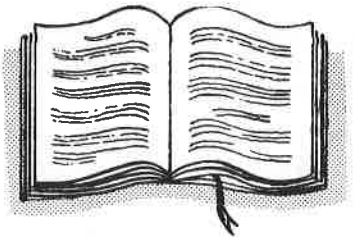
The Christian Courier



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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

This is a trial segment of the Chrisitian Courier. I have wanted to start a question and answer part to the Courier, and many have suggested many ways to go about it. So, lets try it this way first.

Rules: Send in any BIBLE question or questions you wish. These questtions will be open to any member of the church of Christ to send in answers in no more than, say 400 words. (one page). Lets try this and see how it goes. I will return any question or answer that is not signed. No anonymous correspondence, please. This is designed to help us understand some of the things in the Bible that is not quite clear to us. So, please stick to the point and use only Biblical references. No commentaries will be used.

I would like to offer the first question. Being that we are close to April, and what is commonly called "Easter". I'll ask this question: "Are christians supposed to celebrate "Easter"?

If we keep the questions and answers going, I know we will learn more obout the word of God, because there are some very qualified people out there that can give us excelent Biblical answers.

If there is another way of having this kind of project, please feel free to send in your ideas on the subject. The more we work together, the more we can learn.

Editor

STIRING UP OUR MINDS

[Luke 14:5] ....Jesus says; "Which of you shall have an ass or on ox fallen into a pit and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath day?" An employer once used this scirpture to try to tell his employee that it was alright for mim to work on the Lord's Day. The employee replied: "Yes, but if my ass fell into the same pit every Lord's Day, I would either sell the ass or fill in the pit. How many times do we try to use the scriptures to justify what we want to do and totaly disregard what the Lord wants us to do? So often, men "wrest the scriptures to their own destruction". [11 Peter 3:16] These people Peter tells us, are unstable and unlearned. This is why it is so important to "study to show ourselves approved of God..." [11 Tim 2:15]

More often than not (it seems) men study for the purpose of justifying themselves in their own eyes or the eyes of others instead of considering how it appears in God's eyes.....Les us stir up our pure minds.....

With Christian Love

Howard McCay
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THE JUSTICE OF GOD'S WAYS

[Ezek 33:11] .... "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel." Here we see the watchman on the wall. [Ezek 33:2] And he is instructed to warn the people when he sees the sword come upon the land. In the 7th verse we see that this son of man was made a watchman to the house of Israel; "...therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me." (Well, what was his warning?) Verse 8...."When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou has delivered thy soul." We see the word 'wicked' and also 'iniquity' used here and both mean the same thing. Seems as though people hear the word 'wicked' used and say that is not me; I am not wicked. Then hear the word 'iniquity' and say, well maybe I might not be quilty, for I know I don't commit iniquity: but do we really know what it is? [Isa 59:2] "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." Iniquity is pride, fulness of bread, abundance of idleness and will not feed the poor of God's people. This was the iniquity of Sodom, so we see that any of this can be wickedness; But says one; "I have my pride." Well, does not Paul say; "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" [Rom 6:16] Does not [Ezek 33:20] say; "Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. O ye house of Israel, I will judge you every one after his ways." Does not Paul in; [Rom 14:10] "...for all shall stand before the judgement seat of Christ." [verse 12] "So then every one of us shall give an account of himself to God." [Ezek 33:31-32] "And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but with their heart goeth after their couvetousnes. And lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not. And when this cometh to pass (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them." (Showing that this Prophesy is for a future time.) Then in Chapter 34: 1-23, he continues to rebuke the shepherds of his flock and tells them what

they are doing to this flock and he would set up one shepherd over them even his servant, David, which was Christ, and would make a covenant of peace with them and would feed them. This also comes to pass in Christ. [Jer 31:31] and [Heb 8:7-10].

We see people today not willing to obey, but turn away their ears from hearing the Word of God. And [Ezek 33:13] where they trust to their own righteousness and commit iniquity as also did the fathers before us, for he is not a Jew which is one outward, neither is circumcision which is outward in the flesh but he is a Jew which is one inwardly and circumcision is that of the heart in the Spirit and not the letter whose praise is not of men but of God. [Rom 2:28-19]

Brethren, just because we read a prophesy back in the Old Testament, does not mean that it does not apply to us. Read [Ez 33:13-16] and see if this does not also apply to this day and age. Also read [Rom 15:3-4] and see and ask ourselves. What Scripturs? It said those that were written afore time. Also read [2 Tim 3:16] Itsaid All Scripture!

Yours for the love of Christ and his truth.

