

Present Threats

I do not remember a time in my lifetime when the peace and purity of the church has been threatened with more "winds of doctrine" than right now. I began preaching near the beginning of the institutional controversy that divided churches during the last half of the just recent century. "The issues," as they were called in those days, were pretty much confined to efforts to activate the universal church in some form or the other. Today, even among those who came out of that controversy popularly labeled "non-institutional" (but not confined to them), there are a multiplicity of issues that have to be dealt with on many fronts. Among them are:

- The doctrine that salvation is grace based and not obedience based.
- The doctrine that grace covers the Christian's sins even as he sins.
- The doctrine that all life is worship.
- The doctrine that the Lord's Supper should be observed in a manner that mirrors the eating of a common meal together.
- The doctrine that social services are to be at the basis of our evangelism.

By Edward O. Bragwell, Sr. • The doctrine that fellowship should be extended to all "believers in Christ" without regard for doctrinal differences.

This, by no means exhausts the list of doctrines being floated out there among us and taking over churches. But this should be enough to occupy our minds to a little while.

However, I feel compelled to point out one other threat: It is the growing number, who say they do not agree with these doctrines, who *are unwilling to openly oppose them in any effective way*. They prefer to bury their heads in the sand and believe that none of these present a real threat; or they prefer that they be dealt with in generalities (sometime called "just deal with the principle") rather than clearly exposing each doctrine for the threat it is to the peace and purity of congregations and exposing the teachers as the false teachers that they are. This may well be as great, if not greater, a threat than the mere existence any of the doctrines.

Brethren, sometimes is better to "rock the boat" occasionally than to just stand back and watch it sink.

Sunday 5:15 Kid's Class at the Building	Monday 7 PM Men's Class at Walker Davis' House	Tuesday 8 PM "Truth Seekers" at Student Center - Room 2310	Wednesday 12 Noon Ladies "Proverbs" class at the Rouse's
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Sick			
Donna Rutledge (Ashley Tucker's aunt)	Eli Williams (Friend of Sarah Norman)	Frank Hand (Laura Humphrey's dad)	Sandlyn Fultz (Davis Fultz's Sister)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	David Hartsell (Holly and Brad's Father)	Jeffery Miller (Friend of Walker Davis)
Emma Hettinger (William Herd's Mother)	Neal May (Manna Jones' Mother)	Roger Whatley (Daphene Whatley's son)	Andrew Hagewood (Friend of Sarah Norman)
Pat Webb (Friend of Jared Johnson)	Quinton Addison (April Jerkins Grandfather)	Diane Hudson (Josh Hudson's grandmother)	Arline Harkrider (Nichole Pender's Grandmother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Dave Brown (Friend of the Lanier's)	Emily Stallings (Anna's sister)	Madi Wise (Friend of the Robert's)
Marty Meeks, Russell Dickerson (Toni Herd's Nephews)	Frances Fultz (Davis Fultz's grandmother)	Judy Nichols (Suzanne's Mother)	Owen Mauldin (Seth and Sumner Mauldin's Son)

October Birthdays

- 1 - Aiden Hahn
- 2 - Suzanne Nichols
- 6 - Jessica Anderson
- 8 - Heath Fowler
- 9 - Seth Edwards
- 11 - Mason Chandler
- 12 - Stacy Norman
- 14 - Grant Smith
- 17 - Abbie Buchanan
- 20 - Evan Pender
- 20 - Olivia Hillard
- 20 - Keith Bailey
- 22 - Meredith Bragwell
- 22 - Hunter Crawford
- 22 - Christopher White
- 22 - Chris Davis
- 24 - Sarabeth Roberts
- 24 - Suzanna Roberts
- 24 - A. J. Price
- 25 - Bethany Bradford
- 25 - Josh Sutton
- 26 - Palmer Daniels
- 26 - Sarah Sutton
- 29 - Belle Johnson
- 29 - Matt Hall
- 31 - Kitty Tam

News and Notes

- ☒ - Our new quarter will start Oct 7.
- ☒ - We will have our group meetings tonight after services.
- ☒ - Every member is encourage to fill out the deacon qualification sheet and return it by October 3.
- ☒ - Bob Simpson's sister, Ann, passed away on Wednesday.
- ☒ - Let us remember out expectant mothers in our prayers, Karen Padgett, Emily S. Jones and Nicole Pender.
- ☒ - Please sign up on the bulletin board to host or teach the 1st-6th grade and 7th-12th grade monthly Saturday classes.
- ☒ - Brother Rouse will be away in a meeting in Trussville this week.

The Auburn Beacon



Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

Unfair Criticism

By Tim Nichols

The following story has been around for many years. I do not know who the original author is. It well illustrates what most of us have experienced from time to time. You simply cannot please everyone. It is not reasonable to try. Our time and energy are best spent in trying to do what is right. If some critic can help us to better understand what is right, then it is reasonable to follow such suggestions. But changing what we are doing or not doing to try to please unfair critics is absolutely futile.

A man and his grandson went on a journey, walking and leading a donkey. Soon they met a passerby who said, "How foolish for both of you to be walking. One should be riding the donkey." So the man put his grandson on the animal. The next person they met frowned and said, "How dreadful for a strong boy to be riding while an

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old man walks." So the boy climbed off the donkey and his grandfather climbed on. The next traveler down the road said, "I just can't believe that a grown man would ride and make a poor little boy walk." So the man pulled the little boy up and they rode on together.

