

Words of *Truth & Reason*

MARCH 2011 – VOL. I, NO. 3
CHURCH OF CHRIST—QUAIL VALLEY

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE HAVE TO OFFER?

Many Americans read the Bible, but they do not know WHY they should believe it is from God. The Bible offers evidence that it is from God, not man.

Many people view the Bible as a mere “self-help” book. Thus, they typically fail to see more basic truths the Bible offers—such as the proof that it is from God: genuine prophecy. The information found in genuine prophecy is only attributable to God because it is *impossible* for man to know specific future events. For example--

But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting (Micah 5:2).

Evidence inside and outside of Scripture confirms that this was written hundreds of years before Jesus’ birth. How did Micah know that God’s chosen ruler would be born in Bethlehem and that *this* ruler was coming “from everlasting”? Centuries later, Jesus was born in Bethlehem and identified as God’s chosen Ruler, and He is still the only man who came to earth “from everlasting.”

If God is not the author of the Bible, how did Micah get this information hundreds of years before it happened? Contact us with your answer!

Inside This Issue:

- **What Does the Bible Have to Offer?**
- **Three-Part Series: Is One Church As Good As Another?**

Author & Editor: David Halbrook

IS ONE CHURCH AS GOOD AS ANOTHER?

(1 OF 3)

Are all churches good? Is the Church of Scientology and Church of Satan good? Revelation 2-3 proves that God does not approve of all churches for He warned some churches that He would “remove your lampstand.” The lampstand represents God’s approval of a church. Consider three ways of **identifying a church that has God’s approval**:

1. Composed of Christians A Christian is someone saved from sin by Jesus’ blood (Matthew 26:28). This happens when a person with faith in Jesus Christ repents of sin, confesses Jesus, and is baptized for forgiveness from God (Luke 6:46; Acts 2:38; Romans 10:9).

2. Teach the truth Paul preached the whole counsel of God, even when it was controversial (Acts 20:27). In order to have God’s approval, churches must teach God’s whole counsel on topics such as baptism, the Lord’s Supper, divorce, and homosexuality.

3. Practice the truth If they preach truth, churches must “practice what they preach.” Men may not like it, but pleasing God is most important.

IS ONE CHURCH AS GOOD AS ANOTHER? (2 OF 3)

Does God equally approve of ALL churches? Is it possible that a church who once had God's approval could lose His favor?

Revelation 2:5 shows that churches who once pleased God, may lose their lampstand (God's approval). Consider three ways of identifying a church like this.

1. Composed of Christians Who is a Christian? Someone baptized by faith in the working of God to forgive sin by Jesus' blood (Col. 2:12; Rev. 1:5). But Christians may *depart from the faith* (1 Tim. 4:1).

2. Teaching partial error Churches which avoid controversial topics may technically say "We don't teach error." Paul preached "the whole counsel of God" and regularly warned of error (Acts 20:28-31). Do you hear warnings of error, like lascivious dancing and dress, evolution, etc.?

3. Practicing partial error *As for your works, the last are more than the first* (Rev. 2:19). Jesus sees the practices of churches, and He often sees practices He does not approve of. Paul taught the church at Corinth to worship when they came together as a church but to satisfy their hunger at home (1 Cor. 11:18, 22, 34). Today, churches provide food, games, and sports which the family should provide. If churches can entertain children, can churches punish them too? If one, why not the other?

"... I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." (Matt. 16:18)
"The churches of Christ greet you."
(Rom. 16:16)

You are invited to:
Sunday AM
Bible classes: **10:00AM**
Sunday AM Worship:
10:45AM
Sunday PM Worship:
5:00 PM
Wednesday Bible
Classes & Worship:
7:00 PM

IS ONE CHURCH AS GOOD AS ANOTHER? (3 OF 3)

Most Americans believe that all churches are basically equal; that one is just as good as another. But is a church that God approves of, just as good as a church which God has never approved of?

Revelation 2-3 shows that churches may have a "golden lampstand," symbolizing God's approval. But some churches have never had God's approval. How can you know who they are?

1. Composed primarily of non-Christians. How can you have a church that is composed of non-Christians? Keep reading.

2. Teaching some truth and some error Many churches today do not accurately teach how to become a Christian (how to receive the forgiveness of sin). Teachings like "infant baptism," "salvation by faith alone," or "waiting for the Holy Spirit to work a miracle in me to save me" hinder men from receiving God's salvation which makes men Christians (Jesus said, *He that believes and is baptized will be saved*, Mark 16:16). Do such churches teach 100% error? No, but error on this topic has eternal consequences.

3. Practicing some truth and some error False teachings lead to false practices. Read Matthew 7:21 to see how God views those who speak some truth but do not practice His truth.

Questions from this month's articles:

1. What evidence do we have to prove that the Bible is from God?
2. Name three factors that identify a church of whom God approves.
3. Does a church which loses God's approval always teach 100% error?
4. Does God approve of a church that does not accurately teach a sinner how to become a Christian?

* Mail your answers to church of Christ—Quail Valley 4104 East Harrison St, Batesville, AR 72501

* Email your answers to **TruthAndReason@suddenlink.net**

* Do you have other Bible questions we can help you with? Write or call us (870 793-6700; 569-4491)