

University Heights Church of Christ

BULLETIN

November 9, 2008

Assembly and Teaching

Whenever the gospel of Jesus Christ first began to be preached after the ascension of Jesus it was preached in the temple at Jerusalem. The disciples continued to assemble there daily and be taught by the apostles until persecution by unbelievers drove all of them but the apostles out of Jerusalem. When the gospel began to be preached outside of Jerusalem it began to be preached in the Jewish synagogues. Those synagogues were usually built, owned and maintained by the local autonomous group of Jews that met in them. In large cities there were often numerous synagogues

Acts 24:12 "And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city:"

James assumed that the Jewish Christians to whom the **Book of James** was addressed met in synagogues. (In **James 2:2** the word in the Greek text is "synagogue".)

It was to the synagogues in Damascus that Saul was headed to look for Christians to persecute when Jesus met him in the road.

Acts 9:2 "And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem."

Synagogues were where Saul said that he found many of the Christians that he persecuted.

Acts 22:19 "And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue those that believed on you:"

Acts 26:11 "And I punished them often in every synagogue, and compelled [them] to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted [them] even to strange cities"

At **Corinth** Paul showed no inclination to stop meeting in the synagogue until some of the Jews who refused to believe the truth caused such turmoil in the synagogue that further teaching there was hindered. At that time the disciples moved to an adjoining building where the work continued.

Acts 18: 6 "And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook [his] raiment, and said to them, Your blood [be] upon your own heads; I [am] clean: from henceforth I will go to the Gentiles. 7 And he departed thence, and entered into a certain [man's] house, named Justus, [one] that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. 8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized."

Unless the house of Justus was exceptionally large it is not likely that it was more than a temporary meeting place for that local church in Corinth because a large number of people were converted in that city.

At **Ephesus** the gospel was cordially received in the synagogue and Paul was asked to remain there preaching but he declined to do that at that time. Aquila and Pricilla remained in Ephesus and there in the synagogue met Apollos, when he came to Ephesus preaching that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ. It appears that the Jews in that synagogue accepted the preaching of the gospel and became Christians because no opposition was raised and when Apollos left Ephesus to go to Corinth "the brethren" wrote letters recommending Apollos to "the disciples" in Corinth. As long as the Jews thought of the gospel of Jesus Christ as an addition to the Law of Moses as had been the baptism of John they had no particular problem obeying it in addition to the Law. Acknowledging that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, being baptized in water for the remission of their sins; eating the Lord's supper and following the other teachings of Jesus was not a problem for Jews other than the Sadducees. The Sadducees did not believe in resurrection or in spirits and because of their false belief understandably were completely opposed to the preaching of the good news about Jesus of Nazareth.

With the exception of the Sadducees the Jews had no reason to reject the gospel of Jesus Christ or to refuse to obey it. Until they knew enough about the message to understand that the crucifixion of Jesus was the end of the old covenant and the beginning of the new there was no compelling reason for them to refuse to obey the gospel. Until the Jews knew enough to understand that the crucifixion of Jesus fulfilled the Law of Moses and took it out of the way, (circumcision, temple sacrifices and everything) there was no reason for them to feel that there was a conflict between obeying the teachings of Jesus and continuing to obey the Law of Moses. The questions about circumcising Gentiles were based on the mistaken belief that being a Christian meant being a **Jewish Christian** and that obeying the teachings of Jesus was something that you did in addition to obeying the Law of Moses.

When Paul went to Ephesus the second time, after Apollos had with the recommendation of the brethren at Ephesus, gone to Corinth, Paul preached the kingdom of God in the synagogue at Ephesus for three months. Preaching the kingdom of God would certainly make the Jews at Ephesus see that the teachings of Jesus were not an "add-on" to the Law of Moses. They would come to understand that the voice of Jesus Christ is now the only voice by which any can enter the kingdom. They would come to understand that both the Old and the New Covenants could not be in effect at the same time. They would come to realize that the Law of Moses having been fulfilled was no longer in effect. Jews who did not desire to believe the truth would have opposed that message no matter how well proven from the Old Testament. Opposition to what Paul was preaching eventually became so intense that the synagogue was no longer a profitable place in which to teach and as a result the disciples moved to another location that would work better.

Acts 19:8 "And he went into the synagogue, and spoke boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. 9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spoke evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. 10 And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks."

It should be noted that Paul, Apollos, Pricilla, Aquila and the other brethren at Ephesus were completely happy to use the synagogue to teach, preach and assemble in. There is no reason to assume that they were not doing the same thing in the synagogue while they assembled there that they later did for two years in the school of Tyrannus. There is also no reason to assume that if there had been no opposition to the preaching in the synagogue that the Christians would have moved out of the synagogue. The text indicates that the Ephesian church did not acquire its alternate meeting place until it became expedient, for the progress of the gospel, to leave the synagogue. The local church at Ephesus does not ever appear to have been without a building in which to assemble. On the other hand the church at Ephesus seems to have been determined to always have a building to assemble in and to use that building to make the word of the Lord Jesus known to everybody possible.

