

As Good a Time as Any!
By Jonathan L. Perz

The phrase almost seems passé. In many ways it seems careless and flippant, rather than careful and planned. In some ways, it is almost too casual a phrase for what I am about to suggest. Nevertheless, with the New Year just days away, is it not *as good a time as any* to evaluate the condition of your soul and then do something about it?

It is high time many sleepwalking Christians awake from their lethargic slumber and get about the Lord's business! *"And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed"* (Rom. 13:11). Has the spiritual funk you are in rendered you fruitless in things eternally important (Prov. 6:4-11)? Are you leading souls to the Savior (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16)? Are you maintaining and abounding in good works (1 Cor. 15:58; Tit. 3:14)? Are you growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:18)? Perhaps it is *as good a time as any* for you to get to back to work!

There are many who have known for a long time what they must do to begin their walk with Christ. They have sipped from the well of salvation—God's word. They know what it is the Lord wants of them. They know what it is they need from the Lord. Yet, for one relatively ridiculous reason or another, they choose not to drink deeply and demonstrate their faith in God by obedience to His word (Rom. 10:17; 6:17; 2:8; 2 Thess. 1:8). *"Therefore, lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls"* (Jas. 1:21). Perhaps it is *as good a time as any* to do more than just hear the word, but to act on it (Jas. 1:22-25; 2:14-26)!

One thing is certain, God's longsuffering will not endure forever (2 Pet. 2:9ff). Indeed, now is *as good a time as any* to avail yourself of His grace and mercy. *Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com* ♦

THINK ABOUT IT!

When a farmer stops plowing his land, stops planting seed, and stops harvesting his crops, he has stopped doing those things that identify him as being a farmer. When a Christian stops attending worship services regularly, stops studying, stops giving as he has been prospered, and has stopped working for the Lord, he has stopped being a Christian because he has stopped doing those things that identify him as a Christian. *"By their fruits ye shall know them,"* (Matthew 7:20). ♦

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

- Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3
- Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24
- Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30
- Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21
- Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27
- Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17

About the Hillcrest church of Christ

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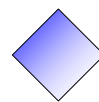


Schedule of Assembly

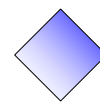
Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

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

www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com



The Voice of Truth



February 5, 2012

Shall Only Those in the Church of Christ Be in Heaven?

By Jimmy Pettigrew

This is a question that is asked of the members of the church of Christ from time to time. I feel the best way in answering this question is with some questions. Jesus did this often when He was confronted with scribes and elders. Notice one example in Mark 11:27-33: *"And they come again to Jerusalem; and as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders; and they said unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? or who gave thee this authority to do these things? And Jesus said unto them, I will ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or from men? answer me. And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; He will say, Why then did ye not believe him? But should we say, From men — they feared the people: for all verily held John to be a prophet. And they answered Jesus and say, We know not. And Jesus saith unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things."* So, let us use the same tactic that Christ used in answering this question with some questions.

Do you believe there is one God? Where did you get your answer? There is not but one place that anyone can go to answer this question: **THE BIBLE!** Notice these passages: *"The Mighty One, God, Jehovah, the Mighty One, God, Jehovah, he knoweth; and Israel he shall know: if it be in rebellion, or if in trespass against Jehovah (save thou us not this day,)"*; *"The Mighty One, God, Jehovah, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof"*; *"Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, profaning the covenant of our fathers?"*; *"Yet to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him"*; *"For there is one God, one mediator also between God and men, (himself) man, Christ Jesus"*; *"One God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and*

in all" (Joshua 22:22; Psalms 50:1; Malachi 2:10; I Corinthians 8:6; I Timothy 2:5; Ephesians 4:6). After analyzing these passages there is only **ONE ANSWER**. Yes, there is one God, the Father. Now, tell me how did we achieve this answer? It is clear that the answer came from God's word, the Bible. Why would you teach that there is one God? You would respond, "Because the Bible says so." Right! Let look at some more questions.