This seemed to be the solution, until they met the next fellow who cried out, "I never thought I

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Thoughts to Ponder

Renew the courage that prevails,
The steady faith that never fails,
And makes us stand in every fight,
Firm as a fortress to defend the right.

Elders
Walker Davis
(334) 703-0050
Larry Rouse
(334) 734-2133

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES Sunday

Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday
Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

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would see anything so cruel in all my life -- two intelligent human beings riding one poor defenseless donkey." Down the road a piece, they met a couple of men traveling together. When they passed, one said to the other, "Did you ever see two dummies carrying a donkey before?"

Soon after I began preaching I was confronted by a critic who believed that there was something wrong with preparing notes for sermons. At the time I was using extensive outlines in the pulpit that I had prepared in my studies during the week. The critic said, "A real preacher can stand up and preach a sermon on any subject in the Bible right now without using notes!" Over time I developed the practice of using fewer and fewer notes while preaching expository sermons over passages of scripture. I eventually got a wide margin Bible and now do most of my preaching from the text of the Bible and the notes that I have made in the margin. This takes more work in the study but it seems to be the most effective way to preach the word of God for me at this time. I was not surprised to hear another critic point out that "real preaching cannot be done from a few notes scribbled in the margin of a Bible."

Such criticism comes from a variety of sources. Job's "friends" came to him without knowledge of what was actually going on and made criticisms concerning things about which they were ignorant. They could have come with open minds. They could have listened and learned. Instead they came attempting to instruct Job.

The Sadducees were a proud people in **Matthew 22** where it is recorded that they came to Jesus attempting to "show Him up". Jesus "put them to silence" (**verse 22**). Before doing so he showed them where they had gone wrong; "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God" (**verse 29**). Even though their criticism was put forth in the form of a question, it was a loaded question that blew up in their faces. They should have learned from the reasonable answer to their question. Instead, it appears that they went quietly back to looking for opportunities to bring Jesus down a peg or two.

In **Joshua 22** we read of an incident in which the tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh went back to the other side of Jordan. They built an altar to God. Their brethren in Israel heard about it and assumed that it was an altar to an idol. Based upon their assumption they prepared to go to battle against them and kill them. According to **verse 16** the whole congregation believed it! All of Israel was stirred up and "red-hot mad" because they had failed to investigate before acting. They nearly killed faithful brethren because of unfair criticism.

Before you criticize ask questions and learn facts. If you must criticize try to help and not hurt. Look first at yourself. Some of the most bitter criticism seems to come from those who have the least knowledge of and interest in spiritual things.

Let us also be prepared to at least hear those criticisms from brethren with open Bibles and loving spirits. We should be ready and willing to repent if we have done wrong (**Psalm 51**).



The Bible Verses Books About the Bible

By Bryan Gibson

I don't read many books about the Bible, but I do read the Bible—frequently, and sometimes for long stretches. In the interest of full disclosure, that hasn't always been my practice. Back in my early to mid 20's (I'm 50 now), I read a lot of books about the Bible, but I cut way back and here's why. Unsound ideas had begun to creep into my mind, and it scared me. When I did get around to actually reading the Bible, I could tell that these uninspired authors were taking me in a different direction. These weren't what some would call major departures from the truth, but how far does one have to stray to be wrong? I wanted to be right about everything, and I knew the Bible was right.

I'm sure there's been some downside to my present practice. No doubt I've missed some wonderful insights from other authors, but I want to make sure that the source of all my teachings is the One "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3). I want the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and there's only one book that can provide that. "The entirety of Your word is truth..." (Psalms 119:160)—that's what David said and I believe it with all my heart.

Perhaps you're thinking that you can read all this outside material without being influenced by error, that you can properly discern between truth and error. Maybe YOU can, but many have proven that they cannot. I read and hear lessons from my own brethren that sound more like the popular authors of today than they do Jesus or His apostles. It is clear to me at least that they've read more books about the Bible than the Bible itself. Personally, I prefer an inspired author over an

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uninspired one any day (2 Timothy 3:16-17). I've yet to find an uninspired author that can match their skill in argument, their fire, their heartfelt compassion, their beauty of expression, etc. In other words, I'm more impressed with THE word than I'm their words.

I know I'm going to be challenged on this, so let me add this for clarity. I don't put all

books about the Bible in the same category. Concordances, word studies, topical Bibles, Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias—these pose little or no danger, and they can be most helpful in better understanding the text. I don't read many commentaries, because they do pose a greater danger, but at least there's an effort to stick to the Bible text, and to prove each point that is made. The worst culprits seem to be the "devotional style" books, where the author often goes for long stretches without citing a Bible verse to prove his point. It's easy to get caught up in their "fresh, contemporary" style, and not even bother to search the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things are so (Acts 17:11).

Yes, I know the Bible contains some things "hard to understand" (2 Peter 3:16), but God assures me that I can understand His will for me (Ephesians 3:1-5; 5:17). I'm not anywhere close to brilliant, but I am capable of understanding, and I plan to pursue this understanding as diligently as I possibly can (Proverbs 2:1-5).

"Give me the Bible, holy message shining, thy light shall guide me in the narrow way, precept and promise, law and love combining, till night shall vanish in eternal day" ("Give Me the Bible," E.S. Lorenz, Priscilla J. Owens).

