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10:17). Man must believe that Jesus is the Son of God (Jn. 8:24). It is then required that men repent of their sins (Lk. 13:3). They must also confess their faith in Christ (Matt. 10:32). Finally, God requires that a man be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). We can read about men following God's plan for salvation in places like Acts 2:36-38, 16:30-34, 22:16, etc. When one follows God's plan of salvation, then God will add him to His church (Acts 2:47)! The denominational world does not teach this plan. Most teach that "faith only" saves men. Yet, the only time the Bible talks about "faith only," God says it DOES NOT SAVE (Jas. 2:24)! Others will say that a little baby needs to be saved, and so they will sprinkle water on the baby, and say that he/she must believe later and will be "confirmed" at a later time! Is this what the Bible teaches? No!

The Lord's Church Worships As God Directs. Denominations Worship As They Please.

God wants people to worship Him in Spirit and in Truth (Jn. 4:24). He expects His people to worship Him in song,

in doctrine (teaching His word), giving as we have been prospered, partaking of the Lord's Supper, and prayer (Acts 2:42, 20:7; Eph. 5:19; I Cor. 16:1-2). All of this is to be done every first day of the week! Most every denomination tries to worship God with the mechanical instrument. They will take the Lord's Supper at their convenience. Most do not teach the Bible, but their creeds and/or other opinions. They demand people give to them at times other than the first day of the week, and use bingos, raffles, car washes, etc. as ways to make money as well. Does this sound like they are worshipping as God directs?

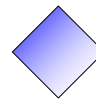
Conclusion

There are other differences between the Lord's church and denominations that we could study. But, the things mentioned above ought to encourage all of us to study and learn whether or not the church to which we belong is the Lord's church or not. Remember, we need to "receive the word with all readiness of mind and search the Scriptures daily..." (Acts 17:11). Are you a member of the Lord's church?? (Romans 16:16) Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com ♦

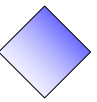
"Reasons Why I Don't Wash"

(The following are listed to mock excuses for not attending services)

1. My parents always made me wash as a child.
2. People who wash are hypocrites; they think they are cleaner than other people.
3. There are so many different kinds of soap; I could never decide which one was right.
4. I used to wash, but it got so boring, I stopped.
5. I still wash on special occasions, like Christmas and Easter.
6. None of my friends wash.
7. I'm still young - when I get older and need it more, I might start washing.
8. People who make soap are only interested in your money.
9. I'm so busy; I just can't find time to wash.



The Voice of Truth



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"Law of Grace"
By Jimmy Pettigrew

Paul said, "For by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: It is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9). Grace is usually defined as "unmerited favor." God didn't owe it to us. Out of love he extended grace. The grace of God is truly one of the main topics of the entire Bible. No one could say, "we could have just as easily have been saved without grace." We depend on God to save us. God did this through His grace.

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and Godly, in this present world" (Tit. 2:11-12). The relationship between law and grace is of the major theme of Paul's writings. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). "But not as the offense, so also is the free gift. For if through the offense of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offenses unto justification. For if by one mans' offense death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:15-17). We should never be guilty of minimizing the importance of grace in our salvation. Without Gods' grace we could not be saved! His grace we are shown in the greatest gift: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jno. 3:16).

As the song "Amazing Grace" goes; God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8). Grace provided for our pardon while we were yet sinners. But our gift of pardon is conditional. How about when God offered Abraham land,

"For by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: It is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast."

Ephesians 2:8-9 (King James Version)

but to receive it he was to leave his country. By faith Abraham obeyed. How do we receive Gods amazing grace in the forgiveness of our sins? Jesus said that when men hear the gospel of God's grace, they must believe it and be baptized in order to be saved by Gods Grace. (Mk. 16:15-16). Grace throws a rope to man drowning in sin. Man must believe and obey in order to be saved by grace. He does not deserve that grace and can never earn it.

The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ, (Jno. 1:17). God supplied mans' greatest need when He sent His Son to die for man. Without this, we would be utterly hopeless. He could provide no means of forgiveness of sins. God's grace is seen in the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ. Grace comes to all.

