

THE GREENWOOD BULLETIN

Church of Christ
371 W. Main Street
Greenwood, IN 46142
(317)888-8288

www.churchofchristatgreenwood.org

VOLUME 9 NO. 6

April 8, 2012

Spiritual Urban

Legends

VIA Charlottesville Bulletin

Men have always been gullible and quick to believe and spread false stories they have heard from another. In this internet age and with the use of e-mail, false stories are spread like lightning and are accepted by millions without a second thought. Even when websites are dedicated to debunking these falsehoods, and conscientious people inform others about what is true, these false stories never seem to die. The modern term coined to describe these deceptions is "Urban Legends."

Here are but a few of these Urban Legends that sincere people have sent me:

"Forward this e-mail and Bill Gates will pay you \$156.29!"

"NASA scientist has found a missing day that proves Old Testament miracles!"

"Terrorists are buying UPS uniforms!"

"You must write the FCC now or Madelyn Murray O'Hare will ban all religious broadcasts."

As Christians, we should be concerned about every word that comes out of our mouths and every e-mail that we write or forward that bears our names (**Matthew 12:36**). These and other false stories cost others money, damage the reputations of others, and hurt the credibility of those that spread them.

Our society thinks of themselves as being informed and enlightened and above the ignorant beliefs of past generations. The hard truth is that this generation is just like all past generations and has often accepted falsehoods without any attempt to investigate what is true.

How does this apply to our religious world? How many doctrines and practices that are

2

commonly believed are actually taught in the Bible? God commended the Bereans because they "searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so" (**Acts 17:11**). When you begin to actually "test the spirits" (**1 John 4:1**), that is check what men do and say by God's word, then you will also find many things that are accepted by millions and practiced by "mainline" denominations are nothing more than spiritual "Urban Legends."

The Literal Reappearing of the Body and Blood of Jesus

When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper to commemorate His death, He used bread and fruit of the vine to represent His body and blood that was to be given as a sacrifice for our forgiveness. "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." ²⁷Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸ For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (**Matthew 26:26-28**). Just as the Passover meal reminded the Israelites of a past merciful act of

God, so the Lord's Supper or Communion would remind all Christians of all times about the sacrifice of Jesus. The power in this act of worship is found in the remembrance and not in some mystical strength in the physical elements (**Luke 22:19; 1 Cor 11:24-25**).

Sadly, many years ago men took verses that had no direct bearing on this memorial feast and twisted them to mean something that is contrary to the scriptures. Jesus said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you (**John 6:53**)." He explained in the context that men are to fully partake of His teachings and, in that, they would be eating His "flesh and blood."

In order to gain power over men, a whole series of assumptions have been made about this text that push men to believe that only the Catholic Church through their priests has the power to administer the Lord's Supper. This service is called a "Mass" and claims to be a literal sacrifice of the body and blood of Jesus anew. These assumptions are widely accepted, even though the

scriptures teach that the sacrifice of Christ was “once for all,” and because of that it would never be repeated again (**Hebrews 9:26-28**).

Accepting Jesus as Your Savior through Prayer

How many people, that have come to be convicted of their sin and thus have seen their need of salvation, were then urged to say the “sinner’s prayer?” From the popular Billy Graham crusades of years past, to today’s typical Protestant services, millions are told that they have been forgiven and now are Christians because they have “received Jesus into their hearts” by this prayer. Where is this taught in the Bible?

When you look in the scriptures, you will not find a command or any example of men finding forgiveness in this manner. However, you will find that out of a belief in the resurrected Jesus, that men were to repent of their sins, confess Jesus as Lord and then be baptized (in water) into Christ for the forgiveness of sins (**Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Romans 10:9-10**). The very first sermon Peter preached after the ascension of Christ concluded with this command and example:

“Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit...⁴¹Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them (**Acts 2:38, 41**). Have you tested these beliefs?

Ordained Priests or Clergy are Needed in Our Service to God

In both Catholic and Protestant churches there exists a special class of men that act as priests, or as ordained men, that alone can perform certain services to God. Because of this distinction, these men have special callings, special ordained educational institutions that they must attend, and that they alone can baptize, conduct marriage ceremonies, and speak with a special authority about the word of God.

In the church that Jesus Christ built there are no such classes of men. Rather than having special titles such as reverend and father, Jesus taught that we are all brothers (**Matthew 23:8**). If you are a Christian, then you are a priest. “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a

holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (**1 Peter 2:9**). Do you understand that no one stands between you and God except the Lord Jesus Himself (**1 Timothy 2:5**)?

Have these things been part of some of the spiritual “Urban Legends” that you have accepted? Why not begin today to look at the Bible anew, and test the things you have heard? By taking that step you will begin to glorify Jesus in your life and be able to confidently stand with Him in your beliefs. “If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen” (**1 Peter 4:11**)

Note found in introduction of a commentary:

“A commentator has the strange privilege of writing to people and

asking them to read a Book other than the one he has just written.”