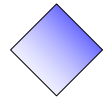


The Voice of Truth



January 12, 2014

Are We Drifting From The Old Paths?

By Jimmy Pettigrew

There can be no argument about our drifting. Attitudes have softened, approaches have varied, spiritual knowledge has diminished, and the boundary line between truth and error has almost been annihilated, demolished and erased. That which once was defended on the basis of principle is now sacrificed on the altar of expediency. What once was opposed on the basis of human doctrine is now accepted on the basis of situation ethics. **YES**, we are drifting!

One area we are drifting in is the accepting of members who have come in on their denominational baptism. We are told that they were baptized "for remission of sins" and, therefore, their baptism was scriptural. We do injury to a man in trying to extend fellowship when he is out of Christ.

In **Acts 19:1-7**, we read of the apostle Paul finding twelve men who had been baptized with the baptism of John. They were baptized again. Yet, John's baptism was "for remission of sins" (**Mark 1:4**). If "remission of sins" is all that is required, then those twelve would not have been baptized again; but they were. When Paul had explained the difference between John and the Lord Jesus, they were baptized "in the name of the Lord Jesus."

It is a tragic mistake to pretend that baptism has only one purpose. The truth is that God's word reveals several things that result from baptism. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (**Mark 16:16**). One who is baptized "because I am saved" is not obeying Christ in the purpose He had for baptism. Such a person (like those in **Acts 19**) should be baptized in obedience to Christ. There are other purposes of baptism: "into Christ" (**Gal. 3:27**),

"into the death" of Jesus (**Rom. 6:3**), to be "born again" and begin "newness of life" (**Jno. 3:5; Rom. 6:4**). In **1 Cor. 12:13** we read, "for by one spirit are we all baptized into one body." That body is the church of which Christ is head (**Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18**): **IT IS NOT A DENOMINATION (1 Cor. 1:10-13)**.

Anyone baptized for the wrong purpose **MUST** be baptized again to please the Lord. The one baptized because he "is already saved" has missed the purpose of baptism and should be baptized for the right reason. But, in the same way, one baptized into a denomination has missed the purpose of baptism into the one body, the church of Christ, and he should be baptized for the right purpose. If one says "they didn't know it was a denomination when they were baptized", the answer of **Acts of 19** still applies: those twelve men didn't know that John's baptism was no longer in effect. When they found out the truth about it, they were "baptized in Jesus' name." In the same way, when one learns the truth about the church, he will reject denominational baptism and be "baptized into one body" which is the Lord's church.

We do injury to a man in trying to extend fellowship when he is out of Christ. Thereby we lull him into a false sense of security, making him feel justified before God while he is yet in his sins.

Tragically, it is true that due to unconverted preachers, many unconverted folk have been received in fellowship, and both they and the church stand in jeopardy. Brethren, we've drifted too far already! It is time that we begin to defend the Bible, and the church! ♦

Sin will take you farther than you
Ever wanted to go.
Keep you longer than you ever wanted
To stay and cost you
More than you ever wanted to pay. ♦

In This Issue...

Page 1 - Are We Drifting From The Old Paths?
Pages 2 to 3 - After The "Amen" Is Said ...

Page 3 - GOD HAS A RIGHT | The Nature Of The Kingdom Of God
Page 4 - THE KINGDOM EXISTS NOW | What Must I Do To Be Saved?

After The “Amen” Is Said ...

By Jarrod Jacobs

I am sure we are familiar with the saying, “They left the building just as soon as the ‘amen’ was said.” This is just an exaggerated way of saying that a person left worship (which is usually concluded with a prayer) as soon as they could without staying and visiting with others afterward.

This little saying, however, got me to thinking about our responses to private and public prayers. Put simply, what do you (I) do after the “amen” is said? In other words, after we have prayed, what do we do next? In order to develop our thoughts, let us begin by dissecting the content of most prayers offered today and then make some applications.