The grace of God is what we all need, and can only be obtained through Christ, through faith in Him. Paul said, "But by the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Cor. 15:10). God's grace made Paul what he was. Grace is God's part in our salvation, Grace is that which God gives, and which man cannot do for himself. "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you" (1 Pet. 5:10). Faith is man's part in his salvation, and is something man can do for himself, and God does not force upon man. God's grace is from above, and descends from Him.

It is by the death, burial and resurrection that God

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About the Hillcrest church of Christ

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Schedule of Assembly

Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

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reached down to man: this is Grace. Grace is shown most clearly by the Son of God. *"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends"* (**Jno. 15:13**). *"Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor"* (**Eph. 5:2**). We have done nothing to earn this. Salvation is the free gift of God; but it takes two, "Grace and Faith".

God wants all men to hear of His amazing grace. It is broad enough to take in everyone, if only men will receive

Christmas Lies By Jonathan L. Perz

Is it not written within the pages of the sacred text, *"all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death"* (**Rev. 21:8**)? Knowing this, I stand amazed that Christmas, a holiday traditionally based on Christ's birthday, is actually based upon and has become the catalyst for a plethora of diverse lies. These lies all begin with the simple idea that "Jesus is the reason for the season."

For some, it would be unthinkable to imagine the fact that the Bible does not even mention the holiday of Christmas, because Christ has been associated with Christmas for so long. Yet, the Bible makes no mention of the holiday. Not once! First century Christians never celebrated Christ's birth as an annual holiday.

Rather, they celebrated His death, burial and resurrection by partaking the Lord's Supper on each first day of the week (**Acts 20:7**; **1 Cor. 11:17ff**). Thus, Jesus is not the reason for a season of activity as is commonly proclaimed. Would it not be far more accurate to say Jesus is the reason we can have life? Should not Jesus be celebrated daily, not annually?

Furthermore, many actually believe that Christ's birthday fell on December 25th, the day chosen for observing Christmas. However, this little detail cannot be proven from scriptures or from history. As a matter of fact it would seem, based upon the scriptures, that Christ was born during a warmer time of year and not winter as is traditionally accepted. The shepherds who heard the angels' proclamation would not have been staying in the fields during winter nights, rather they would have had their flocks in the folds (cf. **Luke 2:8ff**). Thus the very day chosen for the holiday is merely a tradition of men—it is not based upon a

it. *"The Lord is patient, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance"* (**2 Pet. 3:9**). During the time of Gods patience, we have the wonderful privilege of telling men about His Grace. We must show people that they need God, this mercy, gift of love, the conditions for receiving it, the joy of sharing Gods grace. For God who is rich in mercy for His great love where with He loved us, even when we were dead in sins hath quickened us together in Christ, by Grace we are saved. ♦

commandment or upon inspiration from God (cf. **Matt. 15:9**).

Additionally, children are often in holiday pageants that depict three wise men visiting Jesus at His birthing place in the manger. Herein exists two more lies. First, the Bible does not say that there were three wise men. It simply says that there were three kinds of gifts (cf. **Matt. 2:1-12**). There could have been any number of wise men, three is merely assumed. Second, the Bible does not say they visited Jesus at the manger where He was born. When the wise men arrived, Matthew tells us they had come into the "house" (**Matt. 2:11**). The star had been in the sky for some time already (vs. **2, 7**) and was not necessarily over the manger, but *"stood over where the young Child was"* (**v. 9**). Thus, children are being taught false details about Christ's birth and many adults have accepted these things as truth, when they are in fact lies.

Besides these very serious spiritual issues, by which the word of God is being perverted, there are many lies associated with the secular aspect of Christmas. For example, Santa Claus and all the fantastic stories about him are being taught to children as fact. Sure, children eventually grow out these beliefs. Nevertheless, is it acceptable for adults, some of whom are Christians, to tell lies to their children? Surely not. You see, the rationalization is that it is harmless to let children believe in Santa Claus. Is it really harmless to teach your children to tell a little lie? Is it harmless to let them believe something that is not the truth? Is this merely pretending? Some rationalize that the story of Santa Claus is a necessary part of childhood or that a child's Christmas would be diminished by not believing in Santa Claus. My children have always known the

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truth about Santa, as well as every other aspect of the holiday, and it has not diminished their holiday one bit. Don't let movies like Miracle On 34th Street convince you it is acceptable to lie to your children. Remember the Lord's promise for *"all liars"* (**Rev. 21:8**).

