

We Need To Talk About Resurrection

David Halbrook

Talking about death naturally leads to the subject of resurrection. This is controversial as many people believe death is the end or that our spirit returns to a new body (reincarnation). Can all ideas be right? No, but God's are.

What man can live and not see death? Can he deliver his life from the power of the grave? (Psa. 89:48). Jesus claimed He would thus deliver Himself and proved it on the first day of the week (Jn. 10:17; 20:1). This is the Lord's Day, the only day the Spirit gave significance to for the church (Rev. 1:10; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2). This day is God's weekly memorial of Jesus' resurrection. In the 4th century a human council declared Easter a holy day of the church worldwide. (See the front page of our website for more on this)

Jesus also said *all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth... to the resurrection of life, or to the resurrection of condemnation* (Jn. 5:28-29). Many people avoid the subject of death and resurrection because they both point to judgment for each deed, public and private (Heb. 9:27; 2 Cor. 5:10). Learn from God how to prepare for that day. Can we help you? (Send us your comments, questions)

Editor's Note: You can use our *Arkansas Weekly* article in several ways this week. The general subject of death and resurrection may be obvious to you but increasingly, fewer people have given either subject much thought. The resurrection of Jesus is obviously related and at this time of year when that subject arises, you should raise the subject of human tradition. If we aren't talking about these things, who will?

Simple opportunities to teach the lost and assist each other.

Pray for: Ed & Janice White, The Ledgerwoods, Novela Puckett, Noleka Hopper, Samuel Southall, others with ongoing trials, and new Christians among us.

Please check the back bulletin board for simple ways you can serve.

Men—please return the sheets which identify how you are willing to lead in the assembly to Courtney Sutton. If you did not receive one, please see him.

Join us each Sunday at 10AM (classes), 10:45AM, & 5PM and Wednesday at 7PM.

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The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*
church of Christ--Quail Valley

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Easter Sunday

Larry Ray Hafley

Pageants and parades, bunnies and bonnets, sunrise services and special shows--you may expect to see this and much more this time of year. Churches will be vying with one another to see which one can put on the most ostentatious display for Easter Sunday. Sadly, even some churches of Christ will enter the competition by playing up to a human tradition (Matt. 15:8, 9).

Easter Sunday, like Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, and the whole spectacle of Lent, is of man. It is not of God. It is not authorized in the New Testament (Matt. 28:20; 2 Thess. 2:15; 2 Jn. 9). In the Bible, there is no annual day set aside to remember the resurrection of Christ. The apostles never advocated Easter Sunday. The first century churches never celebrated it. New Testament Christians never commemorated it. If you doubt those statements, send us passages of Scripture which show that we are wrong, and we will apologize for our remarks.

Therefore, since Easter is not a part of New Testament religion, we can have no part in its observance (1 Cor. 4:6; 2 Thess. 2:15; 2 Tim. 1:13).

However, let us not be puffed up by our correctness in doctrine and worship. Sunday is the Lord's day, the first day of the week. As we did last week, and as we shall do the week following, Lord willing, we must humbly remember our Savior's death this day as he has authorized (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 10:16, 17; 11:24-26). Let us not be lifted up with pride and neglect pure worship in spirit and in truth. It is sometimes easier to condemn the traditions of men than it is to keep the true traditions of God. Let us never fall into that trap.

As individuals, we may otherwise spend the day as we would choose to spend any other day. Christians may look for the groundhog's shadow on February 2nd. They may play an April Fool's joke on April 1st. They may shoot off a firecracker on July 4th. They may enjoy a turkey dinner at Thanksgiving. They may wear a new outfit

on "Easter Sunday" and spend the day with their children eating chocolate rabbits. It is up to them. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind regarding things of that nature.

Meanwhile, in love for the Christ who "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification," let us honor and serve him according to his will today and every day (Rom. 4:25).

"Sound Speech Or Sound Silence?"

Connie Adams

The book of Titus is a divine treatise on the subject of "sound doctrine". Sound doctrine is to be employed in exhorting and convincing the gainsayers. Tit. 1:9. The word "sound" means literally, "in good health" or "wholesome." In reference to teaching it means free from any admixture of error. The design of "sound doctrine" is that the taught be "sound in faith." Tit. 1:13 and 2:1,2. The fruit of "sound doctrine" is living "soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." Tit. 2:12. The vocabulary of "sound doctrine" is "sound speech that cannot be condemned." Tit. 2:8. To employ "sound speech" is to speak "as the oracles of God." 1 Pet. 4:11. Doctrines that are sound can be expressed in language which is scripturally correct. It is when men have doctrines to uphold which are unsound that they must invent unsound terms with which to discuss these doctrines. Every religious movement has been characterized by its own replier vocabulary. A return to the faith and practice of the early church was, and is, impossible without a return to the language of the Scriptures in discussing religious topics.

But the writer would like to point out that the word of God requires sound speech, not silence. Whatever is included in the term "sound doctrine" is to be spoken, not silently contained within. Within the church of our Lord there are a number of practices in some quarters which are contrary to "sound doctrine"; practices which relate to the organization and divine mission assigned the church. There are some preachers who, in private conversation, talk pretty sound, but do not have the courage to speak publicly what they profess in private to believe. Such are greatly in error, for they suppose they shall be approved because of their sound silence. Brethren, if you have any convictions concerning "sound doctrine" then speak up, exercising the vocabulary of sound doctrine-sound speech. A "sound man" ought to feel no hesitation in declaring himself openly on anything which concerns the "whole counsel of God."

Tithing

Heath Rogers

When we talk about church offerings or contributions, it is not uncommon for the question of "tithing" to be raised. Tithing is the practice of giving a tenth of one's income or property as an offering to God. While it is almost always associated with the religious practice of the Jews, tithing was practiced by many ancient nations. The Egyptians, Syrians and Babylonians all used it primarily as a mode of taxation.

There are examples of tithing in the Bible that pre-date the Law of Moses. In Genesis 14:18-20, Abraham gave Melchizedek a tithe of all he had obtained in battle. Jacob promised to give a tenth of everything he received back to God (Genesis 28:22).

The practice of tithing was commanded to the Hebrews and regulated through the Law of Moses (Leviticus 27:30-33). The purpose of this tithe was to meet the material needs of the Levites (who had not received any land inheritance, but instead served God on behalf of the people), strangers, orphans, and widows (Deuteronomy 26:12-13). Tithing was an expression of gratitude and an acknowledgment that everything on the earth belonged to God.

Tithing appears in the New Testament, but there it only refers to its usage in the Old Testament or current Jewish practice. A noticeable change in giving practices took place when the church began. Christians were commanded: "On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come" (1 Corinthians 16:2). The New Testament contains no command for Christians to tithe. Christians are free to choose the amount they give.

Should Christians tithe today? Tithing was a part of the Law of Moses, a law that was done away with on the cross of Christ (Colossians 2:14). The person (or church) who returns to the Law of Moses to bind tithing on himself or others is obligated to accept the entire law (Galatians 5:1-4).

For Christians, giving has to do with attitude, not a specified amount or percentage. "So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7).

The New Testament gives us the freedom to choose how much we want to give. No one (priest, pastor, elder, deacon, etc.) has a right to tell us how much we have to give. We are told to give as we purpose in our heart. If we choose to give ten percent, that is fine. However, we must remember that the amount we give is actually an acknowledgment of God's rich blessings and a reflection of our gratitude.