

AND THE PEOPLE CAME...

- Week of December 12, 2021 -

Sunday Morning Service -----	35
Sunday Evening Service -----	24
Wed. Evening Service, 12/15/21 -----	16

AND THE PEOPLE GAVE...

- Week of December 12, 2021 -

<u>Undesignated</u> Tithes & Offerings -----	\$ 2,012.30
Love Offering -----	\$ 50.00
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 12/12/21:	\$ 2,062.30

- Week of December 5, 2021 -

<u>Undesignated</u> Tithes & Offerings -----	\$ 1,834.00
Love Offering -----	\$ 20.00
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 12/05/21:	\$ 1,854.00

- Week of November 28, 2021 -

<u>Undesignated</u> Tithes & Offerings -----	\$ 1,392.25
Love Offering -----	\$ 100.00
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 11/28/21:	\$ 1,492.25

- Week of November 21, 2021 -

<u>Undesignated</u> Tithes & Offerings -----	\$ 1,747.00
Love Offering, Dr. Ray Meier -----	\$ 350.00
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 11/21/21:	\$ 2,097.00

- Week of November 14, 2021 -

<u>Undesignated</u> Tithes & Offerings -----	\$ 1,185.00
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 11/14/21:	\$ 1,185.00

- Week of November 7, 2021 -

<u>Undesignated</u> Tithes & Offerings -----	\$ 1,315.00
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 11/07/21:	\$ 1,315.00

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

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.



THANK YOU For Your Continued Faithfulness In Giving!

During the early part this pandemic, we were unable to meet in the church-house. But - that did not mean that the expenses of having a church-house were suspended. We still had bills to pay - electricity, gas, water, trash pickup, phone, internet, facility insurance, copier lease, office supplies, etc., and, praise the Lord, His people kept praying, watching online, & supporting their church with their giving.

Sadly, some people only give when they are in attendance at church - sort of like paying for "services rendered" - but the truth is that they are robbing THEMSELVES of God's blessings when they withhold their tithes and offerings and only give when they are here (see Malachi 3:10). Thankfully, most of our people have remained faithful, in so many ways, during this crisis, including financially.

WE HAVE 3 WAYS YOU CAN GIVE:

1. By mail - 23 East Wells Blvd., Sapulpa, OK 74066
2. Drop it off - call the Church Office to arrange it. 224-1924
3. Online - Go to the link below and give electronically:

<https://tithe.ly/give?c=433047>

WE ARE GLAD WE CAN NOW GATHER TOGETHER TO PRAISE GOD & STUDY HIS WORD TOGETHER IN THE CHURCH-HOUSE! YOUR FAITHFUL AND GENEROUS GIFTS WILL HELP US KEEP UP WITH THE BILLS AND CONTINUE OUR RENEWED OUTREACH EFFORTS!

Church Directory

Todd W. White -----	Pastor
Lois Mae Floyd -----	Pianist/ Organist
Mickie Shatwell -----	Evening Pianist
Derek Quinnelly -----	Greeter
Larry Byars -----	S.S. Teacher
Larry & Mary Byars, Derek Quinnelly, Harrison White -----	Outreach
Bertha Segebart -----	Custodian
Shirley & Brenda White -----	Flowers
Seth White -----	Sound/Video



SOUTH HEIGHTS BAPTIST'S WEEKLY REMINDER

Volume XXVII

December 19, 2021

Number 48



Dr. John R. Rice
1895-1980

I LOVE CHRISTMAS

(ADAPTED FROM DR. JOHN R. RICE)

by Dr. R. L. Hymers, Jr.

A sermon preached at the Baptist Tabernacle of Los Angeles on Saturday Evening, December 19, 2015

"And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother; and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh" (Matthew 2:11).

Dr. John R. Rice (1895-1980) was a good and sensible Christian. This evening I will give you the main points of his sermon, "I Love Christmas." The sermon is shortened and some parts are worded slightly differently. Dr. Rice said:

I love the Christmas season. I find great joy in preaching on the Christmas themes of the angels, the shepherds, the manger, the virgin birth, the wise men. I have great joy in the Christmas carols. There is a joyful, happy note of worship in our home, and thank God, in my heart, through the Christmastime. I love the gathering together of my loved ones and family for Christmas. I love to give gifts, and I rejoice to be remembered by my loved ones and friends. I love the Christmas season (Dr. John R. Rice, I Love Christmas, Sword of the Lord, 1955, p. 7).

But Dr. Rice points out that some people "feel sour, cantankerous, and full of objections about Christmas" (ibid.). They criticize those who celebrate the birth of Christ.

I. First, They Say That Christmas Was Not Christ's Birthday.

It is true that we do not know the precise day on which Jesus was born. The Bible does not tell us. But that does not make it wrong or sinful to remember the birth of Christ on Christmas Day.

