

# THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

September 2

2018

## PROPER VIEW OF THE BIBLE

People look upon the Bible in different ways. Some view it as the word of God while others see it as simply an antique book, preserved through the ages because of the religious beliefs of people. How do you view it? And even among those who believe it to be the word of God there is a difference in how they look upon the things it teaches. Among those ways of looking at the Bible as God's word are the following:

1. We can do anything the Bible does not specifically forbid.
2. We can do only those things the Bible authorizes. Do you view the Bible in one of these ways? Which? I believe the proper view of the Bible is #2 and here are my reasons for so believing.

The Bible says it is sufficient to guide man to every good work that God wants him to perform (2 Tim. 3:16,17). Paul warned the Corinthians about the danger of going beyond that which was written (1 Cor. 4:6). Peter told the saints to whom he wrote that God had given them all things that pertained to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:1-4). When John wrote his short letter to the elect lady he warned her that anyone who went beyond the teaching of Christ did not have God's blessing (2 John 9-11). If the Bible IS the word of God and IF he meant what he said in these passages, then the only logical conclusion one can reach is that we can only do those things the Bible authorizes IF we are going to please God. Now, if we admit the Bible to be the word of God then we are bound to view in this way if we want to please him. It would be unreasonable for God to give a book of instructions and then to bless people who simply did everything that he did not specifically forbid! Why not just give a book of "thou shall not" and then tell us everything else goes? No, God gave us a book telling us THE THINGS HE WANTS DONE and if we want to receive his blessing then we have to follow these instructions.

I recognize we have to study and rightly divide (2 Tim. 2:15) what God has written. Sometimes this may be a little complicated as we strive to understand what is said and how it is to be applied. We have to make a distinction between simple statements of fact, commands, examples, etc., but after we have done all of that we still have to settle on some view of how we look at the Bible. So, I ask again--do you view the Bible in one of the ways listed in the first paragraph? If so, which? If you did choose the first one then I ask on what basis do you view it this way? I gave my reasons for the second view. Taking the passages I gave in paragraph two how can one uphold view #1? If God gave a book that is complete then we have to follow it. And following it, we have to confine our activities to the things it authorizes. In doing this we can prove all things (1 Thess. 5:21; Gal. 6:4) and we can give a reason for our hope (1 Pet. 3:15). This reason will be speaking as the oracles of God as Peter said we should (1 Pet. 4:11). How do you view the Bible?? *J. F. Dancer, Jr.*



## RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY

One of the greatest problems in our society today is the failure on the part of so many to show proper respect for those in positions of authority. This is a problem in the home, in the schools, and a problem for both local and national authorities.

Many children never learn to show respect, honor and obedience to their parents as the word of God teaches they should (Eph. 6:1-4). It is not an uncommon thing to hear young children talking back to their parents and, in some instances, even cursing them. Surely we can see that when parents have no respect for God's word and fail to teach their children to have such respect it will lead to this type of behavior on the part of the children.

Also, we frequently read or hear about some group of workers who refuse to return to work even when ordered by the courts to do so. It is not my intent to express any opinion on any labor dispute that may exist between employees and employers, but I do believe it is a sad commentary on our nation when so many will openly defy the law and our civil authorities. The Bible teaches Christians to obey civil authorities (Romans 13). When we fail to do so we are not only disobeying civil authorities we are also disobeying God.

One sad thing about this rebellion to proper authority is the fact that the

majority of religious leaders and teachers have done little to discourage such rebellion and, I believe, have even encouraged such by the things they teach and the examples they set. When some religious leader encourages disobedience to the laws of the land simply because you don't like them or because you consider them unfair he is encouraging that which is contrary to the word of God. When religious teachers tell people that it doesn't matter what they believe and practice so long as one is honest and sincere in what they do they should not be surprised when the people apply that teaching to areas other than religion. These teachers have shown no respect for God's word or the authority of His Son for so long that many think nothing of doing those things for which there is no authority.

Yes, we need to have more respect for proper authority and it should begin among those who claim to believe in God and His word. Maybe it would be a good example for our children and for those around us if we would teach and practice only that which is authorized in God's Word.

*✍ James Hahn*



## Should You "Join The Church"

The word "join" means "to associate oneself with, become connected or unite with" and the use of this word with reference to "the church" is not a "mortal sin" as some seem to imply. In previous generations, when there was a more constant "hot" war with denominationalism, gospel preachers made a big point of criticizing the expression "join the church"---and apparently did a fine job of "selling" the brethren on this point. We would have less trouble today if they had done as good a job teaching brethren the work and organization of the church.

However, their condemnation of this terminology has a valid basis. The denominational world considers the church a sort of "adjunct" to the saved, or Christianity. One becomes a Christian---then does, or does not "join the church." To combat this erroneous conception of "church" gospel preachers pointed out that the church is the "body" of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23) made up of all saints who function in Christ (Ephesians 4:11-16) hence, one can not be a Christian apart from the church. In the saving process, we are "added" to the church. (Acts 2:47)

Your children are "born" into your family---are members of the family by reason of the birth. They are not born, then sometime later "join" your family. In exactly the same way God's children become members of His family, the church (1 Timothy 3:15; Ephesians 2:19) We are "born anew"

(1 Peter 1:23; 2:2) and become members of the Lord's church by this process. (See Acts 2:37-41) Denominationalism has a human origin, but God's church is divine. Now all of this has been said with reference to the church as those people in covenant relation with God---saints "assembled" in a figurative sense only. Becoming a Christian makes one a part of "all Christians"---the universal church---without further ado. "Membership" in this group is possible when no relation with other members is under consideration. (Note the Ethiopian nobleman, Acts 8:26-39)

But the Lord has made provisions for His followers to work in teams---function collectively for worship, self-edification, authorized benevolence, and preaching the gospel. Here (in a local church) men agree to join forces---accept a special relation with one another---in order to carry out the Lord's will. Saints so collected are called a "church" (1 Corinthians 1:2; Philippians 4:15) and one already a Christian, and a member of the church in its universal sense, may "join" other brethren in this local fellowship.

Notice he "joins" other saints. In Acts 9:26 we read that Saul (Paul) "assayed to join himself to the disciples;" and later succeeded in this. The church – even the local church – is not an entity apart from her members, but consists of saints in a certain relationship with one another. Every Christian that can possibly do so is expected to "join" with other Christians in this relationship. (See Hebrews 10:25)

Perhaps there is enough tolerance in language to allow us to speak of "joining" a local church; but be sure you know what you are talking about.  
*✍ Robert F. Turner*

**Belleville church of Christ**  
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**Schedule of Services**

Sunday Bible Study . . . . .	9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship . . . . .	10:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship . . . . .	5:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study . . . . .	7:00 p.m.

**Evangelist**

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