Is there one Spirit? Yes, there is one Spirit. How did you arrive at that conclusion? From the Bible, (Ephesians 4:4; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14). Why would you teach that there is one Spirit? You would respond, "Because the Bible says so." Right!

Is there one faith? Yes, there is one faith. How did you arrive at that conclusion? From the Bible, (Ephesians 4:5; Jude 3; Galatians 1:6-9). Why would you teach that there is one faith? You would respond, "Because the Bible says so." Right!

Is there one Lord? Yes, there is one Lord. How did you arrive at that conclusion? From the Bible, (Ephesians 4:5; Matthew 28:18-20; Matthew 7:21; Luke 6:46; Acts 2:36; Romans 10:12; Colossians 3:17). Why would you teach that there is one Lord? You would respond, "Because the Bible says so." Right!

Is there one body? Yes, there is one body. How did you arrive at that conclusion? From the Bible, (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4; 5:23; Colossians 1:18, 24). How many bodies are mentioned in these passages? **ONE**. Since the body is the church and there is only one body, how many churches are there? **ONE**. Once again how did you arrive at that conclusion? From the scriptures.

Is there only one way to be saved? Yes, there is only one way to be saved. How did you arrive at that conclusion? From the Bible, (John 14:6; 6:44-45; Acts 4:12).

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Why would you teach that there is only one way of salvation? You would respond, "Because the Bible says so." Right! The Bible teaches that there is only one way of salvation. You might ask, "What is this one way of salvation?" Well, where will we find the answer to this question? Again, from God's word. What then does the word of God say about what one must do to be saved?

- a. One must hear God's word (**Romans 10:17; Acts 2:37**).
- b. One must believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God (**John 8:24; Mark 16:16**).
- c. One must repent of his/her sins (**Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38**).
- d. One must confess that Jesus is the Christ (**Acts 8:37; Romans 10:10**).
- e. One must be baptized (**Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21**).

Now, if you have not done the things mentioned above for salvation, are you saved? **NO!** Why? You would respond because the Bible says you must do the things mentioned above to be saved. Right!

Will only the saved be in heaven? Yes, only does who are obedient to the will of Christ will be saved. How did you arrive at that conclusion? From the scriptures, (**Hebrews 5:8-9; Matthew 7:21-23; Luke 6:46**).

Those who are in Christ, will they be in heaven? Yes, only those in Christ will be in heaven. How did you arrive to

that conclusion? From the Bible (**Romans 8:1; 1 John 5:11; Revelation 14:13**). The Bible teaches one must be in Christ where salvation is found (**Acts 4:12; 2 Timothy 2:10**).

How does one get into Christ? By being baptized into Christ. How did you arrive to that conclusion? From the scriptures (**Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27**). The same act that puts one into Christ (baptism) puts one in the body which is the church. Wait, how did you arrive at that conclusion? From the scriptures, "*For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body*" (**1 Corinthians 12:13**). Okay, we are baptized into Christ, and this also puts us in the one body, the church. Now, is Jesus the savior of the one body the church? Yes! "*Christ also is the head of the church, (being) himself the saviour of the body*" (**Ephesians 5:23**).

Seeing that those who are in Christ are those in the one body which is the one church, in which Jesus is the saviour of, would you say one must be a member of the church to go to heaven? **YES!** "Shall only those in the church of Christ be in heaven?" **YES!**

Just because one obeys the gospel and becomes a part of the church does not mean he will automatically go to heaven. One must be faithful to the end (**Revelation 2:10**). For one to have a chance to go to heaven, one must be a member of the church which Jesus purchased with His own blood (**Acts 20:28**); one must be a member of the church of Christ! ♦

children, to eat, to enjoy a hobby, and everything else we do. How are we using this time? Someone once made the observation of how difficult it would be for someone to spend \$86,400 each day with the stipulation that he could not save it, nor "invest" it, etc., because at the end of the day, he would lose any money he had not spent. This is similar to our gift of 86,400 seconds. The seconds we have this day will be used up in this day, and at the end of the day, they are gone forever! We have no "roll-over seconds", no "do-overs"! There is no retrieving the seconds from this day once they are gone!

