

Light and Life

Astonished at His Teaching

Early into the first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas preached to the Roman proconsul of Cyprus, Sergius Paulus. As they stood before him, “Elymas the sorcerer opposed them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith” (Ac. 13:8). It could be that Elymas had some sway over the local politics that he was afraid to lose if the proconsul obeyed the gospel. Regardless, Elymas was committing a great evil in not only rejecting the gospel, but attempting to prevent the saving of Sergius Paulus’ soul as well!

In response, Paul “filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, ‘O full of deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord?’” (Ac. 13:9-10). Yikes! Paul didn’t mince any words here! At this point, Elymas had rejected the truth, but Sergius Paulus’ soul was still on the line and Paul could not allow this wicked and selfish man to get in the way of the message. Compared to the salvation of a soul, Elymas’ feelings didn’t matter.

Paul continued, “‘Now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time.’ And immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand” (Ac. 13:11). Can you imagine being in Sergius Paulus’ shoes? Two men stand before you, each claiming to possess the truth, and one strikes the other with miraculous blindness! That doesn’t leave much room for doubt.

“Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had been done, **being astonished at the teaching of the Lord**” (Ac. 13:12). It wasn’t the sign Paul performed that caused amazement, but the teaching that that sign pointed to!

We don’t need to see a false prophet struck blind to be amazed today – but we should be astonished at the teaching of the Lord!

- Sam Bunyard

Another Perspective

“I Knew Better, but...”

How many of the sins we commit are truly ‘sins of ignorance’? **So why, then, don’t we ‘do better’ when we ‘know better’?** Perhaps...

We don’t take time to stop and think. We *react* rather than *rethink*. We should be “*quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger,*” realizing that “*the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God*”, [Ja 1:19-20](#).

We allow our emotions to override our intellect. Perhaps *cowardice* was greater than *courage*, or we gave in to our *fear* more than our *faith*, [Mk 9:22-24](#).

We excuse ourselves because of some circumstance, or another’s actions. Like King Saul, we allow *circumstances* to cloud our judgment enough to override our knowledge of what God commanded, [1 Sa 15:8-13](#).

But often, **we simply do what pleases us instead of God.** In my judgment, the greatest and most difficult battle we face as followers of Christ is that of subjecting ‘self’ to God’s will, [Lu 22:42](#).

And so, by correctly assessing and identifying the problem(s), the solutions become manifestly obvious:

1. Stop and think; reflect on what you know from God’s Word to be right, and then do it. If you truly don’t know what God’s Word says is ‘right’ in a particular situation, find out, and then do it.
2. Don’t allow your *emotions* to displace what you know from God’s Word to be right. Pray for *understanding* of God’s will, but also for the *courage* to do it.
3. Realize and admit that spiritual failures are ‘my’ fault. Don’t blame circumstances or others for them, [1 Co 10:13](#). Do what you know from God’s Word to be right the next time.
4. Commit yourself to “*not my will but **Thine** be done*” in, through, and by **me**.

May God bless us to **know** and **do** His will!

- Philip C. Strong (edited for space)

ASSEMBLY TIMES

Sunday

Morning Bible Class 9:30
Morning Assembly 10:30
Evening Assembly 5:00

Wednesday

Evening Bible Class 6:30

RADIO PROGRAM

The Bible Speaks



Sunday 9:00–9:30a.m.
Thursday 11:30a.m.–noon
KURM 790AM

Downtown Church of Christ

P.O. Box 447
201 W. Chestnut Street
Rogers, AR 72757
479-636-3575
www.downtowncoc.net



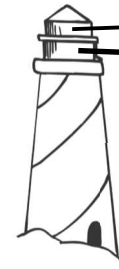
**Conviction comes
before conversion.**

ELDERS:

Otis Hardin
Perry Johnson
Ken Parker
Alan Revier
GW Walsh

DEACONS:

TJ Burleson
Scott Hale
Jason Hill
Chris Johnson
Brock McKeel
Randy Potter
Tim Roberts
Randy Shell



DOWNTOWN GOSPEL BEACON

**PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY THE DOWNTOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST
ROGERS, ARKANSAS**

May 17, 2024

Understanding the Times

In David's early reign, some in the tribe of Issachar "had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do" (1 Chr 12:32). Contrast that with some of the Jewish leaders of the first century, to whom Jesus said, "You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the time" (Mt 16:3).

Neither the men of Issachar nor the Jewish leaders had any divine insight into the 'times' in which they lived. Yet both had – or should have had – an "understanding" of their times. Which leads to the question, how would one gain an understanding of the times in which they live?

The Jewish leaders failed to see what was right in front of their eyes because of preconceived notions of Messiah and His kingdom. They were wrong, but worse – their biases blinded them to seeing the truth.

The men of Issachar had witnessed Saul's unjust provocations against David and had made a deliberate decision to side with righteousness. For anyone with a good heart – and who paid attention – "understanding the times" was not that hard.

And so it is today. Do not allow bias to blind you from discerning good and evil. (And here's a hint: **God's** kingdom is the good one.) - *WKing*

FAMILY NEWS

PRAYER LIST –

Preachers we support: Japan, Philippines, Vietnam, Canada, Mexico, Peru, & U.S.
Sick: Fletchers, Swims, JMarshall, RStarr, MiBader
Shut-ins: Billie Pennington, Shirley Cole, Susan Wiese, Virgil Carter, ADosier
Military: Kyler Sullins, Sean Potter

2024 EVENTS STILL REMAINING – Jul 21-25 (Vacation Bible School with PJ Anderson), and Aug 2-4 (Youth Lectures with Ben Hall)

SENTENCE SERMON – Interesting fact of biology: Our ears are designed to remain open while our mouth can be shut at will. (Ja 1:19)