

WOULD JESUS “ROCK THIS HOUSE” FOR TEN DOLLARS PER HEAD?

David Halbrook

Jesus Christ is our perfect example. On their website, the Ash Flat Church of Christ states that they seek to follow “the examples that He set while He was on this earth.” But their upcoming “Rock This House” weekend contradicts their claim.

If they follow Jesus’ example, why do they charge admission fees to their event and organize a 5K race? Did Jesus charge admission fees? Which church of Christ in Scripture offered a God-filled weekend paid for by a 5K race? Have we forgotten Jesus’ words, *Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!* (John 2:16).

His words “rocked that house” and should do the same today among churches of Christ who abuse God’s words and funds with merchandise by building gyms, cafeterias (falsely called “fellowship halls”), and even *charging admission fees*. God equipped the church with spiritual teachers—not race organizers and ball coaches (Ephesians 4:11; 1 Timothy 3:15).

I doubt sincerity is the problem in Ash Flat, but it has often happened that “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge... because you have forgotten the law of your God...” (Hosea 4:6).

-- *Editor's Note:* Have you ever heard the warning “Its later than we think...”? If not, it was the warning of a gospel preacher trying to help Christians realize how far from the truth many had already strayed. Drifting continues today, and we must be aware of it, avoid fellowship with it, and expose it. Might the above example awaken someone you know, who is influenced by drifting churches of Christ? Then help them find this article in this week’s *Arkansas Weekly*.

Church of Christ—Quail Valley
4104 E. Harrison St.
Batesville, AR 72501
Office- (870) 793-6700

Evangelists:
David Halbrook 569-4491
Lenoard Westbrook 612-8409

The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

Church of Christ--Quail Valley

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WWW.QVCOC.COM

FILLED WITH THE HOLY GHOST

John Isaac Edwards

The argument has been made by those claiming that men today receive Holy Spirit baptism that the expression “filled with the Holy Ghost” or “filled with the Spirit” means Holy Spirit baptism. Let’s take a look at this.

The apostles were “filled with the Holy Ghost.” There is no question that “filled with the Holy Ghost” in Acts 2:4, in connection with the apostles on Pentecost, has reference to their receiving Holy Spirit baptism. The context makes it clear that such was indeed the case. But, the question is: Does “filled with the Holy Ghost” *always* mean Holy Spirit baptism?

John the Baptist was “filled with the Holy Ghost.” In announcing the coming birth of John, the angel said unto Zacharias, “For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother’s womb” (Lk. 1:15). Did John receive Holy Spirit baptism before he was born, and before Holy Spirit baptism was promised?

Elisabeth was “filled with the Holy Ghost.” Luke 1:41 records, “And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost.” If “filled with the Holy Ghost” means “baptized with the Holy Ghost,” then Elisabeth must have received Holy Spirit baptism. Did she?

Zacharias was “filled with the Holy Ghost.” Again it is written, “And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied...” (Lk. 1:67). If Zacharias did not receive Holy Spirit baptism, then “filled with the Holy Ghost” does not always mean “baptized with the Holy Ghost.”

The apostles were again “filled with the Holy Ghost.” When the apostles returned to the disciples and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them, “they lifted up their voice to God” in prayer (Acts 4:23-30). “And when they

had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness” (Acts 4:31). If “filled with the Holy Ghost” means “baptized with the Holy Ghost,” then were the apostles “baptized with the Holy Ghost” again? Did they have to have a refilling of the Holy Ghost?

Christians are to “be filled with the Spirit.” Paul commanded the Ephesians, “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:18-19). This is not Holy Spirit baptism for “be filled with the Spirit” is a command and Holy Spirit baptism was a promise, not a command (Acts 1:4-5). Colossians 3:16, a companion passage, says, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” The Christian is “filled with the Spirit” as he lets the word of Christ dwell in him.

Just because “filled with the Holy Ghost” means baptized with the Holy Ghost in one text does not mean that filled with the Spirit means Holy Spirit baptism in every text. Would you say, “A chicken is a bird. Therefore, every bird is a chicken”?

EXHORTATION

Jeff Smith (www.trainup.org/)

The writer of the Hebrew letter, who preferred to remain anonymous, offered powerful advice: “But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today,’ that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin (3:13).

Exhortation is more than advice, of course; it is part of the will of God, even if some are better at it than others. The Greek word is *Parakaleo* (parakalew); it means, “to console, to encourage and strengthen by consolation, to comfort.” In English, it carries the connotation of communicating courage and confidence to another person. It is the objective behind another of the Hebrew writer’s statements. In tempering his stern rebuke, he added, “Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things – things that belong to salvation” (6:9).

Encouragement is a part of discipleship and is one of the functions of our worship assemblies each week. “And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near” (Hebrews 10:24-25). Perhaps our mere presence affords some a dose of encouragement, but our words and

actions go further. We can promise to pray, offer to help, find things to praise and room to instruct.

Encouragement is also a part of leadership, no matter the setting. Coaches and teachers and platoon leaders have to learn how to communicate confidence to people who may be laboring with self doubt. Parents do great damage when they beat down their children with harsh and discouraging rhetoric, seldom finding anything praiseworthy (Colossians 3:21).

Encouragement in the church, however, is just as vital and more enduring. Preachers can fall into a pattern of only calling out sin and speaking so pessimistically that people become discouraged – about society, the congregation and themselves. Without leaping to the opposite extreme where a positive mental attitude drowns out necessary correction and realistic analysis, the one who teaches must seek balance and always express hopefulness and confidence (First Thessalonians 4:18, 5:14; Acts 13:15).

As a leader, the apostle Paul learned how to balance instruction with encouragement. “Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren,” he told the Romans (15:14). He boasted confidently about the Greeks’ obedience (Second Corinthians 9:4, Philippians 1:6). Today, we look to our shepherds for encouragement and confidence, hoping to find in their words and actions that we are sharing in spiritual progress and optimism.

Barnabas was known as the son of encouragement among the apostles (Acts 4:36). People can become beaten down and awfully discouraged, but if their brethren and leaders are sons of encouragement, they can survive.

“If you become a little squeamish about denouncing false teachers, read Jeremiah. If you think people are so hardened in sin that they hate you for preaching the word, read Jeremiah. A careful study of Jeremiah is good tonic for anyone.”

“To write the word of Christ upon the heart, or, what is essentially the same, to let it dwell in us richly, means more than to commit it to memory. It is to make it the dominant factor in our thinking and in our plans and purposes.”

“The apostles were practical men. Some were fishermen; one, a tax collector. Both callings teach a person not to believe all he hears.”

(R.L. Whiteside, The Kingdom of Promise and Prophecy, p. 17, 99, 45)