

The South Florida Avenue MESSENGER

A Friendly Church With a Vital Message Proclaiming the Unsearchable Riches of the Lord Jesus.
The Messenger is published weekly by the South Florida Ave. Church of Christ meeting at 1807 South Florida Ave - Lakeland, FL 33803 Vol. 69 No.3 01-19-16

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SUNDAY SERVICES

Bible Study.....9:30a.m.
Worship.....10:30a.m.
Evening Worship.....6:00p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Ladies Class.....10:00a.m.
Bible Study.....7:00p.m.

HOME OF

Florida School of Preaching

MISSION FIELDS

Dub Hill.....Russia
Don Iverson.....India
Randy Judd.....Malawi, Africa
Graham McDonald.....Scotland
J. Paguaga.....Honduras, C.A.
Joey Treat.....Pacific Islands
Ted Wheeler.....Ghana, W.A.

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IN
SEARCH
OF THE LORD'S WAY

Sundays @ 8:30 a.m. Check local listings

Can You Trust Your Bible?

Luke Griffin

The evidence that the Bible is the Word of God is overwhelming. Consider:

1. Claims Inspiration – Any claim of inspiration must be tested. However, an inspired book would acknowledge its source (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

2. Unity – The Bible contains 66 separate books written in three languages by approximately 40 authors from different locations and diverse backgrounds over a period of 1,500 years, yet there are no contradictions. The theme is consistent resulting in a rich harmony lacking in literary works by mortal man.

3. Scientific Understanding – While atheists attempt to pit science against religion, true science is the Christian's friend. The Bible demonstrates inspiration both by what it omits and by what it includes. The Bible avoids errors about astrology, false medical cures, divination, omens, the earth's shape and position, which errors contemporary literature and culture contain. Yet, the Bible includes scientific information unknown when it was penned, such as ocean currents, logical dietary laws, the water cycle, seabed topography and quarantine.

4. Fulfilled Prophecy – The Bible contains verifiable prophecies about nations (Daniel 2:37-45) as well as 300 prophecies regarding the Messiah, including predictions about His birth, death and resurrection, which were fulfilled in the life of Jesus of Nazareth. One man could not have accidentally fulfilled all these prophecies (Luke 18:31-34).

5. Historical Reliability – The Bible's historical accuracy has been proven. In Acts, Luke mentions 32 countries, 54 cities and 9 Mediterranean islands. He also names 95 people (Metzger, Bruce. *The New Testament: Its Background, Growth, Content*). These citations contain no mistakes. Sir William Ramsey was a skeptic, but after an on-site study of Luke's accounts, he concluded that Luke was "the very greatest of historians." A book may be historically accurate without being inspired, but an inspired book must be historically accurate.

Despite the evidence, critics will claim, "Yes, but the Bible has been mishandled and corrupted through the years. Today's Bible is not anything like the ancient writing." Centuries of accumulated evidence dispute this claim. The Bible is the best-preserved book in history, with compelling manuscript evidence. Besides the Bible, the best preserved ancient work is Homer's *The Iliad*. Written about 900 B.C., only 643 known ancient copies exist. The earliest is from approximately 400 B.C., a full 500 years after it was written. Compare this example to the Bible. More than 5,000 manuscripts of the New Testament exist. The earliest fragments are from a mere 35 years after the books were written. In addition, many early Christians wrote defenses, sermons, and commentaries that contain more than 86,000 direct quotations from the Scriptures. In fact, 99.86 percent of the New Testament could be reconstructed from these quotations alone.

This conclusive evidence proves that the Bible is trustworthy. New finds and continuing research show that our Bible is identical to the text of the earliest days of Christianity.

FRANK'S CONVERSION

by Charles Moore

In St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome, Italy, they have a large mural showing the baptism of Jesus. It shows Jesus in water about ankle deep and John pouring water on the head of Jesus with a bowl. John baptized people at Aenon near Salim "because there was much water there" (John 3:23). Baptism is a burial (Romans 6:3-4). The traditional baptismal place of Jesus near Jericho is four or five feet deep. The Ethiopian eunuch, in Acts 8:38, went down into the water and Philip baptized him. Then they came up out of the water. That was what Jesus did when John baptized him. Near that mural in Rome the Catholic Church has a baptismal fountain where hundreds of little babies are "sprinkled" and they call this baptism. Babies don't have any sins. They are pure and innocent. Jesus said, "Unless you become as a little child you shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven."

