

SOUTH HEIGHTS BAPTIST'S WEEKLY

REMINDER

Volume XVIII

December 1, 2013

Number 35

NURSERY MINISTRY WORKERS FOR THIS WEEK

10:50 a.m. Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Volunteer Needed
 Cradle Roll 2: Volunteer Needed
 6:30 p.m. Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Kristi Hooper
 Cradle Roll 2: Andrea Hooper
 Wed. Evening Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Volunteer Needed
 Cradle Roll 2: Volunteer Needed

AND THE PEOPLE CAME...

Week of November 24, 2013

Sunday School ----- 15
 Sunday Morning Service ----- 31
 Sunday Evening Service ----- 27
 Wed. Eve. Service, 11/27/13 ----- no service this week

AND THE PEOPLE GAVE...

Week of November 24, 2013

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings ----- \$ 745.00
 Total Received for Week of 10/10/13: \$

Average amount of Undesignated Offerings needed to operate the church EACH WEEK, as a minimum = \$ 1,400.00

LOTTIE MOON POST OFFICE!

Every year, our membership helps fund overseas missions by giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering in an unusual way. Instead of sending Christmas cards to other church members through the regular mail, our members are encouraged to bring their cards to the **Lottie Moon Post Office** which is located in the foyer where they can place them in the appropriate mailbox, and deposit the money they would normally spend on postage in the lockbox on the side of the post office.

It's a great way to remember your fellow church members at Christmas AND help missionaries at the same time!

INSURANCE FUND REPORT FOR NOV., 2013:

Monthly Requirement ----- \$ 329.66
 Amount Received thusfar during Nov., 2013 ----- \$ 0.00
Amount STILL NEEDED by Dec. 5, 2013 = \$ 329.66

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED

1. **Admit that you are a sinner.**
2. **Admit that God says all sins must be paid for.**
3. **Accept the fact that Christ took upon Himself the suffering necessary to pay for all your sins.**
4. **You must change your mind about sin and sinning (God calls this repentance).**
5. **By an act of your will, accept by faith the Lord Jesus Christ, who can save you from the penalty of sin. Then, tell God about this in a simple prayer. Believe that God keeps His promise to save you, and thank Him for His salvation.**

Please Remember To Be Faithful to Give!



As with everything else, the costs of keeping a church going never go down - they always go **up**. Bills wait for no one, and churches are no exception to this. An extra, sacrificial gift today by everyone present would go a long way...

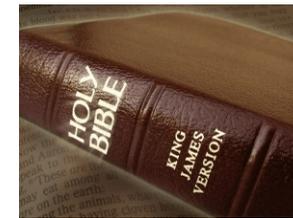
We encourage all of our membership to practice obedience to God by being faithful every payday to give back to Him His tithe (10%). *If every family in our church would practice this one simple discipline, we would never have weeks where we have to put off paying some bills until the following week!*

Everything is expensive, especially for a small church like ours, but ours is a BIG God, and He LOVES to bless His children when they are obedient to Him!

If you are already a tither, we thank you, and encourage you to also give offerings as well. If you're currently not tithing, won't you please start **today - OK?** Thank you.

Church Directory

Todd W. White ----- Pastor
 Mickie Shatwell ----- Pianist
 Dickie Eberle ----- Greeter, Custodian
 Shayne Hooper, Caryn Quinnelly, Todd W. White ----- S.S. Teachers
 Larry & Mary Byars, Brian & Charity Crawford,
 Dwayne English ----- Outreach
 Flowers ----- Shirley White



**A Tale of Three Cities:
 Where the Bible Versions Began**

by the late Dr. David F. Reagan, Pastor
 Antioch Baptist Church, Knoxville, Tennessee
(continued from last week)

A Tale Of Three Cities begins in the Roman Empire during the time of Christ. The three cities (Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch) were the three largest and most influential cities in the Roman Empire. Yet, to the Christian, their influence concerning Bible corruption and preservation is of much greater importance.

As capital of the Roman Empire and the empire's largest city, **ROME** ruled the ancient world. Rome emphasized form, legalism, and tradition. Through tradition, Rome became the center of Biblical addition. The Apocrypha is one example of how Rome added to scripture. From Italy, Rome dominated the theology and spiritual life of southern Europe and northern Africa.

Alexandria, Egypt, the second largest city, was the world capital for science, education, and scholarship. Great minds gravitated to Alexandria. This home town of Philo and Origen dominated the theology of surrounding Egypt and Palestine. As is the practice of modern scholarship, Alexandria subtracted from the Word of God. **The Alexandrian Text is still the basis of modern Bible corruptions.**

The third largest city of the empire was **Antioch of Syria**. Located in the East, Antioch dominated the regions of Syria and Asia minor, the lands of early apostolic work. Antioch was known for her luxury and cosmopolitan flavor, but also for a literal interpretation of scripture. Although belittled by the scholarship of today, the Syrian Text was the underlying basis for the King James Version of 1611.