Dr. Rice once knew a little girl who was born February 29, leap year. Since that day only appears every four years, or leap year, he points out that it was not wrong for her parents to celebrate her birthday on February 28, when it was not the actual date of her birth.

December 25 is as close to the birthday of Christ as we can come. We love the dear Lord Jesus, and we want everybody to remember His birth. We want to teach our children about the baby in the manger, about the wise men who came from the East to worship Him, about the angel's announcement to Mary and the angel chorus who [sang to] the shepherds. And why is not December 25 as good a day for that as any other? Do you think it is wrong to remember the birth of Christ on the day which is as close as we can come to the birthday of Christ?

II. Second, they say that Christmas only means "Christ's Mass," a Catholic holiday to many.

They say that Christmas comes from Christ's Mass, that it was initiated by Catholics, and that therefore Protestants should not observe it. That objection seems a little foolish to me.

[Many of the names of cities and towns in California came from the Catholics. Los Angeles was originally a Catholic name. But we do not think of the Catholics when we use the name "Los Angeles." We are not thinking about Catholics when we say "San Diego," or "San Francisco," or "Sacramento."] Names mean what they mean, no matter what origin.

The Seventh Day Adventists sometimes make a big deal out of the fact that we worship on Sunday, and Sunday comes from the worship of the Sun. I reply that Saturday is named for the worship of the heathen god Saturn! But nobody is thinking of worshipping

(continued inside)

the Sun when they use the word “Sunday” today. It is foolish to make an artificial distinction when none exists in the mind and heart of people who observe Christmas. January was named for the Roman god Janus. Are Christians therefore sinning when they call the month by that name? To every sensible person, Christmas simply means Christmas. It does not mean any kind of Mass. Catholics may observe it with a Mass, but Protestants do not, and neither do Baptists.

III. Third, They Say That Christmas Was a Former Heathen Holiday.

I think that Christmas was a former heathen holiday. This argument is not important. The heathen people did something on every day. They had ceremonies about sowing and reaping, about the solstices, and new moons. So, if heathen people used the twenty-fifth of December for idolatry, why shouldn't Christians now use it to honor Jesus Christ and His birth? No matter what day we use to remember Christ's birth, it will be a day someone else used for bad reasons. But, thank God, all days belong to Jesus Christ now, and no day belongs to heathen gods, including December 25th! December 25th should be used to honor Him, too, in one way or another.

IV. Fourth, They Say That Christmas Trees and Decorations Are an Abomination.

Some people say that the Bible forbids Christmas trees in Jeremiah 10:3-4. But that Scripture does not speak of Christmas trees. It speaks of an idol made out of wood, covered with silver and gold. And the rest of the Scripture tells how elaborately and expensively the idol is made of silver and gold, and dressed in purple. [Dr. Hymers' note: this passage could not be speaking of Christmas trees for two reasons (1) there was no Christmas and no Christmas trees in Jeremiah's day (2) no one today worships a Christmas tree.] No, the Bible does not forbid Christmas trees. [They are no more sinful than the bouquet of flowers that many people have in their homes and churches at Christmas time.]

Is there any harm in decorating the house with holly, or mistletoe, or other evergreens? No more than decorating the house with pumpkins and cornstalks at Thanksgiving time! No more than decorating graves with flowers on Memorial Day! Surely God is not displeased if we pay attention to some of His natural beauties.

[Dr. Hymers' note: it is said that the Christmas tree came from the Protestant Reformer Martin Luther seeing stars shining through the leaves of a pine tree, which he brought into the house and decorated with candles, to remind him of the star that shone when Jesus was born. If that legend is true, then the Christmas tree is of Protestant origin.]

I love Christmas and Christmas decorations, and I do not think they are wrong. They are only an expression of the joy that is in my heart when I think how God became a man, how the Creator became a baby, how **“though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (II Corinthians 8:9).**

V. Fifth, They Object to Christmas Because of Worldliness and Unchristian Revelry That Takes Place During the Holidays.

It is true that many people do not honor Jesus Christ at Christmas. I think they greatly sin. Sometimes people tell the silly lie about Santa Claus and deceive little children with a heathen legend, when they should tell about the dear Lord Jesus. I think that is wickedness. A lie is always wrong and always hateful to God. Deceit is the poorest possible way to honor the birth of Jesus. Certainly to deceive little children with a lie about Santa Claus is a sin. No Christian ought to condone it. Yes, people often dishonor God at Christmas. I am sorry they do. I hope no Christian who hears this sermon will grieve God by such sins.

But we should not turn Christmas over to Satan and wicked people because some people sin at Christmas. Should we give up Sunday because it is often misused? There is more drunkenness on Sunday than any other day of the week. There is more revelry. Should Christians therefore give up Sunday and count it as the Devil's day? Certainly not! There are a great many people who teach that baptism is essential to salvation. They give more honor to the water than to the Blood of Christ. That is wrong. But should we, therefore, disobey Jesus Christ about baptism because some have overstressed it and have held false doctrine about it? Certainly not!