Lloyd Treat - 13 N. Bock - Broken Bow, Ok. 74728

"FORSAKE"

This word is used several ways in the New Testament. Sometimes it is translated "leave" and carries a meaning of to leave behind (in a good sense) as in [Eph 5:31]. Leaving father and mother carries no sense of turning from or abandoning, merely a leaving behind, and its meaning is obvious. Another usage is displayed in [Heb 10:25]. Usually translated "forsake", the meaning is entirely different. Both carry the idea of "leaving behind" but there the similarity ends. Strong defines "egkataleipo" (forsake) "...to leave behind in some place, ie (in a good sense) let remain over, or (in a bad sense) to desert. Vine defines it as follows: "....signifies (a) to leave, to leave behind, (b) remaining, reserve, (c) to forsake, in the sense of abandoning." Thayer defines the same word as, "..to leave behind; (a) To depart from, leave, as a person or thing; (b) To bid one to remain, in a place. (c) To forsake, leave to one's self a person or thing, by ceasing to care for it, to abandon, leave in a lurch."

It is in the last sense, used by Paul [Heb 10:25]. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together.." What is Paul here saying? Is it true that if, for any reason, we are not in attendance at the "assembling" that we are "forsaking" it? Just what does it mean?

Being apart from someone does not necessarily mean that one has abandoned them. This meaning just is not found in the useage noted above. Note [Matt 26:44]. "And he left them, and went away again.." This is speaking of Jesus and his disciples. Jesus left them, (seperated himself from them) but he had not abandoned them. Thus he had not "forsaken" them in the sense of [Heb 10:25]. He had not "left them in the lurch" or "left them to themselves" for it is obvious that He still "cared for them." It does not appear that if for reason of sickness, or other compelling reasons one is not in the assembly, he has "forsaken" it. Make no mistake about it, I speak not of trivialities. It is not compelling to go fishing or hunting when one should be in the assembly. To follow one's desires and show a preference for one's pleasures rather than being in the assembly is not compelling. One can memtion several examples. Remaining home when there is "company coming", going out of town to persue our pleasures where there is no possibility to attend the assembly. These are not compelling reasons. To have worship of one's own convenience is not a compelling reason. There is a popular theory quite common amongst some christians today that if we only have two or three together to worship, it is acceptable. By this I mean if there is an "assembly" within reasonable distance where one can attend. it is quite alright to stay home and have "services" by one's self with one or two together. Quite obviously, this does not qualify as "assembling of yourselves together" for under these circumstances there are many in the assembly with which one does not assemble. Certainly it is not a compelling reason to absent oneself from the assembly because of a desire to pursue one's personal pleasures, thus doing irreparable harm to the congregation. I am remided of a member several years ago who had an entertainment he wished to attend which took place when services were being conducted. Not wishing to miss the entertainment, the solution was simple; take someone along and have their own "mini" assembly.

One is compelled to ask, "If this is a scriptural practice, why are we instructed to assemble and not to "forsake" the practice? Surely we can see that if this practice were followed, it would eventually result in the fragmentation and eventual destruction of each congregation. This practice would completely contradict the instructions in [1 Cor 11:33] "...my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for the other." Note: When we eat the Lord's Supper (to eat) we are to "come together" and "tarry" (wait for) one another. Sad to say, many times we "tarry" for brothers and sisters who simply have no intention to "come together" with the assembly. Again, one is compelled to ask; "Is this putting Christ first?" [Matt 6:33] "Seek ye <u>first</u> the kingdom of God and his righteousness,..." Where

are our priorities? It is not only a matter of not caring for the assembling of ourselves together and thus "forsaking" it, but of relegating it to a position of secondary importance.

Think of it brethren. How much importance do we put on being obedient to God's Word? Do we "assemble" occasionally as we feel like doing, and refrain as the mood strikes us? This is "forsaking" the assembly because we no longer "care" for it, or because we CARE FOR SOMETHING ELSE MORE, which is basically the same.

What position does Christ and his work occupy in our lives? [Col 1:17] "..he is BEFORE ALL THINGS, and by him all things consist." And verse 18; "He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that IN ALL THINGS he might have the PREEMNINANCE." And verse 19; "It pleased the Father that in him should ALL FULLNESS dwell." When we absent ourselves from the assembly of the church, we demonstrate our lack of respect for the primacy of Christ and the importance of keeping his Word.

Let each one of us, from this day forward, resolve that we will put Christ and his work FIRST in our lives. When we are tempted to absent ourselves from the assembly for any reason not imperitive, (each knows in his or her own mind what is truly compelling; sickness, etc...and what is trivial: merely excuse making) let us remember that we are not to "forsake" our "assembling" with other christians. We do this because God COMMANDS us to do it, and also because we truly care for it and wish to put Christ preeminent in our hearts.