These three cities were located in three important countries on three different continents. They represented the three major races. Why are they so important? How did these cities become so influential in the historical transmission of the Biblical Text? These questions and more are to be answered in the following text. **But never forget that God promised to preserve His Word.** Our greatest concern should never be to judge or criticize the Word, but to find it, then read it, study it, memorize it, obey it, teach it, preach it, and if necessary, die for it.

Thusfar, we've looked at Alexandria and Rome. This week, we will look at the city of

Antioch

Antioch was located in Syria on the Asian continent. The native inhabitants of Antioch descended from Shem, one of the sons of Noah, through Aram (Gen. 10:22). Please notice that God did not use the Japhethites of Europe or the Hamites of Africa to preserve His Word. He used the Shemites of Asia of whom Noah prophesied, **"Blessed be the Lord God of Shem" (Gen. 9:26)**. This scripture shows that God is going to use the Shemites throughout history in a special way. He established His chosen nation, the nation of Israel, through Abraham who was a descendent of Shem. He offered salvation to mankind through the Jews, for Christ declared, **"salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22)**. He also revealed Himself to mankind in the Bible which was written by Jews and given to Jews (Rom. 3:1-2). If God's chosen people, His offer of salvation, and His written Word all came through the children of Shem in accordance with the prophecy of Noah, why then would God not use the children of Shem to preserve His book? The Syrians of

(continued inside)

Antioch were the Shemites which God used to preserve His New Testament during the first centuries after it was written.

Antioch has a great influence in the area of Asia Minor as well as in Syria. These areas were the early locations of the greatest revivals and most extensive evangelism. Most of the New Testament books were either written or received in this part of the world. By His wonderful providence, God had placed Antioch in a special place of importance. Antioch became the early center for Bible-believing Christians and Bible preservation.

Much is revealed about a Bible teacher or Christian group by examining their approach in interpreting scripture. The same is true in the study of Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch. **Rome** took the approach of ecclesiastical interpretation. In other words, the past traditions of the church and church theologians determine the meaning of the passage. The approach of **Alexandria** was that of allegorical interpretation. Scripture was to be spiritualized by scholars in order to conform it to their philosophical beliefs. **Only Antioch took the literal approach to Biblical interpretation.** According to this approach, the Bible means what it says and says what it means. There is no need to change or manipulate scripture because the Word of God is already perfect. Now who do you want to copy your next Bible manuscript: the traditionalists from Rome, the scholars from Alexandria, or the literalists from Antioch?

Biblical Mention

No matter how much we know about a place historically, the bottom line is still, “What saith the Scripture?” The city of Rome is mentioned nine times in the New Testament and is characterized as a place of persecution (II Tim. 1:15-17). Although only mentioned three times by name, Alexandria is clearly a place of false doctrine according to scripture (Acts 6:9; 18:24-26). But our greatest amount of Biblical information is reserved for the city of Antioch. It is mentioned by name **nineteen times** and has great importance for us today. In fact, the church at Antioch is the greatest example of Biblical Christianity in the entire New Testament.

The founding and early ministry of the church at Antioch are described in Acts 11:19-30. Acts 13:1-4 narrates the calling and sending of the first missionaries out of Antioch: Barnabas and Paul. From these two passages we learn seven basic characteristics of the church at Antioch. First, the church at Antioch was a preaching church (Acts 11:20,23). Second, it was a witnessing church (Acts 11:21,24). Third, it was a teaching church (Acts 11:26; 13:1). Fourth, the church at Antioch was a serving church: **“The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch” (Acts 11:26).** Fifth, it was a giving church (Acts 11:29-10). Sixth, it was a praying church (Acts 13:2-3). And seventh, the church at Antioch was a missionary church (Acts 13:3-4).

Being founded on these principles, the church at Antioch continued in its Biblical ministry for several centuries. Why then should any one think it strange that God would use the influence

of Antioch in the preservation of scripture? That is exactly what He did.

New Testament Preservation

There are about 4,000 or 5,000 existing manuscripts of the New Testament. They have been classified according to their characteristic readings by various scholars and divided into families. Although all divisions of manuscripts are manmade and therefore subject to dispute, one of the most accepted divisions separates the manuscripts into three families. These families are called the **Western**, the **Alexandrian**, and the **Syrian**. The Western Text is related to Rome, the Alexandrian Text is related to Alexandria and the Syrian Text is related to Antioch. The Western and Alexandrian Texts are represented by a minority of manuscripts and corrupt the pure Word of God. The Syrian Text represents the great majority of manuscripts and, as a whole, preserves the pure Word of God. This pure text is still preserved for us today in the English of the King James Version.

Book after book has been written in the last hundred years on both sides of the issue of textual differences. ***But the real question is whether God preserved His Word or not.*** If He did, He could have used anyone in any way, although history definitely points to Antioch. If He did **not**, then our Bible is corrupted beyond repair, and we are left without any final authority for truth. We are left blind in a world blackened by sin and rebellion toward God. But we do have the pure and preserved words of God. Open up your King James Version and read, study, teach, and preach it. Its words are without error and without mistake. Therefore, we can proclaim its message without apology.■



Should Children Be Taught About Santa Claus, Easter Bunnies and Good Fairies?

by the late Dr. Bill Rice

Q: *I have a problem that in recent days has caused me to question my stand.*

I was raised in a Christian home and have been saved for several years. My husband is an unsaved church member and doesn't take a stand for or against anything.