The Content Of Our Prayers

As we begin, let me hasten to say that I recognize there are specific prayers that are offered for specific occasions. However, for the purpose of this article, we will be speaking in broad terms in order to emphasize a point. Generally speaking, we find the content of most public and private prayers to be similar. Generally, there is something said concerning God and His majesty, love and mercy, etc. (**Matt. 6:9; Acts 4:24-25; Dan. 9:4**) There is praise offered to God’s love and sacrifice in sending His Son to die on the cross. (**Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8**). Too, most prayers include a petition to heal those who are ill physically (**Jas. 5:15a**). This is right, proper, and Scriptural. There may also be petitions for those traveling as well as for those ill spiritually. During our prayers, we often pray for the spreading of the gospel in our local area and world-wide (**I Thess. 3:1**). Men will petition God for His guidance and providential hand (**I Cor. 10:13; II Tim. 4:17-18**). In many prayers, asking God’s help for our country and her leaders will be included (**I Tim. 2:1-3**). Again, I am speaking in broad terms, so in addition to these, other points may be included in an individual’s prayer. However, this is enough to make our point.

These Prayers Are Scriptural.

My mention of prayers in this broad sense is not to be critical. Certainly, such prayers are Scriptural, and in the case of public prayers, brethren are leading the congregation in a prayer to God for which we can all say, “Amen.” However, is this the end of the matter? Do we simply offer prayers to God and then stand back to watch God do whatever it is that He is going to do? Are we put here on earth just to give God our “wish list” like He is some kind

of “genie”? What do we do after the “amen” is said? This, my friend, is where the rubber meets the road!

Action Is Needed After The “Amen” Is Said!

There is an old saying which goes like this: “Pray as though everything depended upon God. Work as though everything depended upon you.” After the “amen” is said, are we active in our spiritual work? If not, why not? We need to understand that offering prayers for self and others is a valuable thing, but it is only part of our work before God as Christians.

For example, after we pray for the sick, we need to be active in doing what we can to help the sick in their time of need. Jesus commended folks who were “doers” (**Matt. 7:21-23**)! In connection with this, do we remember Christ’s commendation to those who visited (action!) Him when He was “sick” (**Matt. 25:36**)?

Again, after we pray for those who are ill spiritually, what are we doing to then take the opportunity to see to it that they do not die in their sins? Yes, let us pray for their softened heart and for God’s longsuffering (**II Pet. 3:9, 15**), but we ourselves need to be active in trying to win them back! This is the purpose and point of such passages as **Galatians 6:1** and **James 5:19-20**. After the “amen” is said, are we living these passages?

After praying for the spread of the gospel, are we then active in taking the gospel to our friends and family? Are we active in inviting people to our worship services or inviting them to a Bible study in our home (**II Tim. 2:2**)? How about being the person instrumental in getting the preacher and sinner together, as Andrew and Philip did (**Jn. 1:40-42, 45**)? We can also be active in getting Bible material in the hands of those that need it. Parents, our work of teaching does not end with prayers. Rather, we need to be active in making sure our children know the truth that we know. God expected such work from parents in the Old Testament (**Deut. 6:7-9**), and expects the same from parents today (**Eph. 6:4; Titus 2:3-5**; etc.). Yes, our work can take many forms, but the point is we need to be active after praying!

One passage that best sums up our actions after the “amen” is said is **James 2:14-26**. James reminds us that being a Christian is more than merely saying the words.

Continued from Page Two, "After The "Amen" Is Said ..."

We must be active in our deeds! Often, we look to **James 2** as a passage which shows our denominational friends that we are not saved by "faith only" because faith without works is dead. This is true and ought to be preached from the mountaintops (**v. 17, 20, 24, 26**). At the same time, let us remember that James was not writing a letter to denominational people. He was writing to Christians! Christians need to remember that "*faith without works is dead*"! Therefore, while we need to be praying for others, after the "amen" is said, let's get to WORK!! (**I Jn. 3:18**)

Some Things Only God Can Do.

This study might cause some to reflect on prayer and realize that there are some things only God can do, i.e., forgive us of sins. Yes, when Christians repent and ask God for forgiveness of sins in prayer, John, by inspiration, has promised, "*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*" (**I Jn. 1:9**; See also: **Acts 8:22**).

In this situation, some may ask how we can be "active" after the "amen" is said when God has promised to forgive Christians when we repent and pray? One thing we can do after we have repented and asked God to forgive us, is to then be active in resolving to not fall for those same temp-

tations anymore. The Bible says we must resist the devil (**Jas. 4:7**), and we do this by not yielding to his temptations (**Jas. 1:14-15**). God has made sure we have a way to escape temptation (**I Cor. 10:13**). Therefore, let us be active in looking for this escape! These are the kinds of things we can do after having asked for God's forgiveness and after the "amen" is said!

