

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.



John 8:32 and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

January

2

2022

## HOW SHOULD I APPROACH THIS NEW YEAR?

by Jim Stauffer

It is that time when we review the past year. In doing so we find things we accomplished and in which we find contentment. At the same time we see areas we either neglected or in some way failed to achieve what we would desire. People often use the new year to resolve to accomplish certain things they feel needing to be. We want to lose weight, eat right, exercise more, make wise financial decisions, make plans to be more active socially, be a better neighbor, etc. The list is endless and far too often it focuses on things of a temporal nature.

But let us raise the question for ourselves about our spiritual life. Where do we stand? Have we pursued spiritual growth such as Peter mentions in **2 Peter 1:5-11**. These verses picture for us a pathway to our eternal inheritance. The pathway requires discipline. Discipline requires serious thought and planning so that each day we accomplish the necessary items that lead to accomplishing our goal. Yes, indeed, our goal has to have priority if we are to achieve it. As Paul tells Timothy, we must *"Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth."* (**2 Timothy 2:15**) In deciding our priorities for 2022, we must decide what is the most important thing in our lives. I ask you, what is more important than the eternal destination of your soul? As you think about that, ponder the teaching of God through the prophet Ezekiel.

**Consider reading Ezekiel 33.** There is a clear explanation in this chapter of how and why God's judgment is dispensed. He explains to Ezekiel that he has been appointed a watchman. The responsibility of a watchman is to warn people of danger. In this case he is to warn God's people to adhere to the tenets of their covenant with Him. To avoid sin and pursue righteousness.

He makes it abundantly clear that the watchman

who warns the people of sin has fulfilled his responsibility and it behooves the hearer of the warning to heed or he will be judged in his sin. Then he warns the watchman if he fails to warn the people they will just as surely perish, but their blood will be on his hands.

The conclusion is each man is responsible for his own soul. Ezekiel teaches this concept thoroughly in **Chapter 18** as well. God emphasizes this very important point so we cannot with honest hearts fail to understand. We then will be judged on what we ultimately become. We cannot obey God's commands to become His child and then rest on our laurels. The concept of once saved always saved is completely refuted in this chapter and **Chapter 18**. Conversely, a man is not destined to condemnation because he has sinned in the past. This chapter teaches he can change by obeying God, by pursuing righteousness instead of sinful pleasure. If a righteous man becomes a sinner that will be how he is judged. If a sinner becomes righteous in his deeds, that is how he will be judged.

The very interesting part of this communication to Ezekiel is that the common concepts of mankind are untrue, false, and are propagated regularly from pulpits of religious organizations. There is no limitation to what man can do in his quest for God. It matters not if man seeks God in the last years of his life or in the early years of his life (See Jesus' parable on the workers hired each hour - some at the 11th hour). What matters is where man ends his life before God.

This is not to encourage deathbed confessions, this is to explain that God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (**2 Peter 3:9**). And it also teaches us the simple principle that a man of faith is to be faithful unto death, regardless of what occurs in this life that would deter his faithful service to God (**Rev. 2:10; 2 Tim. 2:12; 4:6-8**).

Bottom line. You and I are responsible for our own

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souls. We need to deny ourselves and take up our cross and follow Him (**Mat. 16:24,25**). When we do this, we must be committed, just as we see the commitment in Scripture of those who are described as faithful. Do not believe that somehow your description of faithfulness is what the inheritance rests upon, but rather match your faithfulness to that of those described in Scripture.