I have never taught our children to believe Santa Claus brings Christmas presents or that good fairies leave money for teeth. To me, Christmas is the start of a home in Heaven. I could not believe Christ died if I did not believe He was born. I have received lots of laughs and criticism for this belief. I never paid it any thought until our music director, a student of a great Bible college, laughed and told me how silly I was not to tell my children about Santa Claus, etc.

How do you feel? How did you teach your family when they were growing up? Can I teach my children to love and serve God

if I also teach them things that I must tell lots of lies about?

A: My good friend, you are another who is going to cause me a lot of trouble! When I answer this, I'm going to get letters from irate preachers, angry parents, and outraged businessmen. If ever in my life I have wished I were a man of tact, I wish it now. But I do not know any honest way to answer your letter that will also sound kind and make everyone love me.

So - you ask a plain question, and you deserve a plain answer, and here it is -

Any Christian who teaches little children the fable that there is a Santa Claus is, at best, incredibly thoughtless and shallow How blind one must be not to realize that the Christian who tells children about Santa Claus is bypassing the Gospel of Christ that brings salvation just as much as a modernist (liberal) who teaches that the Bible story is not true.

Surely nothing could please Satan more than for Christians to talk about Santa Claus, Easter bunnies, and good fairies rather than about Jesus Christ.

The Devil Wanted A Detour

Satan tried to keep Jesus from going to the cross in the first place. On the Mount of Temptation, Satan offered Christ the kingdoms of the world without a crucifixion. In the Garden of Gethsemane, I believe Satan tried to kill Jesus and thus prevent His going to the cross. When Simon Peter insisted that Jesus should not die, the Saviour significantly said, **“Get thee behind me, Satan.”**

The idea that Jesus should not die on the cross for sinners was clearly of the Devil.

Substituting Something Good for the Gospel

Today, Satan wants to substitute something else for the Gospel of Christ.

Perhaps the most beautiful story ever told is the true story of how Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary in the little town of Bethlehem. Angels sang to the shepherds to announce the Saviour's birth. Surely there is no more beautiful story in all the world than this. Christmas is the day set aside by Christians to commemorate this great event.

But, little by little, the fictitious story of Santa Claus has become a tradition. In many places it has been substituted for the true story of the birth of Christ. In almost all places, it is at least on an equal with the story of Jesus. One may walk down the streets of a great city at Christmastime and hear “Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer” sung in the same collection with “O Little Town of Bethlehem.”

Many Christian parents tell their children the Santa Claus fable because it is a cute story and an entertaining one. Many do not dream that they are actually aiding the Devil by substituting a lie for the truth. Parents tell the Santa Claus fable lightheartedly while telling themselves that Junior will soon realize that it is not

a true story, and when he is older he will understand that the Santa Claus fable was just a beautifully-told tale and not the truth.

So, what harm is done? A great deal. ***Every time the Santa Claus story is told - the true story of Jesus is NOT told!*** And the emphasis is on Santa Claus rather than on Christ.

After all, how many times have you ever heard someone ask a little child, “What will you be given for Christmas in Jesus' name?” Actually, I doubt if I have ever heard that question in all my life! But I have heard, “What is Santa Claus going to bring you for Christmas?”

There certainly no honor to Jesus Christ in that!

I certainly do not object to the giving of gifts to loved ones at Christmastime. I love Christmas and think it is fitting and right for us to give gifts to our loved ones in the spirit of Christ who gave Himself for us; but I am dead set against telling little children that gifts come from Santa Claus when the Bible says, **“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights . . .” (James 1:17).**

What About Easter?

Easter is a day on which Christians commemorate the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The importance of His resurrection is absolutely impossible to overestimate or over-realize. Paul wrote in ***I Cor inthians 15:16-19:***

“For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.”

How foolish, then, for any Christian to add silly stories of the Easter Bunny laying eggs right along with the true and vitally important story of Jesus being raised from the dead! Easter ought not to be a time when the primary thoughts of any Christian have to do with Easter eggs, colored chicks, baby ducks, little rabbits or new clothes. Even though the stories may be cute and the clothes attractive, we are shallow to allow ourselves to be duped by Satan to share the Gospel story with these things.

Any Substitute Suits Satan

Just about anything that is used as a substitute for the Gospel is satisfactory to Satan.

It must be a matter of great satisfaction to Satan that many orthodox churches have become so engrossed with satined-glass windows, a beautiful “sanctuary” and a stiff, formal service that soul winning is no longer on the agenda.

Not only should a Christian be careful always to tell the truth - and stories about Santa Claus, Easter rabbits, and good fairies are definitely not truthful - but he ought to be careful never to let anything detract from the story of Christ. □