Another thing God does is extend mercy and patience to man for another day (**I Pet. 3:9, 15**). Man cannot add days to his life or anything of the sort. What we can do, however, is be active in making the most of the time we have (**Heb. 3:15**)! We can glorify God in our bodies (**I Cor. 6:20**). We can learn "*to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom*" (**Ps. 90:12**). We can take advantage of the day we have and not boast of tomorrow (**Prov. 27:1**), thinking we have more time "in the future."

Conclusion

Let us pray to God for our needs and wants, for help for others, and for the well-being of our country, brethren, family, and self. Then, let us be active in the work the Lord has given us to do! (**Rev. 22:14; Matt. 7:21; Acts 10:34-35**) Friend, what are you doing after the "amen" is said??

Credit: The Old Paths - 8/26/12 ♦

GOD HAS A RIGHT

Author unknown

God has a right to a definite part of your time

— He has the power to take all of it.

God has a right to a definite part of your money

— He has the power to take all of it.

God has a right to be glorified through your tongue

— He has the power to take all of it.

God has a right to be honored through your influence

— He has the power to take all of it.

God has a right to your life

— He has the power to take all of it. ♦

The Nature Of The Kingdom Of God

IS NOT

1. Of This World (**John 18:36**).
2. Eating and Drinking (**Rom. 14:17**).
3. In Word (**1 Cor. 4:20**).
4. With Observation (**Luke 17:20**).

IS

1. In Power (**1 Cor. 4:20**).
2. Righteousness (**Rom. 14:17**).
3. Peace (**Rom. 14:17**).
4. Joy (**Rom. 14:17**).
5. Within You (**Luke 17:21**).
6. Unshakable (**Heb. 12:28**). ♦

THE KINGDOM EXISTS NOW

By David J. Riggs

The Bible clearly shows that the kingdom is in existence now. Before the day of Pentecost (**Acts 2**), the kingdom was preached as being "at hand." Jesus said in **Mark 1:15**, *"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."* John the Baptist preached that the kingdom was "at hand" (**Matt. 3:1-2**). Jesus sent the twelve to the lost sheep of the house of Israel and they were to preach "the kingdom is at hand" (**Matt. 10:5-6**). The seventy were to preach "The kingdom of God has come near to you." (**Luke 10:1, 9**). Jesus said that the kingdom would come within the lifetime of some of those who stood in His presence. He said, *"Verily I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power."* (**Mark 9:1**).

Notice that Jesus said that the kingdom would come with power. Thus, a passage which reveals when the power came also discloses when the kingdom came. In **Luke 24:49**, Jesus told the apostles, *"Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."* The same is repeated in **Acts 1:4-5**. **Verse 8** of **Acts 1** says, *"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you..."*

From the foregoing passages, we see that the kingdom was to come when the power came (**Mark 9:1**) and the power was to come when the Holy Spirit came (**Acts 1:8**). Very simply therefore, if we can find when the Holy Spirit came, we would know also when the power and the kingdom came since they all were to come simultaneously.

Acts 2:1-4 is the passage; it describes how the Holy Spirit came on the apostles on the day of Pentecost. That day, therefore, marked the beginning of the kingdom.

After the day of Pentecost the kingdom is no longer spoken of as being "at hand" but as being in existence. The apostle Paul declared that he and the Colossians were translated into the kingdom. *"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son."* (**Col. 1:13**). They could not have been conveyed or translated into the kingdom if it had not existed; thus, showing most certainly that it did exist. John the apostle said he was a companion in tribulation and in the kingdom (**Rev. 1:9**). John could not have been a partaker in the kingdom if it was yet future, thus again showing that the kingdom is in existence now. The Hebrew writer said, *"Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."* Again, we cannot receive a kingdom, if there is no kingdom.

By way of summary, the Bible teaches that the kingdom is in existence now. It was "at hand" (**Mark 1:15; Matt. 3:2; 10:5-6; Luke 10:9**) and would come before some of those who stood in the presence of Jesus would die (**Mark 9:1**). It was to come with power (**Mark 9:1**), the power was to come with the Holy Spirit (**Acts 1:8**), and the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost (**Acts 2:1-4**). They had received it (**Heb. 12:28**), were translated into it (**Col. 1:13**), and were companions in it (**Rev. 1:9**).

Credit: <http://oakridgechurch.com/riggs/> ♦

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

Evangelist: Jimmy Pettigrew

How to Contact Us

Telephone: (920)499-5677
E-mail: hillcrestcofc@live.com



Our Address

1621 Hillcrest Drive
Green Bay, WI 54313



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