

# 4th & Stewart church of Christ

"...upon this rock I will build my church;  
and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."  
~ Matthew 16:18



December 24, 2017

## Contact Us:

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## Meeting Times:

### Sunday:

Bible Study .....9:45 AM  
Worship .....10:40 AM  
Care, Inc. Service .... 2:30 PM  
Worship ..... 6:00 PM

### Wednesday:

Ladies Bible Class.10:00 AM  
Bible Study ..... 7:00 PM

## Elders:

Gene Bannister..... Billy Chism

## Deacons:

Mike Bannister..... Don Smith

James Thomas

## Preacher:

Johnny McCaghren

## Works We Support:

Cherokee Home for Children  
Gospel Broadcast Network  
Heart of Texas Bible Camp (Bangs)  
House to House, Heart to Heart  
Mission Printing  
Rohan Jones, Africa  
The Truth in Love  
World Bible School

Let us know if you want to study  
the Bible to know more about  
Christ and His Church.

The following article by the late brother B. C. Goodpasture (1895 - 1977) was originally published in the Gospel Advocate, December 18<sup>th</sup>, 1969. It is worthy of consideration, especially his closing question. Johnny



To the humble shepherds out on the Jordan hills the angel brought the startling announcement, *"Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord"* (Luke 2:10-11). It is worthy of note that this announcement was not made to the Pharisee in the synagogue nor to the priest in the temple; not to the Roman governor in Caesarea nor to Augustus the Emperor in Rome, but to the lowly shepherds out in the field.

The Saviour was born of the virgin Mary. A miracle was involved in His birth. He had no human father. The Holy Spirit came upon Mary and the power of the Most High overshadowed her. Not only was the birth of our Saviour miraculous, it was also a virgin birth; not only a virgin birth, but it was also an advent. He came. He had been with the Father *"before the world was."* Christ, *"the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us"* (John 1:14). Matthew tells how Joseph came to know about it. John, writing after Mathew and Luke had written, merely states that the *"Word became flesh;"* but does not tell how. This had already been related.

There is a remarkable passage in the Galatian Epistle (4:4) about the coming of Christ: *"But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law."* This passage assumes the virgin birth. Note that God *"sent forth his Son."* This implies his pre-existence. He was *"born of a woman,"* *"made of a woman"* (RV), this suggests the virgin birth. Ordinarily genealogy was reckoned

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For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs— heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. **Romans 8:15-17**

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from the father's side of the house.

It was in the "fullness of the time" that Jesus came. This means that preparations had been made of his coming. The Jews had made their contribution as God's covenant people in that they had received and preserved the knowledge of the true God. They had held aloft the torch of revealed truth for centuries. The Romans had unconsciously made certain valuable contributions against the time of the Savior's coming. They had given the world the conception of universal and government. They had reduced robbery on the land and piracy on the seas. They had built roads to all the important centers of population in the empire – roads that would be remembered more because they were traveled by messengers of the cross than that they were built by the Caesars. The Greeks contributed the vehicle of transportation for the gospel message. They prepared the language in which the New Testament was written. Not the stately language of the poets and the orators, but the language of the common people, the koine. Besides, there was a general expectation, even among the Greeks and Romans, that a deliverer would be born among the Jews. This may have been due to the knowledge of Hebrew prophecy, made accessible to the Gentiles by the translation of the Old Testament into Greek about three hundred years before Christ. Also, the temple of Janus, open in time of war, was closed for the first time in about four hundred years. Truly it was in the "fullness of the time."

No man knows the exact date of Jesus' birth. It has been set in every month of the year. It is quite certain that he was not born on December 25. At the time of his birth the shepherds were out in the field keeping watch over their flocks by night. They did not do this after the cold, rainy season began in October, until after winter was over. The presence of the shepherds in the fields at night is conclusive evidence that it was before December. But if we knew the exact date of the Saviour's birth, we would have no right to celebrate it without some com-

mand to do so. To celebrate it without any authority is to do so without faith; and, consequently, is wrong.

But there are millions of people who have never heard that Jesus was born in Bethlehem centuries ago. They have a right to know about his coming and mission. The angel, speaking to the shepherds, said that he brought "good tidings of great joy" which should be to all the people." But it cannot be good tidings of great joy" to those who have not heard about it. It is our solemn duty to relay the joyous words of the angel to those who have not heard them, to tell those who sit in darkness that the Light has come.

This troubled world needs the wonderful message of the angelic anthem, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased." Only as men lay aside their ancient hates and unholy ambitions and accept the principles of the Prince of Peace can they be prosperous and happy. Christ can banish the fear and anxiety that haunt the world if men will let him. He alone can lead the race out of the miseries and tragedies of its own making onto the sunlit heights of peace and good will.

Finally, what does it mean to you that a Saviour is born?

B. C. Goodpasture (Gospel Advocate [18 Dec. 1969]: 806, 809)

## Baptism and the New Birth

A major cleavage within Christendom pertains to the point at which the "new birth" occurs. Most of Christendom maintains that a person is born again, and thus has sin washed away by the blood of Christ, when that person "accepts Jesus Christ as his personal savior." By this expression, it is meant that a person must mentally and/or orally decide to embrace Christ as the Lord of his life. Hence, the new birth is seen simply as a determination of the will—a moment in time when the person accepts Christ in his mind and couples that decision with an oral confession.

