

Gospel Power



"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation..." (Romans 1:16)

The Gospel Power is published in interest of New Testament Christianity and to enhance the work of the Anderson church.

**Anderson
church of Christ**
5900 Highway 207
Anderson, Alabama

Visit Us On The Web
Anderson-church.org

Men Priviledged To Serve:
Sunday, July 31st:

Bible Classes

Song Leader
..... Jerry Dickey
Bible Reading (1 John 4:11-21)
..... Wesley Phillips
Prayer
..... Scottie Goode

Morning Worship

Song Leader
..... Jerry Dickey
Prayer
..... Monroe Pressnell
Lord's Supper
Presiding Jimmy Glass
Assisting Eddie J. Hammond
Serving Curtis Mosley
..... Ethan Pressnell
..... Mike Rogers
..... Daniel Clemmons
Closing Prayer
..... Larry White

Evening Worship

Song Leader
..... Brian Word
Bible Reading (1 John 2:1-13)
..... Rodney McCrary
Prayer
..... Rocky Rose
Lord's Supper
..... Jimmy Glass
..... Eddie J. Hammond
Closing Prayer
..... Mark McIntyre

Volume XII

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No. 31

The Mystery of Godliness

Mark W. White

"Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory" (1 Timothy 3:16, NIV). Some scholars recognize this summary statement of the life of Christ to be a hymn sung by our first century brethren. But regardless of whether these words were sung or read, they express a truth so wonderful, so weighty, that the world is absolutely baffled by their import. How could God manifest Himself in the flesh? Why would God even want to do such a thing? This is a mystery of our religion – a God who comes near to man. Our God comes so near that He actually became flesh so that He could be where we are and feel what we feel.

Ancient Greeks had their "gods" who possessed fleshly attributes and appetites. In fact, Greek gods were susceptible to the same sins as their human subjects, and mythological literature is filled with examples of the sinful, fleshly exploits of these gods. The idea of a god who understood the flesh then, was not so foreign to ancient minds. The Greeks even believed it was possible for their gods to assume the "likeness of men" (Acts 14:11) and concluded that Paul and Barnabas were fleshly manifestations of Zeus and Hermes. But a god who would allow himself to suffer as a human – even to the point of being put to death by disbelievers, was unfamiliar to the Greek mind. When difficulties presented themselves, the ancient Greek gods would escape the scene and retreat to Mt. Olympus. "Confessedly, great is the mystery of godliness" (Henry Alford's New Testament). Our God is great because, unlike the false mythological gods, He is holy and good. But that is not the only reason.

Our God was “manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up in glory.” Jesus Christ was Divine and also human. Jesus is the mind, heart, and working of God in the likeness of a man. He was not just some smart Jew who fooled the populace into thinking He was the Son of God, because His claim was vindicated by the Spirit. He did His work by the Spirit of God (Matthew 12:28) and through the power of the Spirit God raised Him from the dead (Romans 1:4). Jesus Christ was seen by angels, possibly meaning that being superior to them (Hebrews 1), they beheld His life and work with awe and reverence. Angels not only ministered to the Son while He was in the flesh (Mark 1:13; Luke 22:43), but they also witnessed His resurrection (John 20:12). Jesus was preached to the nations – not to the Jews alone, but to all men everywhere as the Son of God (Acts 13:46-47). Such preaching produced faith in the world-faith confessed by men and women even to their deaths. Jesus Christ was received up in glory where He sits at God’s right hand (Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3,13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22). The story of Jesus begins and ends in Heaven at God’s right hand! He came as a servant; He was treated as a lawbreaker; He was crucified like a criminal; but He arose from the dead and ascended into glory! This is proof positive of His Divine nature. Although once concealed from human eyes, we can now behold “His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

John chapter one states several interesting things about this mystery of God in the flesh. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God” (verse 1). “He was in the world and the world was made by Him, and the world did not know Him” (verse 10). “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...” (verse 14). To declare that the Word became flesh is strong language. John could have said this a bit more palatably, but He did

not. He might have said, “the Word became a body” or “the Word became a man.” But inspiration chose the word “flesh.” Divinity encased in human flesh! What a mystery! How unthinkable! This is an intense way of declaring that God entered this physical, human life. He came near to man. He became like men. He became flesh. Other gods must be sought, but our God seeks us. He “sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh” (Romans 8:3). This God-man never sinned; yet He was tempted in every way the flesh can be tempted. Praise be to God that we can know this mystery. Our heavenly Father understands us because His Son lived where we do. He is our faithful mediator and intercessor, touched with the feelings of our infirmities (Hebrews 7:25; 4:15).

-via *Christianity Magazine*, Vol. 8 No. 7; July 1991.



“Go Away For Now”

Jim Ward

Acts, often called the book of conversions, is also the book of non-conversions. It records about thirteen instances of rejecting the Gospel, including the Sanhedrin (4:13-22); Stephen’s hearers (6:9-14; 7:54-60); Elymas (13:6-12); Jews in Pisidian Antioch (13:42-48); Jews at Iconium (14:1-5); Jews at Thessalonica (17:5-9); the Athenians (17:32-34); Jews at Corinth (18:6, 12-17); Jews at Ephesus (19:9); a Jerusalem mob (22:22); Felix (24:25-27); Agrippa (26:28); and Jews at Rome (28:24-29).

