

## Light and Life

## A Plan of God, Or Men?

In the early days of the church the apostles found themselves constant targets of the authorities due to their preaching. Once when the apostles were arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin, the oppressive council heard the advice of wise Gamaliel: “Keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it – lest you even be found to fight against God” (Ac. 5:38-39).

As evidence of his claim, Gamaliel cited the examples of Theudas, who “rose up claiming to be somebody”, and Judas of Galilee, who “drew away many people after him” (Ac 5:36-37). Each of these men perished and their followers scattered. If they were truly of God, it would not be so.

Gamaliel’s advice was wise – and we can use the same litmus test today! How many movements have risen and fallen over the years? The denominations have changed drastically over time! They are not the same institutions today that they once were. The religions of man will always vanish with time – but the ancient truth of the gospel is the same today as it always has been!

Sixty-six books written over 1,500 years by over 40 authors from diverse walks of life and places of origin in three different languages with complete cohesion and no contradictions – yet all tell **one** story – the story of Jesus!

The more archaeological, historical, scientific, and literary evidence is discovered, the more we see the ancient way of things still holds true today. New religions and denominations are created, but they devolve. Movements of skepticism rise up, but they will die. The word of God remains the same.

“If this plan or work is from men, it will come to nothing; but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it.”

- Sam Bunyard

## Another Perspective

## Give Thanks

Throughout the Bible, we see *thanksgiving* as a theme. Israel had a history of giving thanks to God for the mercy and deliverance He so often showed them. In the New Testament we read that Jesus “took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven He gave thanks” (Lu 9:16). Consider these thoughts about thanksgiving:

**Motive.** When we give thanks to God, our motive should be pure gratitude. Thanksgiving is giving thanks – and that alone. Of all our types of prayers, a prayer of thanksgiving is the least likely to be polluted with selfish thoughts or a subconscious appeal to manipulate God. It is about God’s blessings toward us and our appreciation of those blessings.

**Knowledgeable.** Being grateful requires us to look back into the past, whether times recent or years past, and acknowledge the blessings we have received. Our culture is infatuated with the future, with the result that thanksgiving is sometimes neglected. But to give thanks to God is to look backwards, not forwards (*even our hope of heaven is based on events of the past - w/k*), and to express gratitude for the good things that have come our way.

**Comprehensive.** On the U.S. holiday, many will thank God for the meal. But sometimes we include more in our prayers – and we should because we are so blessed. God is to be thanked for our family, friends, housing, jobs, and countless other ‘minor’ things. Giving thanks to God should be a theme running through our lives – in times good and bad. The Pilgrims lived close enough to the soil to know how dependent they were on God's providence. In bitter winters with scarce food, they learned to thank God for all they had; but they were eager to thank Him during times of abundant blessing, too. And so should we.

- Ken Gay (edited for space)

## ASSEMBLY TIMES

### Sunday

Bible Class 9:30  
Morning Assembly 10:30  
Evening Assembly 5:00

### Wednesday

Evening Bible Class 6:30

## RADIO PROGRAM

### The Bible Speaks



Sunday 9:00-9:30a.m.  
KURM 790AM

## Downtown Church of Christ

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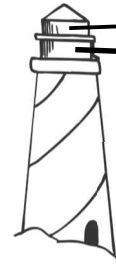
If we pause to think,  
we'll have cause to thank.

## ELDERS:

Otis Hardin  
Perry Johnson  
Ken Parker  
Alan Revier  
GW Walsh

## DEACONS:

TJ Burleson  
Scott Hale  
Jason Hill  
Chris Johnson  
Brock McKeel  
Randy Potter  
Tim Roberts  
Randy Shell



# DOWNTOWN GOSPEL BEACON

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## Give Thanks for All People

*“I exhort first of all that... giving of thanks be made for all people.”*

– 1 Ti 2:1

Now, there’s an unusual request. When we practice ‘thanksgiving’, we tend to be thankful for the obvious things – our food, our families and, if we are Christians, our spiritual blessings. But “for all people”?

Of course, in the context of 1 Ti 2, Paul addresses the role of “kings” and “all that are in authority”. We make prayers on their behalf so that Christians “may lead a quiet and peaceable life”. Clearly, a need exists for Christians to pray for these.

But the command is to give thanks for “all people”. Really? That means giving thanks for the murderous Herods as well as the just Davids – for the bully as well as his victim. How does that even work?

It works because thankfulness is not acceptance. We do not thank God for the sins of others, but we can give thanks for their potential – that no one is beyond the reach of God’s grace (remember Saul of Tarsus?). In fact, praying for our enemies (Mt 5:44-45) demands such an attitude – the very heart of Jesus.

- WKing

## FAMILY NEWS

### PRAYER LIST –

*Preachers we support:* Japan, Philippines, Vietnam, Canada, Mexico, Peru, & U.S.

*Sick:* Fletchers, Swims, JMarshall, RStarr, MiBader, ADosier

*Shut-ins:* Betty Jo Young, Billie Pennington, Shirley Cole, Susan Wiese, V Carter

*Military:* Kyler Sullins, Sean Potter

**DATES FOR 2024** – It’s not too early to mark your calendars: April 19-20 (Singing), July 21-25 (VBS), and August 2-4 (Youth Lectures).

**SENTENCE SERMON** – It is not the happy people who are thankful – it is the thankful people who are happy.