## BY WHAT AUTHORITY

*By Randy Harshbarger*

*“On one of the days while He was teaching the people in the temple and preaching the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes with the elders confronted Him, and they spoke, saying to Him, “Tell us by what authority You are doing these things, or who is the one who gave You this authority?” Jesus answered and said to them, “I will also ask you a question, and you tell Me: “Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men?” They reasoned among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will say, ‘Why did you not believe him?’ “But if we say, ‘From men,’ all the people will stone us to death, for they are convinced that John was a prophet.” So they answered that they did not know where it came from. And Jesus said to them, “Nor will I tell you by what authority I do these things.””*

**(Luke 20:1–8)**

Did Jesus have the right to teach the gospel in the Temple? The Jewish guardians of the Temple, had not authorized Jesus to teach; why would He presume to enter the obvious, physical symbol of their spiritual heritage, and then hold sway over those who had come to worship? He mainly conducted far away from Jerusalem; now He finds a pulpit in the inner sanctum of Judaism. Were their questions and intent genuine? No. They were seeking to destroy Jesus (**Luke 19:47**).

*By what authority* is a good question. Anyone teaching false doctrine must be challenged. From the beginning, Jesus worked and taught with authority (**Luke 4:1,14,31**). Now that authority is questioned. Jesus didn't say: You have no right to ask your questions; there was no evasion of the issue of authority. But His unexpected way of answering exposed the hypocrisy of the Jewish leaders. The Jews knew about John the Baptist; they rejected his teaching; they refused to be baptized by John (**Luke 7:29-35**). If John's teaching came from heaven, why would they reject him? They did reject Jesus. We are not surprised.

Consider this excerpt from *Jesus The Master Respondent*, by James D. Bales. “Some critics of the

Bible have complained that Jesus did not deal fairly with his questioners...He changed the subject to John...First he who asks a question asks a favor... He who asks a favor should be willing to do a favor...one is not automatically obligated to answer another person's questions...they (the Jews) had no right to complain... they had started the discussion with a question of their own...they were trying to trap and discredit Him (Jesus)...the answer to your own question may contain the answer to their question...He (the questioner) is more apt to see and accept the answer when he is led to answer it himself...it (Jesus' question) may stimulate the individual to think...The only way out of a genuine dilemma is to give up the error which involved one in the dilemma...Jesus' opponents realized they were in a dilemma...if they answer one way they discredited themselves...if the other way they would be forced to acknowledge the authority of Jesus.”

When face with questions that concern our relationship to Jesus, what do we do? We can evade, posture, seek inconsistencies in others, and get angry; or, we can be honest and yield to heaven's will. Now, answer Jesus' question.

## Methods of Growth

The denominational world uses many methods to bring about growth of a congregation. Here are some such worldly methods:

**“Come as you are” method.** This means that you won't have to give up sin and sinfulness. You can continue in adultery, still drink and swear, and you can keep your own moral standards.

**“Have fun” method.** Youth parties and games comprise a great deal of the total work of the congregation. Gymnasiums, social halls, kitchens and other such facilities are built. Banquet tables, sports equipment and uniforms, etc., are major church expenditures.

**“Believe as you please” method.** This requires no conviction. It allows you to take your choice: Was Jesus God's Son, or just an exceptionally good man? Is baptism immersion, or sprinkling? Is Jesus coming again, or not? Is there really a heaven and hell? Take your choice—believe as you please.

Naturally, by such processes many unlearned people (those who don't know what the Bible actually teaches) and many unstable ones (those who don't care what the Bible teaches) are led into such churches. Rapid growth is seen.

On the other hand, notice some scriptural methods that are designed to make a congregation grow:

**“Practice what you preach” method.** Preach the truth, the whole and unadulterated truth, and then live it out in the lives of the people who make up the congregation (see Rom. 2:21-24).

**“Let your light shine” method.** The power of influence from lives of devoted Christians will attract others. Doing good to all men (Gal. 6:10) and keeping oneself unspotted from the world (Jas. 1:27) makes a Christian useful and fruitful in bringing others to Christ.

**“Be awake” method.** Enthusiasm is contagious. Some people have just enough religion to make them miserable. The real Christian will be zealous and devoted (Rev. 3:19). His life will radiate with love for God and man. His influence will bring others to Christ through the gospel.