Written in love of the Saviour and all the brethren.
J.D. Logan - 3708 Mission Rd. - Stockton, Ca. 95204

PROVERBS 25:25
"AS COLD WATERS TO A THIRSTY SOUL, SO IS GOOD NEWS FROM A FAR COUNTRY"

SOUTH SAN GABRIEL

Greetings to our Brethren and Sisters in Christ:

The congregation of the South San Gabriel Church of Christ had to disband as the building where we met for many years, has been sold, and is to be made into a residence and more homes built on the property. Some of our group are meeting at the La Habra church of Christ. Brother Marion Serrano gives us excelent Gospel sermons.

Our long time friend and faithful church member, Laura Esther Parker passed away Jan. 17th., 1988. She is survived by her son Russel Parker and his family. Enclosed is a check to help out with the printing of the Courier.

In Christian love
Randolph and Olive Kellems

TEMPLE GEORGIA

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

We enjoy recieving the Courier and getting news from brothers and sisters in other congregations. When we travel over the country it helps us locate congregations to worship with. We enclose a donation to help with the expenses of printing, etc....

In Christian love for all
the brotherhood.
Robert N. Bearden

LOCO, OKLAHOMA

Dear Brethren:

It has been some time since anyone has reported from the Loco, Oklahoma congregation. This time of year seems to bring on a lot of colds and flu and several here have had, or still have, one or the other. All in all, we have been blessed with good health. No one has had to miss church services because of sickness yet. Sister Oma Tayor had eye surgery for glucoma on March 8th, but is doing well. Our little congregation has grow some. Since Sister Karen McCollough (formerly Taylor) from the Lugert, Oklahoma congregation, married, she and her husband, Thomas, have been meeting with us regularly. We are really glad to have them. One or two more makes the building a little fuller.

We have finally set our meeting dates. Brother Al Way of Bellflower, California will be our speaker this year. The meeting will run from July 24th to 31st. As always, we are looking forward to hearing him and being with him and his family. To those that can come, we have plenty of places for you to stay.

Now for some more great news. Last Sunday, March 6th, after a very good lesson from Brother Howard Taylor, Brother Mark Taylor, from Lugert congregation and his fiancee, Vicky Jump, came forward. Mark asked for the prayers of the church and Vicky asked to become a child of God. It is very uplifting to see our young trying to do their very best to live a good christian life and to have new ones in Christ. May we all be able to help this young couple and encourage them to always grow in the knowledege of our Lord and Saviour.

For the Loco congregation,
Audley Barnes

KENTON, OKLAHOMA

Dear Brothes and Sisters in Christ:

Since I haven't read about Brother Clyde L. Couchman's death in the Christian Courier, I thought I'd give what information I have.

CLYDE L. COUCHMAN

Born Dec. 31, 1904, Eureka, Kansas.
Died Nov. 1, 1987, Trinidad, Colorado.
Buried, Kim Cemetery, Kim Colorado

Sister Carmen Coughman resides at Trinidad, Colorado, 1505 East Main St. #25. 91082. While Brother Clyde was alive he and Sister Carman worshiped in their home. They have a son, Lynell who lives in Trinidad. I don't know if Sister Couchman revceives the Courier, if she doesn't, you might consider putting her on the mailing list.

We are all well here, at this writing. There has been a lot of flu this winter. Sister Millye Francis has been able to come most every Lord's Day. I'm sure the 90 mile round trip is hard on her but she still comes when she is able.

In Christian love, Billy L. Richardson.
For the Church at Furnish Canyon, Kenton, Oklahoma 73946

GOSPEL MEETINGS

Goshen, Ark, June 12 - 19, Mark Perigen: Baron/Stilwell, Ok. June 26 - July 3, Bill McCay Jr.: Waterford, Ca. June 19 - 26, Roger Walkingstick: Cedaredge, Co. July 3 - 10, CAMP: Glenwood, July 24 - 31, J.D.Johnson: Loco, Ok. July 24 - 31, Al Way: Yakima, Wa. July 31 - Aug 7, Jim Brown/Sammy Bowen: Yuma, Az. Oct, 23 - 30, Terry Warford: Lorenzo, Tx. Dec 25 - Jan 1, 1989, Ellis Forsman: (sorry for the tight spacing, but I needed the space this issue only.)

BAPTISMS

Sister Vicky Jump March 6, 1988 Loco, Oklahoma

Also, Brother Mark Taylor came forward for the prayers of the church. Are prayers are with you, Brother Mark and Sister Vicky.

DEATHS

Brother Clyde L. Couchman	Nov 1, 1988	Trinidad, Co.
Sister Laura Esther Parker	Jan 17, 1988	South San Gabriel

There are many reported that are ill and have had operations, let us all remember them, especially, in our prayers. Let us pray that they will be healed and can again be able to come to worship.

I would like to request the prayers of everyone, for my brother, who has been out of the church for some time, and who has had a stoke. It is a mild one, and he is ok, but he needs to repent and turn to the Lord again. He is Bill Bryant of Modesto, Ca. Editor