Another group of lies surrounding the holidays is often associated with gift giving. People lie when they say they like a gift when they do not. If one does not want to hurt another's feelings, would it not be more appropriate to simply say "thank you," or to just express appreciation? Such is not a lie. In addition, parents will lie to their children about the source of a gift—in an attempt to keep the Santa story in circulation. It is a lie. Some folks lie about why they were not able to obtain an important gift (e.g., the store sold out, etc.). Such is shameful. Some lie about

"Comparing The Lord's Church To Denominations" By Jarrod Jacobs

Many today do not realize that there are fundamental differences between the Lord's church and the denominations of this world. Some believe there is really no comparison at all; and that one church is as good as another. Is this true? Let us think about the differences between the Lord's church and the denominations of this world.

The Lord's Church Was Built By Him. Denominations Were Established By Men.

The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ said He would build His church (**Matt. 16:18**). He promised to build only one church, and He died for only one church (**Eph. 5:23-25**). He is the foundation of His church (**1 Cor. 3:11**). He is the chief cornerstone of His church (**1 Pet. 2:6-7**). Knowing that two or more houses cannot be built upon the same foundation, it tells us that the denominations today are built upon another foundation, but not Christ!

The Lord's Church Follows His Word. Denominations Follow Creed Books And Manuals.

The Lord's church follows only what the Bible says. Peter taught: *"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God"* (**1 Pet. 4:11**). Paul taught that whatever we do or say must have sanction from Heaven (**Col. 3:17**)! The preaching of Christ and the apostles, as well as the early Christians rings with Scripture and appealing to God's authority for all they did. Do the many modern denominations believe this? No, for we know that the Methodists

the prices of gifts as well. Another shame. Why does such a seemingly harmless holiday and custom have to become the catalyst for so many bold-faced lies?

Must Christians manifest an Ebenezer Scrooge attitude toward the secular holiday? Is the holiday inherently wrong? Some may ask, is it unscriptural to celebrate the day as a secular holiday? There is authority to celebrate days (**Rom. 14:5-6**). Is it unscriptural to celebrate it as Jesus' birthday (a spiritual holiday)? Yes—because we lack authority for the practice (**Col. 3:17**) and we do not abide in the doctrine of Christ by so doing (**2 John 9**). Regarding lies, Christians must always be careful to speak only the truth—whether it is about what the Bible teaches, or rather, does not teach about Christmas, or about the secular aspects of Christmas. Lies will condemn us (**Rev. 21:8**), but the truth saves (**John 8:31-32**).

Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com ♦

have their "Discipline," Catholics have their "Catechism," Baptists have their creed books, Mormons also have their own creed book in the form of a pseudo-Bible; as do the Jehovah's Witnesses. Can one say he is following the Bible when he relies on creed books for his teachings and beliefs?

The Lord's Church Has No Earthly Headquarters. But Denominations Have Them.

We know that the headquarters for anything will be where the head resides. For example, this country's headquarters is in Washington D.C. Why? Because that is where the President resides! The Lord's church has a head as well – Christ (**Col. 1:18**; **Eph. 1:22-23**)! Where is Christ? He resides in Heaven (**Acts 1:9-11, 7:55-56**, etc.). Therefore, the "headquarters" for the Lord's church is in Heaven, and not on the earth! Jesus also has all authority in Heaven and earth (**Matt. 28:18**). If Christ has *"all"* the authority, how much does that leave for you? Me? Now, is your church's headquarters in Heaven or on earth? Is it in Rome? Is it in Salt Lake City? Is it in Nashville? Philadelphia? New York? Etc....

The Lord's Church Follows God's Plan For Salvation. Denominations Do Not.

God's plan for the salvation of men is clear. He expects men to hear the gospel, which produces faith (**Rom.**

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