We need to carefully study the text of the New Testament so that we can understand precisely what God has or has not authorized us to do in obeying his revealed will. There are a whole lot of religious ideas floating around that did not come out of the New Testament. It is spiritually fatal to us to allow unscriptural ideas to influence our thinking. The light of the truth of the word of God will remove the darkness and confusion of false ideas. The light of the truth of the word of God is the only thing that is sure to remove the darkness and confusion of false ideas. For that reason God said, "**Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.**" Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4

Remember To Pray For

The Higginbotham family in the sudden death of Amanda's brother Daniel Parker in an automobile accident

Rick Shamas
Bonnie Wells
Sarah Phillips
David Alford
Carol Bach
Marian Lyda
Edith Tirey
Waldine Childress
Jeanette Lindsey
Lucy Hale
Ruben Amador's daughter Pamela Clayton
Newborn baby of Nate & Tricha Shannon
Ella Wells, and her family
Dallis and Alma Isaacs
Lorene Pagan
Freddie Ward
David and Chessie Harwell
Donna Caldwell
Mabel Greene
Tony Tyree
Ruth Brundige
Cindy Miller
Christie Ellis
Shirley Lewis
Brady Gibbons
Gail Hunter
Larry Flannery
Donnie Joseph
Cheryl Spear
Lanny Hiller
Charity and Abdiel Pallafox
Helen Stephens
Chris Handshoe
Jeffrey Howerton
Addison Pervine
Carl Stripplehoff
Tom Kemp
Freda Blakey

We should be sure to pray for the continued good effects from the Bible lessons that brother Frank Walton presented during the gospel meeting. Great things happen when the word of God grows in human hearts.

Acts 19:18 "And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds. 19 Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all [men]: and they counted the price of them, and found [it] fifty thousand [pieces] of silver. 20 So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed."

When it grows mightily and prevails the word of God shines the bright light of truth into the dark corners of human hearts and drives out every false thing bringing repentance and obedience to God's revealed will.

The effects of the growth of God's word in human hearts cannot be hidden. When the word grows the influence shows.

Thoughts

How Jesus behaved toward the written word of God should have great influence on how the followers of Jesus behave toward the written word of God. How Jesus behaved toward the word of God is how we must behave toward the word of God because Jesus came to do the will of God and that is what we must also do if we intend to please God.

In his teaching Jesus treated the written word of God as if, in order to please God, everyone has to understand the written word of God alike and obey it.

Matthew 12: 3 "But he said to them, **Have you not read** what David did"

Matthew 19: 4 "And he answered and said to them, **Have you not read**"

Matthew 21: 16 "And said to him, Hear you what these say? And Jesus said to them, Yes; **have you never read**, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings you have perfected praise?"

Matthew 22: 31 "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, **have you not read** that which was spoken to you by God, saying, 32 **I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."**

Mark 12: 10 "And **have you not read this scripture**: The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner:"

Luke 10: 26 "He said to him, **What is written in the law? How read you?"**

The implication of each of these statements of Jesus is that all who have read the word of God should, because of having read it, be on the same square. It is obvious that they are not but that seems to have more to do with attitude toward God than with reading skills.

In using the word of God Jesus did not accept everyone's interpretation of a passage of scripture but instead compared passage to passage in order to determine the truth.

Matthew 4: 5 "Then the devil took him up into the holy city, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, 6 And said to him, If you are the Son of God, cast yourself down: for **it is written**, He shall give his angels charge concerning you: and in [their] hands they shall bear you up, lest at any time you dash your foot against a stone. 7 Jesus said to him, **It is written again**, You shall not tempt the Lord your God."

Jesus did not use the word of God as he did because using the word of God as he did was one of many equally acceptable ways to use the word of God to please God. Using the word of God the way Jesus did was not Jesus' personal preference among many equally acceptable ways to use the word of God. Jesus used the word of God as he did because that is the only way to use the word of God in order to please God. We know that because the inspired apostles later used the word of God the same way Jesus did. To Jesus and his apostles the word of God is the one standard by which all things are proven right or wrong.

If the way to please God were by ignoring even part of the word of God Jesus most certainly would have demonstrated that in his behavior instead of demonstrating such nit picking insistence that the whole word of God be known, understood and obeyed.

Jesus did not rebuke the Pharisees for being too careful in tithing mint, anise and cummin. Jesus rebuked them for not being equally careful in observing and obeying **the whole word of God**.

Matthew 23:23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier [matters] of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought you to have done, and **not to leave the other undone**."

Notes

Men's business meeting today, 3:00PM
The next informational meeting will be November 23 at 4:30PM

If macroevolution is how it all works which cell is the most evolutionarily advanced cell and why is it considered to be the most advanced?

One cell is part of my body and therefore working in concert with the rest of the cells in my body, which works as a single unit in concert with the entire creation.

Another cell is a complete life form by itself and therefore acts as a single unit in concert with the entire creation.

If macroevolution were so, where would each single cell be in the "evolutionary chain" of progression from most primitive to most evolutionarily advanced?

Which is the most or the least advanced, the single cell life form that lives in concert with the entire universe or the single cell that is one of millions that live in concert with each other in my body, which lives in concert with the entire universe? **All** living cells, whether in my body or not are interacting components of **one single big picture**. They are not racing to somewhere; they are all already exactly where they need to be. **The most reasonable explanation for the existence of the inconceivably complex and integrated heaven and the earth is that the God equal to the task created both.**

Schedule of Services

Sunday Morning

Bible Classes 9:45 AM

Worship Service 10:45 AM

Sunday Evening

Worship Service 6:00 PM

Wednesday Evening

Bible Studies for all ages 7:30 PM

Monthly Song Service

First Friday each month 7:30 PM

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COME STUDY THE BIBLE
AND WORSHIP WITH US

HELP GOD'S WORD GROW
LEARN IT • OBEY IT • TEACH IT