Floral Heights
Church of Christ
1814 Buchanan, Wichita Falls, Texas 76309

Schedule of Services
Sunday Worship:
9:30 AM Bible Study
10:30 AM Worship
6:00 PM Worship

Wednesday:
7:30 PM Bible Study

The Floral Heights Informer

Clips from Psalms
Psalms 97:6-7
Jehovah's Power and Dominion

"The heavens declare God's righteousness, and all the peoples have seen his glory. Let all them be put to shame that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him, all ye gods."

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Babylon

Babylon was a fortified city within the region of southern Mesopotamia (modern south Iraq) known as Babylonia and later identified as Chaldea. Throughout the OT and NT Babylon stands as a city and nation opposed to God and his people. The development of Babylonia involves the demise of Judah at the providential hands of Jehovah God. Babylon would be God’s battle axe against the rebellious people of Judah (Jeremiah 51:20). Jeremiah tells us that Babylon was God’s servant providentially brought to power to bring down Jerusalem (Jeremiah 25:8-9; 51:20). Like fishermen with nets and hunters with bows they would come after those of Judah and none would escape (Jeremiah 16:16-17). Though Babylon was God's servant they were not above his divine laws. Eventually, their reign of terror would end at the hands of the Almighty (Jeremiah 25:12; 50:14).

Babylon Becomes a World Power

The Assyrian Empire had reached a level of world dominance during the days of Isaiah under Tiglath-pileser. Their world dominance, however, was soon to falter. Secular history records the fall of Assyria during the days of Josiah. The Medes were gaining world supremacy at the weakening of Assyria under the King Cyaxares. Their dominance stretched over parts of Assyria, Mesopotamia, Babylonia, and Cilicia. During the year 605 BC Saracus was pronounced king in place of his father Cyaxares over the Medes. Saracus appointed Nabopolassar (father of Nebuchadnezzar) to be governor of the province of Babylon. Twenty years later, 565 BC, the Medes and Babylonians marched on the Assyrian capital of Nineveh and defeated them. The treasures and land of Assyria was shared between the Medes and Babylonians. All the land lying on the western bank of the Tigris fell to the share of Nabopolassar of Babylon. The land lying west of the Euphrates was occupied by Egypt.
Pharaoh Necho of Egypt was at war with Assyria during the Medes and Babylonians’ conflict with Assyria. Necho had marched through Palestine and killed Josiah as he went out in an attempt to stop the Egyptians (2 Kings 23:29ff; 2 Chronicles 35:20ff). The Egyptian king made Eliakim, son of Josiah, king in his father's stead and changed his name to Jehoiakim. Necho continued his quest through Syria. Necho made it as far as Carchemish when the Babylonians and Medes defeated Nineveh.

After defeating Assyria and dividing up their territory Nabopolassar entrusted the command of his army to his son Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar immediately marched on Egypt at Carchemish and defeated the Egyptians and Necho on the Euphrates. Nebuchadnezzar pursued the Egyptians through Syria and Palestine and at the same time overtook Judah, making Jehoiakim a vassal king in 565 BC. He carried away much of the temple’s treasures and many Jewish youths, including Daniel (see 2 Kings 24:1; 2 Chronicles 36:6ff). Jeremiah's prophetic proclamation of Judah spending 70 years in Babylonian captivity began (see Jeremiah 25:8ff). Over the next twenty years, Judah would exist under the subjection to Babylon with two more major attacks and deportation of its citizens at 555 BC and 544 BC. The final attack decimated Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the temple of Jehovah and burned the entire city with its walls down to the ground (2 Kings 25:8-12). Babylon had done their God ordained work yet remained subject to the same wrath of God that they released upon Judah.

Next Week Part Two of "Babylon"

We shall examine Babylon's sin and God's oracle against them. The lesson is simple. No man or nation is above the laws of God.

The Christian

Luke writes, "The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26). The word "Christian" is used very loosely today. The American Heritage Dictionary defines the Christian as "Professing belief in Jesus as Christ or following the religion based on his teachings" (271). The 2004 Annual Editions on World Religion estimates that there are approximately 30,000 different denominations claiming to follow Christ. A "denomination" is "A name; designation, classification, organized group of religious congregations" (AHD 381). Denominationalism is "Advocacy of the principles of denominationalism... strict adherence to a denomination" (AHD 381). If you were a child that did not grow up in a Christian home yet came to be interested in the eternity of your soul how would you determine what church to attend. You have 30,000 different choices in the circle of Christianity. Maybe you would like to try one of the other current 10,000 different religions such as Buddhism or Hinduism. What will determine what direction you take? Why not start at the source of religion, the Word of God.

I. The Word of God

A. The Word of God establishes truth (see 1 Corinthians 12:1-3)
B. The Word of God is eternal (Proverbs 8:22-26)
C. God has eternal knowledge of Christ (Genesis 3:15; 12:1-2; Galatians 3; Isaiah 53), his church (Isaiah 2:1ff), Jeremiah 31:31ff; Acts 2:1ff), and the individual Christian (Ephesians 1:3; Acts 2:38).
D. Those who do not measure up to God's standard of righteousness and justice are not his (Isaiah 28:17; 1 John 3:10).

II. Truth on How People become Christians

A. Shall I turn to a denominational preacher or the word of God?
B. Is there any above reproach (1 John 4:1-4)?
C. Consider the book of Acts
   1. First gospel sermon after resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:38)
   2. Church grows by the preaching of the apostles (Acts 4:4; 5:14; 6:1).
   3. Philip converts people of Samaria (Acts 8:5-6, 12-13) and the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-39)

III. Baptism for the Forgiveness of Sins (Acts 2:38)

A. Baptism saves (2 Peter 3:20-22; Hebrews 9:11-14).
B. Jesus (Matthew 3:16) and the Apostles (Acts 22:16) were baptized.
C. Baptism comes from a Greek word that means "to dip in or under water, immerge (submerge in liquid as if to disappear)... metaphorically,. over head and ears in debt" (LS 14, 146).
D. To baptize a person under water would mean that "much water" is needed (see Mark 1:4-5 and Acts 8:36-39).

Conclusion

Why do we believe, practice, and hold to any religion? What do you base your faith on? When we open the Bible we find that it gives precise identity to Jesus, his church, and how one becomes a Christian. Jesus tells us that there is one church that belongs to him (Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4; Romans 16:16) and one way of entering that church (Acts 2:38). Remaining in that one church is up to the individual (Revelation 2:10). Are you a member of the church we read of in the Bible?