New Testament.) The Old Testament serves to teach us (Rom. 15:4). The things that happened to the Old Testament people serve as examples to us to admonish us (1 Cor. 10:11).

The Institution of, and Departure From, the Pure Religion in the Old Testament

All things that God does are pure and flawless. When the Godhead instituted the Law of Moses, it was a pure religion but God prophesied of an apostasy (departure from it). Moses revealed the pure religion of God (Jn. 1:17). God cursed them for changing the word of God (Deut. 12:32).

God prophesied of their departure from the word of God (Deut. 31:27 and 29). He informed them that they would be punished for their departure from His Word. The first example will be derived from the book of Judges. Note how they departed from the will of God as soon as their good leaders all died (Jgs. 3:7-11). Because of this departure God was forced to punish them (by withdrawing His protection of Israel). When they began to suffer, they repented and God forgave them (Jgs. 3:9-11). This was repeated many times in the book of Judges.

The second example is derived from the kings (in Hezekiah's days-2 Kgs. 18-20). The departure (apostasy) was realized (2 Kgs. 17:7, 18-19) but good king (Hezekiah) brought them back to the will of God. When Judah returned to God, He forgave them and they received His blessings (2 Kgs. 18:4). Note the reaction of God

to their return (2 Kgs. 18:7).

The third example is from the days of king Josiah (2 Kgs. 21-23). Again, the people go into apostasy (2 Kgs. 22:17). While Josiah was a very good king, the people did not return to God with all their heart and his restoration was ineffective. Their return was only half-hearted (2 Kgs. 22:17-20) and God's reaction to their half-hearted return was to punish them (2 Kgs. 23:26).

The fourth example is derived from the days after the return from Babylonian captivity (Neh. 8:8-9 and 13-16). Nehemiah gives an account of their numerous apostasies (Neh. 1:7-9). Their departure (apostasy) was from the truth (Neh. 1:7) and they must return to it in order to please God (Neh. 1:8-9). When they returned we see the reaction of a merciful God (Neh. 1:9).

This pure system was designed to end (Jer. 31:31-34) and to be replaced by a better covenant (Heb. 8:6-ff.). However a failure to obey the first covenant (the Law of Moses) brought punishment (Heb. 2:2) and a failure to obey the better covenant (Heb. 2:3) will bring about an even greater responsibility to obey (with a greater punishment for disobedience).

Summary of the Apostasies in the Old Testament

"Nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy law behind their back, and slew thy prophets that testified against them to turn them again unto thee, and they wrought great provocations. . . . [29] and testifiedst against them, that thou mightest bring them again unto thy law. Yet they dealt proudly, and hearkened not unto thy commandments, but sinned against thine ordinances (which if a man do, he shall live in them), and withdrew the shoulder, and hardened their neck, and would not hear." (Neh. 9:26, 29)

The Children of Israel were first disobedient (verse 26), then they rebelled against God (verse 26), then they cast the law of God behind their backs (verse 26), then they slew the prophets (verse 26). The prophets had worked to turn them again to God (verse 26) and to bring them again to God's law (verse 29).

When God speaks He does not want His will changed in any manner and when men change His will (either by perverting the doctrine, substituting a different doctrine, or keeping the people in ignorance of His will), he punished those who failed to work in their stewardship (keeping and teaching His will). When He punished them and they repented and returned to His will (were converted), He was merciful and forgave them.

Marion R. Fox, Director, OKCSBS
6001 Gardner Drive
OKC, OK 73150

School News & Outlook

The Fall Semester is finished and the Spring Semester is almost upon us! We added a few students during the Fall and are very excited about what kind of turn out we may see next semester.

We are also very excited about our upcoming Lectureship (see the advertisement on page 7). This year we will get to do something we have always wished for but never managed to pull off—we will be using several of our students as speakers. We believe that you will be impressed with the level of Bible knowledge these men bring to the pulpit. We are very proud of them and thoroughly pleased to get to use them in our lectureship.

This year's lectureship theme is "Precious Passages". Our lesson topics will be some of the Bible's most familiar and beloved passages. Of course, it was a daunting challenge to narrow down the 66 books of the Bible to 12 lesson topics, we think that we have arrived at a selection that will stimulate your interests. While some of my personal favorites didn't make the list, we

hope that these twelve lessons on twelve familiar texts will add to your understanding of the Bible.