*by Leslie Diestelkamp*

## **Prejudiced Against the Bible**

While serving as our ambassador to France, Benjamin Franklin joined a literary society. Such societies were common and numerous in France, but they were filled with infidels. Urged on by his quaint sense of humor, Mr. Franklin joined the most prominent of these societies. It was the custom of this group to have each member write an original story to be read to the society and then have the members criticize the story. Mr. Franklin copied by hand the French translation of the entire book of Ruth from the Bible.

He met with the society at the appointed time and anxiously awaited the time for him to read his story. In warm and sympathetic tones he read this great love story.

For a few minutes there was absolute silence, as the audience sat under the spell of the beautiful love story. Then some member began to applaud. When the chairman of the meeting said that it was the only perfect love story the world had ever heard, the society requested permission to print it.

Mr. Franklin then said: “This story has already been printed and given to the world. You will find it in the Bible: the book you profess to despise, but about whose contents you apparently know so little.”

*by Bob Buchanon; Taken from Beacon Electronic Edition, Colledgevue church of Christ*

## **Fellowship**

**Keith Sharp | Mountain Home, Arkansas, USA**

The New Testament uses the word *“fellowship”* to describe communion with God in Christ (1 John 1:3, 7), communion with saints in Christ (1 John 1:3), communion with the body and blood of Christ in the Lord’s Supper (1 Corinthians 10:16), sharing in suffering for Christ (2 Corinthians 1:6-7), partnership in the work and worship of the Lord in His church (Acts 2:42; 2 Corinthians 8:23), partnership in financing the Lord’s work (Acts 2:42; 1 Timothy 6:18), partnership in the gospel by support of a preacher (Philippians 1:5; 4:15), and distributing to the necessity of the saints (Romans 12:13; 2 Corinthians 8:4; 9:13). Where do the Scriptures use this word to describe or denote a social meal? Are some so carnally minded their mouths water when they think of fellowship in Christ? (cf. Romans 14:17; 8:6; Philippians 3:17-21; Colossians 3:1-4). We must use Bible words in scriptural ways (1 Peter 4:11). Social meals are no more fellowship than sprinkling is baptism. Such *“language of Ashdod”* (Nehemiah 13:23-24) indicates unscriptural, denominational attitudes. To pervert a scriptural word to an unscriptural use to justify one’s practice is to teach and practice error.

***Call me, Jim Stauffer at 913-620-0563,  
Evangelist at the Lenexa church of Christ.***

***We believe in worshiping and serving the  
Lord as He has instructed in His word.***

***Things taught in the Bible that people do not  
believe, and foster false teaching as a result.***

***That Jesus Christ built just one church that of  
which He is the head?:***

***Read Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:4; Eph. 1:22-23.***

***Please call us to study the Bible. It is refreshing.***

As you consider the Bible message, please be reminded of these passages in it.

***“Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth.”  
(John 17:17)***

***“If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments.”  
(John 14:15)***

**Psa. 1:1** Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

## HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study  
Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship  
Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship  
Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

**Visitors welcome**

## OUR ADDRESS IS:

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**Check out the following websites:**

facebook.com/LenexaChurchofChrist  
lenexachurchofchrist.org

**Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer**  
**Elders Ron Peck and Jim Stauffer**  
**Deacons**  
**Bill Miller**  
**Joe Hurd**

### NEWS AND NOTES:

#### THOSE IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

Alma Baumgartner, Jan Patrick,  
Denese Goring, Brooklyn Boyer,  
Tracy Richardson, Tina Brofft, Matt  
Bassford, Cleveland Redding, David  
and Joanne Beckley, Zack Rogers,  
Mark Walker, and Bill and Carol  
Miller.

Bible Classes - Sunday Morning -  
REVELATION - Bill Miller  
Wednesday Evening - GENESIS -  
Jim Stauffer

Sunday Sermon - HAVE WE  
OVERCOME?



## **What Must I Do To Be Saved?**

**Hear** the gospel - Romans 10:17

**Believe** in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

**Repent** of sins - Acts 17:30

**Confess** Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

**Be Baptized** for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

**Be Faithful** unto death - Revelation 2:10