With this in mind, how are we using our time? Do we appreciate this gift of time like we should? Time should not be "killed," "wasted," etc., but savored and used

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wisely because it is precious and finite. This fact is stated again and again in the Bible. Moses asked God to, "*teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom*" (**Ps. 90:12**). Man's life has been compared to a vapor in Scripture (**Jas. 4:14**). It has also been compared to grass or a flower, which "*withers*" and "*falls*" in time (**I Pet. 1:23**). Job said, "*Man who is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble*" (**Job 14:1**). He also said, "*My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle and come to their end without hope*" (**Job 7:6**). The apostle Paul emphasized the brevity of life when he stressed the importance of obeying God "*now*" (**II Cor. 6:2**). It is also written, "*Today if ye will hear his voice, do not harden your hearts...*" (**Heb. 3:7-8**). Notice that all of these verses emphasize the precious possession we call time. It fascinates me to consider the fact that our eternal God (Ps. 90:2) actually inspired men (**II Pet. 1:20-21**) to dedicate portions of His Bible to reminding man not to waste time! Since He has done this, I had better take heed!

On this particular day, January 1, 2012, we stand in a unique position. This is because we are here gathered to worship God on this first day of the week, which is also the first day of a new year! 2011 is past and gone. We have used up the 31,536,000 seconds allotted to 2011. The question is WHAT did we do with those seconds? Have we used them wisely (**Eph. 5:16**)? I hope so, because they are

gone! It would be wise use of the 86,400 seconds allotted to today to practice some self-examination in consideration of how we could best use the time God would grant to us in 2012!

Knowing that our life is brief at its longest (**Jas. 4:14**), and that our lives can end, or be irreversibly changed in a moment (**Prov. 27:1**), is there any wonder that we see a continued emphasis in Scripture on one doing what is right "now" and "today", while we still have the opportunity? 86,400 seconds per day seems like a lot of time (and it is). On the other hand, these seconds move very rapidly. "Swiftly we're turning life's daily pages. Swiftly the hours are changing to years." This is not a trite statement, is it?

Brethren and friends, 86,400 seconds is all we have been given for this day. HOW will we use this precious time? Will it be used in selfish pursuits, or in godly efforts? If the Lord wills, and we wake up to a new day tomorrow, HOW will we use the 86,400 seconds given to us on that day? The world has given us far too many "distractions" wherein we are encouraged to waste our time. (I say this as one who is guilty of wasting time, too!) Yet, let us resolve today to stop wasting time and instead make the best use of our time we have on earth (**Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5**)! *Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com ♦*

The Final Judgment By David Padfield

- All of the nations of the earth who have ever lived will be present (**Matt. 25:32**)
- The Word of God will be the standard of judgment – not the creed books written by men (**John 12:48**)
- We will be judged on the basis of our deeds and not just our attitude (**Rom. 2:6**)
- No "warning signs" will be given prior to the return of Christ (**Matt. 24:36**)
- Christ will return at an unexpected time, during normal circumstances upon the earth (**2 Pet. 3:10**)
- When Christ returns "every eye shall see Him," not just the redeemed (**Rev. 1:7**)
- For some, it will be a day of unspeakable joy (**Rev. 21:1-4**)
- For others, it will be a day of horror (**2 Thes. 1:6-8**)
- When Christ returns He will deliver the kingdom back to His Father (**1 Cor. 15:24**)
- There is no passage in the Bible which states Christ will ever set foot on this earth again – the Bible teaches that we will "meet the Lord in the air" (**1 Thes. 4:17**)
- Once Christ receives His own they will "always" be with Him, not just for a 1,000 years as some teach (**1 Thes. 4:17**)
- While we wait for the Lord to return we have the opportunity to repent (**2 Pet. 3:10**)
- There is no second chance for men to repent after death (**Heb. 9:27**)
- Take comfort in the thought of His return (**1 Thes. 4:18**) *Credit: www.padfield.com ♦*

***Don't think you can ignore the Lord in this life and
He will give you a crown in the Life to come.***