Please take a moment to view the Spring schedule on the opposite page and see if there are any classes that might interest you. Hopefully, we will see some of you when classes begin on January 9 and 11!

In Loving Memory ...

The family of our sister, **Ozella Lemmon**, made a donation to the school in her memory. The faculty and students of the OKCSBS would like to offer their condolences to the Lemmon family and their thanks for the contribution. You are in our thoughts and prayers.

Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies

The Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies is a tuition free, flexible, four-year night school designed to meet the needs of every Bible student. Whether you are interested in preaching the gospel, being an elder or deacon, or just learning more about the Bible, we have the courses you need to accomplish your goals. Our night schedule allows you to continue your normal daily routine with minimal interference. Our staff is qualified and experienced, offering many years of combined preaching experience from which the student may learn.

OKCSBS is hosted at the Barnes church of Christ and is a work overseen by that congregation's elders, Marion Fox and Frank Williams. The school is also supported by sister congregations and individuals who share an interest in the truth.

If you are interested in becoming a student or helping out in this great work, please contact us with the information below. For more details and a full curriculum, visit our website!

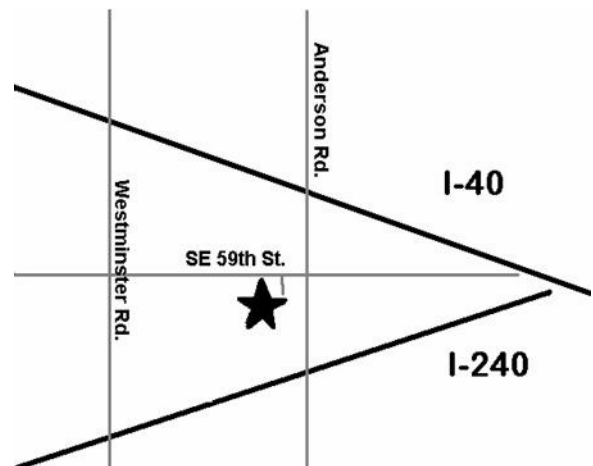
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Barnes church of Christ
 6001 Gardner Drive
 Oklahoma City, OK 73150
 Phone: 405-736-1001

Advantages

- No tuition
- Flexible curriculum
- 4-year basic program or 4 1/2-year advanced program
- Qualified faculty

Full-Time Faculty:

- Marion R. Fox, director
- Frank R. Williams
- Benjamin J. Williams





Course Schedule for Spring '07

- First Quarter: January 9 & 11 — March 6 & 8
- Second Quarter: March 13 & 15 — May 1 & 3 (No Classes, April 3 & 5)

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	Hebrews Course #162 Frank Williams	Godhead Course #111 Marion Fox	1st Hour 6:15-7:00 PM	Hebrews Course #162 Frank Williams	Proverbs Course #121 Marion Fox
2nd Hour 7:30-9:00 PM	Fourfold Gospel Course #172 Benjamin Williams	Apologetics Course #182 Marion Fox	2nd Hour 7:30-9:00 PM	Calvinism Course #192 Benjamin Williams	Genesis Course #262 Marion Fox

Upper Division Courses

1st Quarter	Tuesday Night	Thursday Night	2nd Quarter	Tuesday Night	Thursday Night
1st Hour 6:15-7:00 PM	OT Survey: Divided Kingdom Course #352 Lyndal Werner		1st Hour 6:15-7:00 PM	OT Survey: Divided Kingdom Course #352 Lyndal Werner	
2nd Hour 7:30-9:00 PM	Isaiah Course #314 Marion Fox		2nd Hour 7:30-9:00 PM	Isaiah Course #314 Marion Fox	

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

18th Annual Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies Lectureship

Theme: Precious Passages

Our faculty, students, and alumni will teach on
the Bible's most familiar passages!

April 5-8

6001 Gardner Dr.
Oklahoma City, OK 73150
Office Phone: 405-736-1001

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

SPRING SEMESTER

First Quarter:

January 9 & 11 - March 6 & 8

Second Quarter:

March 13 & 15 - May 1 & 3

(No Classes, April 3 & 5)

Visit us online: www.okcsbs.com

- Download the printable flyer
- View the full curriculum
- Read past issues of *One Heart*
- Pass the site along to others!



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