The passage in the New Testament that alludes specifically to being born again pertains to a conversation that Jesus had with a high-ranking Jewish official:

There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and

### Television

The Truth In Love (Robert Dodson)

Sunday @ 7:00am on KTAB

In Search of the Lord's Way (Phil Sanders)

Sunday @ 7:30am on KTAB

Life In The Light (Chris McCurley)

Sunday @ 10:00am on KTAB

### Radio

Preaching the Word (Michael Light)

Sunday @ 9:00am on KOXE 101.3

### Internet

TheGospelRadioNetwork.org

Gospel Broadcasting Network (Gbnv.org)

### God's Plan for Redeeming Man

**Hear** Learn the saving message of Christ's sacrifice (1 Cor. 1:18; Rom. 10:17).

**Believe** Jesus is the Son of God (John 8:24)

**Confess** Jesus as your Lord, Lawgiver, and King (Rom. 10:9-10; Matt. 10:32-33)

**Repent** of your sinful conduct (Luke 13:3,5)

Complete your initial obedience to the gospel by being **baptized** for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16)

**Live faithfully** (Rev. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:7-8)

### Bible Reading Schedule

**Dec. 24** Zechariah 3-4; Revelation 7-8

**Dec. 25** Zechariah 5-6; Rev. 9-10

**Dec. 26** Zechariah 7-8; Rev. 11-12

**Dec. 27** Zechariah 9-10; Rev. 13-14

**Dec. 28** Zechariah 11-12; Rev. 15-16

**Dec. 29** Zechariah 13-14; Rev. 17-18

**Dec. 30** Malachi 1-2; Revelation 19-20

**Dec. 31** Malachi 3-4; Revelation 21-22

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."



### Visitation Meeting

- ◆ Each Sunday night immediately before the evening worship. Last week **42 contacts** were made.

### Announcements

- ◆ Johnny and Cindy are out of town this week. **Bryan Braswell**, from San Angelo, will teach Bible class and preach this morning. **James Fuller** will bring the lesson this evening.
- ◆ We will have a **New Year's Eve Party** following evening services on December 31<sup>st</sup>. Bring snack/finger foods, games, etc.
- ◆ There will be a **baby shower**, Saturday, January 6, from 2:00pm to 4:00pm, in our fellowship hall, for **Caitlyn and Ryan Settles**. They are expecting a girl, **Riley**. Selections are at Wal-Mart.
- ◆ On Wednesday evening, **January 10<sup>th</sup>**, **Delton McGuire** will present a lesson entitled "**Social Media for Grandparents**." In today's world of sexting, cyberbullying and online predators, it is important that we can talk to our youth about these things from a Christian perspective.

### Upcoming Special Events at 4th & Stewart

- ◆ Dec. 31—New Year's Eve Party.
- ◆ March 25-28—Spring Gospel Meeting w/ Rick Brumback.

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said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is **born again**, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, **unless one is born of water and the Spirit**, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be **born again**'" (John 3:1-7, emp. added).

In an effort to avoid identifying "water" (vs. 5) as water baptism, many within Christendom in the last half century have proposed a variety of novel interpretations. For example, some have proposed that "water" is a reference to the Holy Spirit. While it certainly is true that John uses the word "water" symbolically to represent the Spirit later in his book (7:38-39), that fact had to be explained by the inspired writer. However, in chapter three, the normal, literal meaning is clearly in view, not only because water baptism throughout the New Testament is consistently associated with the salvation event (e.g., Acts 2:38; 8:12-13,36-38; 9:18; 10:47-48; 16:15,33; 18:8; 19:5; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:12; Heb. 10:22; 1 Pet. 3:21), but even in this context, eighteen verses later, the term clearly has a literal meaning: "Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there" (John 3:23). Additionally, if "water" in John 3:5 is an allusion to the Holy Spirit, the result would be nonsensical: "unless one is born of the Spirit and the Spirit."

Another quibble offered in an effort to avoid the clear import of John 3:5 is that "water" is a symbol for the blood of Jesus. Of course, no rationale exists for making such a connection. Elsewhere John refers explicitly to water and blood, but clearly distinguishes them from each other in their import (1 John 5:6).

Perhaps the most popular notion, advanced only in recent years, is that "water" is a reference to a pregnant woman's "water"—i.e., the amniotic fluid that accompanies the physical birth of a child. However, this suggestion likewise fails to fit the context of Jesus' remarks. In fact, Nicodemus himself thought that Jesus was referring to physical birth ("mother's womb"). But Jesus corrected his misconception, and contrasted such thinking with the intended meaning of "water and Spirit." Indeed, Jesus would not have told

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## Celebrate

*"Rejoice with those who rejoice..." (Romans 12:15)*

**December Birthdays:** Lee Tenery (6), Estelle Guthrie (7), Laverne Thomas (13), Kaci Churchwell (18), Linda Griffith (20), Mia Stroope (22), **John R. McCaghren (27)**.