The second coming of Christ has been a greatly abused and perverted doctrine with many. False cults have greatly perverted the doctrine of Christ's coming. People set dates. Should the rest of us, then, ignore the clear Bible doctrine of Christ's imminent second coming because the doctrine has been abused? Certainly not!

And we should not ignore the Bible doctrine of the fulness of the Spirit simply because many people associate it with talking in tongues and with sinless perfection.

In the same way, we would be very foolish if we turned Christmas over to Satan and worldly people. If the world has a Christmas of wild parties, let us make it a day of Christian love and fellowship, and a day that honors Christ!

Do other people make giving of gifts a mere form? Well, it does not need to be for Christians. Christians can give gifts that really express love.

Is it wrong to have a day of rejoicing? Is it wrong to have a Christmas dinner and send portions to others? No, indeed! When the remnant of Israel went back to the land from Babylonian captivity, under Nehemiah, the law was read and explained, and the people wept. But it was a time to rejoice rather than weep, so Nehemiah said:

“This day is holy unto the Lord your God: mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law. Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord:

neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength” (Nehemiah 8:9-10).

Then verse 12 says:

“And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them” (Nehemiah 8:12).

Since those Israelites honored God by having a day of joy and feasting and of sending portions to others because the worship of God had been restored, then Christians today are right to have a day of rejoicing over the birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ!

Yes, I love Christmas! I feel near to God at Christmastime. I love the Word of God at Christmas. I urge sinners to accept God's great Christmas gift of Jesus at Christmastime.

Let us have, then, a happy Christmas, and make Christ supreme on this day which we remember in honor of His birth!

NEWS OF INTEREST TO CHRISTIANS

✦ **RATIONAL SUICIDE** - A new euthanasia organization, *Exit International*, is promoting “rational suicide,” a concept that any adult has the “right to implement plans for the end of their life so that their death is reliable, peaceful and at a time of their choosing” (“Euthanasia advocates,” Right to Life News, Oct. 18, 2021). The founders are Philip Nitschke and Finoa Stewart. In England, Parliament has wisely rejected legalized euthanasia.

“Earlier this year, 70 MPs and Peers signed an open letter in opposition to renewed pushes to introduce assisted suicide, in which they pointed out that in other jurisdictions that have introduced assisted suicide and/or euthanasia, the law may initially have applied to a select group but it slowly expanded to apply to others. The letter argued: “There are escalating numbers of deaths over time in every jurisdiction, and in almost all places the categories of those who qualify for assisted suicide or euthanasia has been expanded. In Oregon, which is the campaigners' declared model for an assisted dying law, cases of assisted suicide have risen fifteen-fold since it was introduced in 1997. In Canada [t]he legislation itself proposes a review with the possibility of extending euthanasia to mature minors and those with solely mental health conditions.”

The right-to-die movement is a product of atheism and rebellion against God. Man did not make himself and does not own himself. God says, **“Behold, all souls are mine” (Ezekiel 18:4). He is “the God of the spirits of all flesh” (Numbers 27:16). He forms the spirit of man (Zechariah 12:1). “In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind” (Job 12:10).**

✦ **CHAMPION OF THE “GOOD DIVORCE” ENDS HER LIFE** - Psychologist Constance Ahrons, champion of the “good divorce,” ended her life by assisted suicide on Nov. 29 at age 84. Author of the bestselling *The Good Divorce:*

Keeping Your Family Together When Your Marriage Comes Apart (1994), Ahrons coined the term “binuclear family” and was a divorce coach, mediator, and therapist.

She defined the “good divorce” as “one which leaves no emotional scars on either the adults or children,” but that is a myth. If a divorce is sometimes necessary under such things as abandonment and physical abuse, divorce is never “good.” Ahrons wanted divorcees to consider the welfare of all parties concerned, but she left out a major one, which is God, the very Author of marriage. Her obituary in the *Family Lawyer Magazine* says that she “died as she lived: on her own terms.” Indeed, her theme song, and that of the culture she helped to create, was Sinatra's “I Did It My Way.” But it is a sad, empty way in the end.

She had a “partner” rather than a husband (divorced her husband in 1965); she celebrated sunsets with champaign and chocolate, worshiping the creation more than the Creator; and she committed assisted suicide. A member of the Hemlock Society, Ahrons believed “strongly in choosing how one lives and how one dies.” But man does not create himself and is not his own master. Life and death and marriage are God's prerogatives. **“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. ... God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things. ... For in him we live, and move, and have our being” (Genesis 2:7, 24; Acts 17:24-25, 28).**

HIS BIRTHDAY



Behold, I stand at the door, and knock.—Revelation 3:20