

## Light and Life

## Not Complicated

Every generation of Christians endures a fresh wave of those who try to make the gospel more difficult than it needs to be. Many want to be seen as intellectual – even revolutionary – by coming up with a ‘new’ perspective on the scriptures that faithful Christians from years past have somehow missed. These, “desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm,” are foolish (I Tim. 1:7).

God’s word has never been so difficult that it cannot be understood! He delivered it because He wants us to understand it (Eph. 3:4)! Consider what God said to Israel through Moses: “This commandment which I command you today is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it” (Dt. 30:11-14).

As Paul later explained to a group of pagans in Athens, God is always within reach and wants us to find Him! He designed creation such that people “should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us” (Ac. 17:27).

Our response to the word of God consists of a simple choice: to submit to His authority, or rebel against it. “See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments... But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear... I announce to you today that you shall surely perish” (Dt. 30:15-18).

Obey and live, or rebel and perish? The truth is simple! But the choice to follow it is yours!

- Sam Bunyard

## Another Perspective

## Believing God

What does ‘believing **in** God’ really mean? That God exists only in the totality of Nature, rather than as the Divine Personage (pantheism); or that God exists and can be found through many different paths that are all equally valid (pluralism); or that God exists, but is found through reason and observation of the natural world rather than by revelation (deism)?

All of these have one thing in common: they not only **contradict** the Bible, but they seek to eliminate it as being **authoritative**. These false concepts of God remove the obligations of man to God’s Word. They all contradict what He has revealed in the Bible about Himself, and what He expects of those who ‘believe Him’!

By contrast, what does ‘**believing God**’ mean? Believing God is more than a mental acceptance of His existence. It means: 1) that “we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible” (He 11:3); and 2) that “all Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (2 Ti 3:16-17); and 3) that unless we are willing to live in faith by obeying God, our ‘faith’ is vain. “You believe that God is one. You do well; demons also believe, and shudder. But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?” (Ja 2:19-20).

‘Believing **in** God’ is just an acknowledgment of His existence and requires no action. But ‘believing God’ means to accept all that He reveals about Himself, all that He requires of us, and all that He says in His Word about future reward of the obedient and punishment of the disobedient (2 Co 5:6-19)! Now, do you ‘believe **in** God’ – or do you ‘believe God’?

- Philip C. Strong (edited for space)

## ASSEMBLY TIMES

### Sunday

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

### Wednesday

Evening Bible Class 6:30

## DOWNTOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST

P.O. Box 447  
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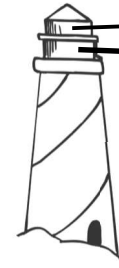
Treasure relationships,  
not possessions.

## ELDERS:

Otis Hardin  
Perry Johnson  
Ken Parker  
Alan Revier  
GW Walsh

## DEACONS:

TJ Burleson  
Scott Hale  
Jason Hill  
Chris Johnson  
Brock McKeel  
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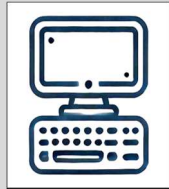


## DOWNTOWN GOSPEL BEACON

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## FAMILY NEWS

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**SOCIAL MEDIA ADS** – If you are on social media, remember to ‘like’ and ‘share’ our online ads. This increases our exposure to the local community!

**SENTENCE SERMON** – People generally find the time to do the things they really want to do.

While this expression conjures up images of the ‘big guy’, may I offer up another consideration?

How about **holiness**? “Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord” (He 12:14). Holiness may sometimes be thought of as an excessive righteousness – that kind of devotion to religion which is only seen in monasteries and convents. But true holiness is not that. It is simply the resolve to no longer live like the world – to not think or talk or behave as they do (2 Co 6:14-18).

And how about **hosanna**? The word comes from the Hebrew *hoshia na*

(Ps 118:25-26), which means, “Save us, please!” As Jesus made His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, it was the cry of those who welcomed Him (Mt 21:9) – and it should be our welcoming cry as well.

And how about **hope**? The “one hope” (Ep 4:4) of the child of God is the hope of eternal life (Ti 1:2). It is “an anchor of the soul” (He 6:19) in the stormy steps of life.

**Holiness, hosanna, and hope.** The next time you hear the ‘big guy’ with his deep-throated laugh, think about these things. It’s way more sobering and spiritually satisfying.

- *WKing*