One evening in Sicily, at mid-week Bible Study, a young American sailor came into our services. This was unusual. Catania was a city of 450,000 people. We were a small Italian congregation, but he wanted to go to Bible Study and he searched us out. As he came in I introduced myself and asked him if he was a Christian. He said, "Yes, I am." We were thrilled to have him. The Air Base was new and we hadn't located any members of the church at the Naval Base. We took him home with us. We became close friends. He was like a member of the family. He was a fine young man.

However, his speech betrayed him. It wasn't long until I realized that he was not a Christian. He thought he was. One day I asked him how did you become a Christian, Frank? He said, "When I was eight years old my mother asked me if I wanted Jesus to come into my heart. I said, Yes, mother, and I was saved." I asked, "But weren't you baptized into Christ? He replied, "Yes, a few years later my mother said, "Son, don't you think you should be baptized? And I told her, "Yes, mother." And they baptized me. I asked him if he had ever studied all of the examples of conversion in the book of Acts and he said, "No." Then I asked, "Would you like to read them with me?" He was happy to do it. He loved to study the Bible. He always carried a little New Testament in his pocket.

After we had read all of the passages, I asked him, "Frank, was your conversion like that?" He thought a long time and then he said, "No, Chuck, it wasn't." "All of those people were forgiven of their sins when they were baptized." I didn't say any more. He didn't sleep well that night. He walked the floor all night and the next morning, the first thing, he said, "Chuck, I realize that I am not a Christian. I am not saved. Will you please baptize me into Christ for the remission of my sins?" I took him out to the Mediterranean Sea and baptized him into Christ. He went on his way rejoicing.

What about your baptism? Look into your heart! Were you baptized scripturally? Were you baptized in the right way and for the right purpose? If not, you haven't been baptized at all. I have seen young people baptized because all of their friends were being baptized. I have seen young men baptized so that they could win the heart of a girl in the congregation. I have seen a lot of people baptized thinking that they had already been saved. But how can you be saved without the forgiveness of sins which comes with baptism. Think about it. Your soul's salvation is at stake. Read Acts 19:1-5.

Editor's Note: This excellent article by Charles Moore was written in 2003. He and his wife Carolyn had served seventeen years as missionaries in Rome and Catania Italy and Sicily. Brother Moore passed to his eternal reward in 2013 at age 81 in Plano, TX.

SFA FAMILY MATTERS

Prayer List

Our Members: Jacqueline Dopwell's cancer has returned. She is waiting on an update for further treatment. Carol Eason suffered a mild heart attack last Wednesday. Also keep Jim Turner, Grace McAnally, Ginny Hamby and Margaret Coone in prayer.

Relatives: Wayne Hendrix, Billy Moore, Louise Stewart, Dolly Martin and Sam Bolding, (bettye bolding's great grandson). He is home from the hospital and doing better.

Shut In Members: Virginia Plumlee, Bill Burton, Claud Romine, Dick & Joyce Burbage, Duane Nelson, Betty Thornhill and Sharon Edler.

Others: Chrissi Fuesner and Sandy Given. Please pray for all of these.

Upcoming Events

Jan. 30th: Ladies Day at the Venice Church of Christ. Starting at 9:00 a.m. See the flyer on the bulletin board for the speaker and theme.

Feb 6th: Ladies Day at Sebring Parkway Church of Christ. Registration and breakfast at 8:00 a.m. See the flyer for more info. Please R.S.V.P by Feb. 3rd.

Feb. 7th: Our Monthly Fellowship In-Service after evening services. Please bring finger foods.

Feb. 14th-17th: Gospel Meeting at the Sebring Parkway Church of Christ. The speaker will be Wes McAdams of Abilene Texas. The theme is "The Simple Truth" see the flyer on the bulletin board for more details.

Response

Elizabeth Tubbs asked for the prayers of the congregation last Wednesday evening.

