



**Forest Hill  
Church of Christ**

3950 Forest Hill-Irene Rd.  
Memphis, TN 38125

Office: (901) 751-2444  
Fax: (901) 751-9711  
Info Line: (901) 531-8849  
[www.foresthillchurch.org](http://www.foresthillchurch.org)

**Elders:**

Anthony D. Callahan  
Floyd M. Hayes  
Harold D. Mangrum  
Leonard Watson

**Ministers:**

Barry M. Grider, Pulpit  
Matthew Martin, Associate  
Douglas Alvarenga, Hispanic

**VISIT US SOON!**

**Sunday:**

Bible Study..... 9:30 A.M.  
Morning Worship.....10:30 A.M.  
Evening Worship..... 6:00 P.M.

**Wednesday:**

Bible Study .....7:00 P.M.

**HOME OF THE  
MEMPHIS SCHOOL  
OF PREACHING**

[www.msop.org](http://www.msop.org)

**Missions Supported:**

Far East/World Evangelism  
Gospel Broadcasting Network  
Iglesia de Cristo (Getwell)  
In Search of the Lord's Way  
Kakinada, India  
Manila, Philippines  
Murmansk, Russia  
Truth for the World  
Words of the Master (Memphis  
Time Warner Cable ch17)

Volume 33

August 8, 2006

Number 31

**HOW CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE ALIKE  
ON HOW THE CHURCH SHOULD BE ORGANIZED?**

**BARRY M. GRIDER**

*[Editor's Note: The Power Lectures, hosted by the Southaven Church of Christ and directed by B.J. Clarke, just concluded. Once again, the Word of God was exalted and great fellowship among God's people was enjoyed. This year's theme was "How Can We Understand the Bible Alike?" The following was my contribution to the lectureship book. You may obtain this year's excellent volume, with every speaker's message, by calling (662)393-2690.]*

The church of Christ is the most precious institution on earth. God predetermined a plan whereby sinful man could be saved and His plan included the church.

To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord (Eph. 3:10,11).

Those who are saved are found only in one place today and that place is the church (Acts 2:47). Many institutions have arisen to aid mankind, yet in none of them is God glorified. He is glorified only in the church of Christ (Eph. 3:21). Many say the church has nothing to do with our salvation. Yet, Paul wrote, concerning Jesus and his relationship with the church, "... he gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25). Suppose you were able to view the mangled body of Jesus as He suffered on the cross, and suppose you asked Him why He was dying such a horrible death, and you heard him reply, "I am dying to purchase the church." Suppose you then were to ask, "Is the church important to our salvation?" Can you imagine him responding, by saying, "that the church has nothing to do with our salvation?" Of course, you cannot. The church has everything to do with our salvation. If, therefore, the church is of such value, should we not carefully consider its terms of entrance, pattern of worship, mission, and organization? The latter shall be the focus of this study.

**Pattern Authority**

Since Jesus is the head of the church (Eph. 1:22, 23; Col. 1:18), He has all authority. Paul wrote, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3:17). Everything we do in matters pertaining to religion must have the authority of Christ behind it. Yet most religious people, including many members of the Lord's church, seemingly miss this point. The Bible is God's will for mankind. It is His all sufficient word. Peter wrote, "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (2 Pet. 1:3).

Has God given us a pattern? He gave those under the old covenant a pattern. "And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount" (Exo. 25:40). Paul, writing to those of us under the new covenant, stated, "Hold fast the form [pattern] of sound words, which thou hast heard of me in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 1:13).

Jesus, likewise, gave authority to His chosen apostles. When speaking about

(continued on page 2)

the establishment of the church, Jesus wrote,

And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys to the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven (Matt 16:18,19).

Therefore, when the apostles spoke, the authority of heaven was behind their teaching. On the day of Pentecost, Peter and the rest of the apostles preached the gospel and that message was divinely sent and approved. Their teaching was accompanied by the miraculous, which gave credence that they spoke words from on high. Some three thousand accepted the apostle's message that day and each soul was added to the number of the saved (Acts 2:41). What happened then? Did they just disperse and go their separate ways? No!