These non-conversions are possibly as instructive as the conversions. We can divide them into two groups: Jews and Gentiles. The Jews largely rejected the Gospel, while as a whole the Gentiles were much more receptive (cf. Acts 13:46-48; 18:5-f; 28:28-f). One thing that both classes have in common is that neither tried to

refute the doctrine of the resurrection, though that was the central theme of the apostles' preaching to all hearers. Why did the Sanhedrin, with the resurrection denying Sadducees in power, remain quiet on the subject? The same verse (Acts 4: 10) that charges Jews with killing Jesus also affirms that He arose from the dead, but though they ultimately objected to the former charge (Acts 5:28), they ignored the latter declaration. What happened to their debating sugar-stick based on the levirate law (cf. Matthew 22:23-33)? Did it look puny in the face of the mighty miracle attributed by the disciples to the risen Christ (4:10) and which the Council could not deny (Acts 4: 16)? On the other hand, the best the Gentiles offered in refutation of the resurrection was mockery and, possibly, polite evasion (Acts 17:32).

The common thread in Jewish resistance was stubbornness: *"Go to this people and say: Hearing you will hear; and shall not understand; and seeing you will see, and not perceive; for the heart of this people has grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest they should understand with their heart and turn, so that I should heal them"* (Acts 28:26,27; Isaiah 6:9-f). Jesus used this text in the same way (Matthew 13:14f; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:39-f). The Sanhedrin showed this spirit when, though they could not deny the healing of the lame man, they set themselves against the power or name (Acts 4:7, 17-f) behind the wonderful deed. As prejudice against the Gentiles (Acts 22:22) and envy (Acts 13:45; 17:5) came into play, it is clear why Stephen called their kind stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears (Acts 7:51).

No specific reason is given for Agrippa's refusal. Still, his story is valuable because it teaches us that almost is not enough. Perhaps he and Felix are meant to remind us that not many wise, or noble are called (1 Corinthians 1:26).

Finally, poor Elymas seems to epitomize the Jews. He wanted blindness, he got blindness. One wonders if, when his sight returned, he ever saw

anything!

Turning now to Gentile rejecters, we look to Felix. He refused Christ, even though he was touched enough to tremble at Paul's preaching. If only he had imitated the smitten Pentecostians, what a happy day that would have been! However, personal convenience (24:25), love of money (v. 26) and politics (v. 27) squelched any inclination he may have had to obey the Gospel.

That leaves the Athenians. Their love of human wisdom kept them from the truth. They doted on telling or hearing some new thing (17:21). Later Paul wrote about such attitudes. *"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God... For since in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe"* (1 Corinthians 1:18,21).

The non-conversions in Acts were not due to a faulty message or incompetent teaching. The trouble was in the hearts of the hearers. That reminds us of two things. First, we must fight against blindness and love of earthly wisdom in ourselves. And then we must not become discouraged if people reject our teaching. We stand in good company, for so they rejected Jesus and the apostles.

-via *Think On These Things* Texarkana, Arkansas.

News & Notes

THE SICK: *Sissy Clemmons* is at home recovering with her broken ankle ... *Ronnie Phillips* is scheduled to have back surgery on Wednesday in Florence ... *Virginia Lovell* has been down with her back and has been unable to be out ... *Tisha Rogers' grandmother, Elizabeht Tucker*, receive a good report from her arteriogram done on Monday ... *Eric White's father, Jim White*, is at home ... *Leota Springer's husband, Bob Springer*, continues to deal with dialysis... *Myrtie*

Williams is at home ... *Judy Williams' mother, Flossie Kazzaire*, continues in a nursing facility in Fayette ... *Tisha Thomas' mother, Shelia Johnson*, is now at home from Vanderbilt Hospital, but will be returning this week to begin her stem cell treatment ... *Faye Hammond's nephew, Donnie Cox*, is in the ECM hospital in Florence... *Helen Stewart* is to have surgery on August 11th in Huntsville ... *Wanda Tucker's father, Billy Letson*, continues at home ... *James McConnell's mother, Della Mae McConnell*, is at home ... *Monroe Pressnell's aunt, Mildred Pressnell*, is at home ... *Helen Stewart's grandson, Adam Stewart*, is awaiting a kidney transplant ... *Mattie Blanche Word* is at home... *Shannon Johnson*, continues at home ... *Tisha Thomas' grandmother, Nellie Hunter*, is in the Meadow Brook Nursing Home in Pulaski

OUT OF TOWN: *The Cooks: Angie, Dennis, Will and Peyton* were out of town on vacation last week, but are now home... *The Roses: Rocky and Donna* have been in Florida this past week for a wedding... *Wynell Ridgeway* is also in Florida attending the wedding... *The Stewarts: Stephen, Valerie, Michelle and Trenton* are out of town this week on vacation.... *The Rogers: Mike, Tisha, Zack, and Jacob* are out of town this weekend in Georgia.

BAPTISM: We are rejoicing over the decision of *Jacob Rogers* to be baptized into Christ this past Friday afternoon. We appreciate the good and tender heart of Jaocb and wish for him many years to serve the Lord faithfully. We are blessed at Anderson with many fine young people, let us remember to encourage them.

GOSPEL MEETINGS: The *East Florence church* in Florence is beginning a meeting today and it will continue through Friday with services at 7:00 p.m. *Harry Osborne of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma* will be the speaker.

THE RECORD: *For the week of July 24th*

Sunday: Bible Classes 99
 Morning Worship 120
 Evening Worship 86
Wednesday: Bible Classes 92

Schedule of Services

Sunday
 Bible Classes 9:45 a.m.
 Morning Worship 10:45 a.m.
 Evening Worship 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday
 Bible Classes 7:00 p.m.

Elders

Michael Clemmons (256) 247-0836
 Scottie Goode (256) 247-1451
 Monroe Pressnell (256) 232-0780

Deacons

Jimmy Glass (256) 247-0571
 Mark McIntyre (256) 233-1953
 Phil Pressnell (256) 232-8509
 Rocky Rose (256) 247-0011
 Larry White (256) 247-0988
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