Visitors

Rebecca Hill, Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Scarbrough, Debra Pavlocic -Okolichany, Russ Crosswhite, Amanda Patterson, Dolly Martin, Larry & Cheryl Nikos, Bert & Gloria Allen, Katrina Greene, Butch & Arlene Carr, Mark Tomlinson, Ron & Mary Weisenstine, Phil & Kathy Lancaster and Will & Autumn Vann.

Welcome Hiram Kemp (and family)!

The elders announced Sunday, Jan. 17, Hiram Kemp will be our full-time preacher beginning June 1, 2016, following his graduation from FSOP. He will still continue his interning until that time. More to come in next week's bulletin.

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

January

Kenny French **Table** Fred Strickland
Fred Rapley **Assist** Josh Estridge

Sunday, January 24, 2016
9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class Ken Walker
Prayer Josh Estridge

10:30 A.M.

Announcements David Anderson
Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer Stacey Paulin
Sermon Bob McAnally
Closing Prayer Antonio Martin

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader Kyle Williams
Opening Prayer John McShane
Sermon Brian Kenyon
Greeters The Fifes
Att. Cards Sebastian & Quadarius
Closing Prayer Phil Fife
Open & Close Building Jason Hendrix

Wed. January 27, 2016

Song Leader Jim Turner
Opening Prayer Fred Strickland
Closing Prayer Tucker Sweeney

*Please meet in the library. If you cannot serve, please call **Chuck Wyatt** so he can get a replacement - 859-5231*

Sunday, January 31, 2016
9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class David Williams
Prayer Chuck Wyatt

10:30 A.M.

Announcements David Anderson
Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer Frank Hamby
Sermon Bob McAnally
Closing Prayer Paul Romine

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader Kyle Williams
Opening Prayer Bobby Sheumaker
Sermon Brian Kenyon
Greeters The Longfellow
Att. Cards Ian & Paul
Closing Prayer Jeff Bingle
Open & Close Building Jason Hendrix

Wed. February 03, 2016

Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer Ken Walker
Closing Prayer Bobby Sheumaker

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Dec. 27.....	\$5,306.25
Jan. 03.....	\$4,605.00
Jan. 10.....	\$4,735.00
Jan. 17.....	\$4,910.30
Contribution Average	\$4,750.10
2015 Weekly Budget	\$4,302.98

Are There Things God Cannot Do?

A youth group member asked her teacher, “Can God make a rock so big that He cannot move it?” The teacher did not know how to answer, but he immediately saw the implication of that question on the nature of God. If God is truly all-powerful, He should be able to make anything, but if He cannot move something He made, how can He be all-powerful? The answer, however, is simple, once a person understands God’s omnipotence. God is omnipotent, or all powerful (Gen. 17:1; Rev. 11:17). The key, though, is that God is able to do whatever He wills, so long as it is logically accomplishable (Genesis 18:14; Job 42:2; Psalm 115:3; 135:6; Matthew 19:26; Ephesians 1:11). However, some things are not possible. For example, it is impossible to have a four-sided triangle or a cubical sphere. God cannot do the logically impossible! He is a God of order, not of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33). Along the same lines, there are some other things God cannot do because of His nature and the impossibility of logical contradiction. God cannot tolerate iniquity. “You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness” (Habakuk 1:13).



God cannot lie. In fact, Hebrews 6:18 says “it is impossible for God to lie!” God cannot commit sin nor solicit others to sin (James 1:13). Finally, “If we are faithless, He [God] remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself” (2 Tim. 2:13). God will always be true to His word, including His plan of salvation (Mark 16:15-16). All who obey have “hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began” (Titus 1:2). ❤️ Brian



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The End of Your Search for a Friendly Church . . .

Upcoming Events

Sunday, Feb. 7 All youth group members (and any adults who want) will take the Bible Bowl test. We will Meet in the fellowship room at 3:30.



Let us continue to pray for our young people as they prepare for the Lads to Leaders convention in Orlando. What they are doing is not easy but rewarding!



for all, especially our youth group, who helped make the lectureship a great success!



The Forrest Park church of Christ in Valdosta will host YES Weekend on Feb. 26-28, Let's start making plans now to attend this valuable event.



Since it worked out so well last summer, due to your generous giving, our elders have given the okay to plan another mission trip to Nicaragua, **June 25-July 3, 2016.** Please begin praying now!