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together and had all things common (Acts 2:42-44).

So from the above passage we notice these early Christians or Disciples were in some way organized.

In one of the most succinct and concise statements concerning the organization of the New Testament church, the following was penned, "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons" (Phil. 1:1). The word bishop carries the idea of overseer. Paul speaking to such brethren at Ephesus stated, "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

Those who serve as bishops are, also, called elders. Hence, their spiritual maturity is emphasized. Peter stated:

The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's

heritage, but being ensamples to the flock (1 Pet. 5:1-3).

Concerning the appointment of these elders or bishops, Paul stated to Titus, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee" (Tit. 1:5). Elders in every city means elders in every congregation of the Lord's people. On Paul's first missionary journey, he and Barnabas, "ordained elders in every church..." (Acts 14:23).

Always a plurality of men, the elders of a specific congregation only have authority over their specific congregation. Keep in mind that not one elder by himself has authority but the authority lies with the eldership. Where does their authority lie? Certainly not in matters of faith, for these matters have already been determined. Rather their authority lies in matters of judgment or in matters of expedience. For the church to function properly, there must be leadership. The elders provide such leadership and they are the decision makers in matters that pertain to each congregation. The Thessalonian brethren were reminded,

And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves, and to all men (1 Thess. 5: 12,13).

Do the elders have qualifications they must meet in order to serve? Indeed they do:

This is a true saying. If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil (1 Tim. 3:1-7).

So we can see from the above passages that those who serve as elders or bishops are good men who love the Lord, His truth, and His people.

(continued next week)

## **A PERFECT FIT FOR SATAN (part 3)**

**Matthew Martin**

### **AM I UNCOMFORTABLE WHEN SOMEONE DISCUSSES SPIRITUAL THINGS WITH ME?**

When you meet someone who is a fanatic NFL fan, he usually is more than happy to discuss his favorite team. The same could be said about a person and his favorite song, or his favorite book. If someone really is crazy about something he will gladly talk about it.

Some Christians, however, get uncomfortable when spiritual things are discussed. Have you ever been around someone who just squirmed and looked all over the place, when talking to the preacher about a religious topic? Whatever the reason for their being uncomfortable, the fact is they ought not find talking about spiritual matters as something awkward.

Consider when Jesus' was tempted of Satan (Matt. 4). With each temptation Jesus responded with a verse of Scripture. Would a person who found it difficult talking about the Bible, be able to handle those temptations? Probably not. If you cannot talk about the spiritual bread with a friend, you certainly would have trouble doing so with the devil himself. It could be, through introspection you realize you have that character trait. If so, make the change, and strive to fit better with God, than Satan.

### **AM I ONE PERSON ON SUNDAY, AND A WHOLE DIFFERENT PERSON ON MONDAY AND TUESDAY?**

Hypocrisy means to live a lie; to be a human contradiction; a walking deceit. Basically, it is the perfect character trait of the devil himself. Ask yourself: how do I act on Sunday? Am I always smiling, always shaking hands, paying attention. Now compare that "you" to the "you" during the week. Is there a difference?

Consider some verses on the subject:

"Ye that love the Lord, hate evil" (Psa 97:10).

Can I love the Lord on Sunday and not love Him on Monday? Yes, by not hating evil on Monday.

In Proverbs 6, we learn there are seven things God hates. One of which is "a false witness that speaketh lies" (Pro. 6:19). Ask yourself: Is my life between services a walking lie? Or maybe: Is my life *during* services the lie? Either way, God hates hypocrisy. A hypocritical life has nothing in common with God. It is, however, a perfect fit for Satan.

Non-Profit  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
GERMANTOWN, TN  
PERMIT #94

**The Forest Hill News**  
Forest Hill Church of Christ  
3950 Forest Hill Irene Road  
Germantown, TN 38125  
Address Service Requested