

## Light and Life

## Come to The Light

It doesn't take long in John's gospel to find Jesus butting heads with the religious leaders of His day. Finding merchants and money changers in the Temple, Jesus made a whip to drive them out and overturned their tables of money and wares. This immediately put Jesus at odds with those in authority in the Jewish religion.

A Pharisaical ruler named Nicodemus came to Jesus by cover of night (due to pressure from other Jewish leaders) to find out more about Him. It is interesting that Jesus gave the man who snuck around to meet him in darkness a lesson about coming to the light. Jesus told Nicodemus, "Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (Jn 3:3). Nicodemus must have thought this to be a strange statement. After all, He was a child of Abraham and a ruler of the kingdom of God! Of course, Jesus was talking to him about a spiritual kingdom greater than physical Israel – and there were conditions beyond ancestry required to enter it!

Many people today want to hang their hat on John 3:16 and call it a day – as long as we believe that Jesus is God's Son, we are okay! And no one should judge, because "God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (Jn 3:17). Jesus didn't come "to condemn" because the world was already self-condemned when He got here – that's why we needed saving!

If people continue to read Jesus' speech to Nicodemus, they will find that salvation has further conditions than just belief. "He who does the truth comes to the light..." (Jn 3:21). Just as the Israelites had to come to the bronze serpent for healing thousands of years ago, we must come to the light of Jesus for our salvation today (Jn 3:14)! And if we are going to come to the light, we must do the truth!

*- Sam Bunyard*

## Another Perspective

## The Greatest of These is Love

The greatest of all has always been love, but now it is the only thing left too. Without love, the only sensible option remaining to me is to curl up and die.

In this, of course, I do not outrun my Master. John 13:1 famously records of Him that He loved His disciples to the end. When I say that love is the only motivation left to me, He looks up at me from that table in the upper room and replies, "I get you."

Jesus loved to the end. I have always found that statement comforting, but I think it's supposed to be inspiring too. We know we have loved strongly enough when we have no energy left, and... when we have no time left.

My dear older brothers and sisters, love to the end. You may retire from work when you turn 65, but you don't get to retire from love until they plant you. Sisters, the time to quit teaching children's Bible classes is when you can't anymore, not when you think you have 'aged out'. Brothers, the same goes for all your service to the Lord and others – from helping in the assembly to showing up to rake a shut-in's yard. When you are so worn down that all you can do is pray for others, do that. Younger brethren, do not be deceived. The complete range of earthly delights is open to you, but it is just as true for you as it is for me that only love matters. The best way to prepare to love till the end is to start loving now. Choose the meaningful over the merely enjoyable.

Love abides. It abides even when your body is a wreck, you almost literally can't do anything, and breathing is a weariness. When your enemies nail you to a cross and laugh it up as they wait for you to die in misery and shame, love still abides. Love is as humble as the dust yet as indestructible and magnificent as the throne of God. If you choose that which abides, you will never be without it.

*- Matthew W. Bassford (ALS patient, 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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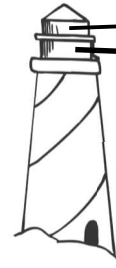
Never miss an  
opportunity to keep  
your mouth shut.

## ELDERS:

Otis Hardin  
Perry Johnson  
Ken Parker  
Alan Revier  
GW Walsh

## DEACONS:

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



# DOWNTOWN GOSPEL BEACON

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ROGERS, ARKANSAS

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## FAMILY NEWS

### PRAYER LIST –

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

*Sick:* Fletchers, Swims, J Marshall, T Deen, R Starr

*Shut-ins:* Betty Jo Young, Billie Pennington, Shirley Cole, Mary Lou Lewis, V Carter

*Military:* Kyler Sullins, Sean Potter

**WELCOME!** – We welcome the Walls family (Adam & Corinne, with kids, Everly & Brody). We also welcome the Brownfield family (Scott & Ashley, with daughter, Aria). Let's make these new families at home at Downtown!

**SENTENCE SERMON** – Never borrow sorrow from tomorrow.

## Fallen, Fallen is Babylon!

“The angel called out with a mighty voice, ‘Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!’... Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, ‘Come out of her, my people...’” (Re 18:1-4).

Regardless of your interpretation of what the city of ‘Babylon’ represents in the book of Revelation (Rome, Jerusalem, United States, etc.), it clearly describes a place given to the pleasures of life. It is characterized by “sexual immorality,” “power,” and “luxurious living” (vs 3). Like Paul’s “thorn in the flesh”, perhaps the exact reference is blurred so that people of all times and places can read it and make application to their own time and place.

And without a doubt, Christians in modern America should be able to read the writing on the wall.

It is not necessary to document the spiritual corruption that permeates our society. Sexual immorality? Check. Power? Check. Luxurious living? Check. And even that does not begin to describe our condition.

The inspired warning is to “come out of her, my people”. This is not a call to monastic living, but a call to holiness – a plea for God’s people to focus on things eternal. Because, as the Bassford article (p 3) states, we should “choose that which abides.” And that ain’t Babylon. - *WKing*