**December Anniversaries:** Allen & Linda Griffith (20), David & Glenda Milam (20), **Ken & Jo Maninger (25)**.

Mistakes? Left Out? Let Johnny know...



## Records

	Dec. 10, 2017	Dec. 17, 2017
Bible Class	36	53
AM Worship	56	61
PM Worship	41	44
Wednesday PM	44	38
Contribution	\$1,586	\$1,766

	This Week: 12/24/17	Next Week: 12/31/17		
<b>Sunday AM:</b>	Song Leader: Ken Maninger	Song Leader: Tom Wilcox	<b>December 2017</b> <b>Make Announcements:</b> James Fuller <b>Prepare Communion:</b> Dennis Family <b>Clean Building:</b> Randy & Laura Huckaby  <b>January 2018</b> <b>Make Announcements:</b> Don Smith <b>Prepare Communion:</b> McCaghren Family <b>Clean Building:</b> McCaghren Family	
<b>Greeters</b>	Dennis Family	Allen & Linda Griffith		
<b>Opening Prayer</b>	Ken Maninger	Gene Bannister		
<b>Communion</b>	Rafe Smith*, Joe Dennis Larry Petty, Hank Wheeler	James Thomas*, Jack Turner Ken Maninger, Chase Churchwell		
<b>Closing Prayer</b>	Gene Bannister	Allen Griffith		
<b>Attendance Cards</b>	Ian Barnum	Jaceten Evetts		
<b>Sunday PM:</b>	Song Leader: Ken Maninger	Song Leader: Tom Wilcox		
<b>Opening Prayer</b>	Allen Griffith	James Fuller		
<b>Scripture Reading</b>	Don Smith	Ryan Rudloff		
<b>Communion</b>	Rafe Smith	James Thomas		
<b>Closing Prayer</b>	John Barnum	Joe Dennis		
<b>Wednesday Devotionals:</b>	December 27 Joe Dennis	January 3 Prayer Night	January 10 Delton McGuire	January 17 Rafe Smith

## Search the Scriptures

*Be like the Bereans who "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (Acts 17:11)*

<b>Studies for the week of December 24, 2017</b>	Sunday Class .....	<b>Bryan Braswell</b>
	Wed. Class .....	<b>TBA</b>

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Nicodemus that he needed to be born physically ("water"). He would not have included the act of physical birth in His listing of prerequisites to entering the kingdom. That would make Jesus say that before a person can enter the kingdom he or she must first be a person! What would be the point of stating such a thing? [Would it perhaps be to ensure that everyone understands that non-humans (i.e., animals) cannot enter the kingdom?!] Later in the same chapter, did John baptize near Salim "because there was much amniotic fluid there"?

If one cares to consult the rest of the New Testament in order to allow the Bible to be its own best interpreter, and in order to allow the Bible to harmonize with itself, additional passages shed light on the meaning of John 3:5. According to the rest of the New Testament, spiritual **conception** occurs when the Gospel (i.e., the seed of the Holy Spirit—Lk. 8:11) is implanted in the human heart and mind (Jas. 1:18; 1 Cor. 4:15; Eph. 6:17; 1 Pet. 1:23). The Word of God, in turn, generates penitent faith in the human heart (Rom. 10:17) that leads the individual to obey the Gospel by being baptized in water (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; Heb. 10:22). The resulting condition of the individual is that he or she is now a child of God, a citizen of the kingdom, and member of the church of Christ (Mt. 28:19-20; Gal. 3:26-27; Rom. 6:4).

Additional verses in the New Testament clarify and cinch this meaning of John 3:5, pinpointing the "new birth," while also allowing us to understand the activity of the Holy Spirit in the act of conversion. Consider the following chart (Wayne Jackson [1988], "The New Birth: What is It?," *Christian Courier*, 24:14, August):

	John 3:5	Spirit	Water	Kingdom
1 Cor. 12:13	Spirit	Baptized	Body	
Eph. 5:26	Word	Washing/Water	Cleansed Church	
Titus 3:5	Renewal of Spirit	Washing of Regeneration	Saved by Mercy	

These verses demonstrate that God achieves conversion through the Gospel message authored by the Holy Spirit. When a person comes to an understanding (Acts 8:30) of the that inspired message, his penitent faith leads him to submit to water immersion for the remission of sins (Acts 8:36,38; 10:47). The result of his obedient response to the Gospel is that he is saved and cleansed from past sin and instantaneously placed into the kingdom of Christ.

Notice that submission to the divine plan of salvation does not mean that humans save themselves by effecting their own salvation. Their obedience does not earn or merit their forgiveness. Rather, the terms or conditions of salvation are stipulated **by God**—not by humans—and are a manifestation of **His** mercy! When people submit to the terms of entrance into the kingdom of Christ, they are saved by the blood of Jesus and the grace of God—not their own effort! Water immersion is not to be viewed as a "work of righteousness which we have done" (Titus 3:5). When we submit to baptism, we are being saved by "the kindness and love of God our Savior" (Titus 3:4). We are being saved "according to His mercy" (Titus 3:5).

Dave Miller (apologeticspress.org)