



Anchor of the Soul
P.O. Box 401
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Anchor of the Soul

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THEMED ISSUE: "WHY IT MATTERS..."

Why it Matters

By Casey Head

After having a disagreement with someone about some biblical issue, it is not uncommon for them to respond by saying, "Well, it doesn't really matter anyways. We're all going to heaven in the end." But the question is...does it matter? Does it matter what we believe and what we do in our service to God?

- ✓ It matters because **we need the Lord's guidance**. "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23). So often, we want to do things our way, but we cannot lead ourselves. We need God's guidance, which means that we must do things His way, not our way!
- ✓ It should matter to us because **it mattered to Jesus and the apostles**. Jesus warned the disciples "of the doctrine of the Pharisees and the Sadducees" (Mt. 16:12). He also boldly confronted the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23. Over and over again, He said "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" Even the apostles "reasoned" (disputed) in the synagogues with the Jews (Ac. 17:2; 18:4; 18:19). Paul and Barnabas "had no small dissension and disputation" with the Judaizing teachers (Ac. 15:1-2).
- ✓ It matters because **the scriptures say so!** When we worship our way and not God's way, we are condemned (Mk. 7:7-9; Jn. 4:24). Timothy was told to "charge some that they teach no other doctrine" (1 Tim. 1:3). Clearly, it does matter!
- ✓ Finally, it matters because **Christ is king and we are to submit to His authority**. The church is subject to Christ (Eph. 5:24, 26-27), and we are told to do all things by His authority (Col. 3:17).

In this issue of "Anchor of the Soul," we are going to continue to emphasize "why it matters." *Do God's ways matter to you?*

It Matters What We Believe!

By Byron Smith

What do you think? Does it matter what a person believes? I propose that it matters if that person wants to be with the Lord in heaven and escape the tragedy of being lost eternally in hell!

The scriptures foretold an apostasy that would take place at an undisclosed time in the future of the church's existence (2 Thess. 2:1-12; 1 Tim. 4:3; Ac. 20:28-31). Repeatedly, the inspired writers of the New Testament warned of the danger of false teachers and the consequences that would result from being led astray by their influence (Rom. 16:17-18; 2 Pet. 2:1-2; 1 Jn. 4:1). How would such a departure from the truth take place? It would come about from a failure to continue to **believe and practice the truth**.

Secular history records in massive volumes the unfolding occurrence of this apostasy from the biblical pattern. It eventually evolved into the Catholic hierarchy and subsequently led to protestant denominationalism. If you wish to challenge this assertion, I only request that you check the historical records, for only in secular writings will one find the history of these churches. Nowhere in the Book of God do you find the Catholic church or any other denomination. Their history begins hundreds of years after the last word of the New Testament was penned. What we see today in the religious world has little resemblance to that sacred institution of the church our Lord established in the first century (Mt. 16:18). Why such a different picture today, than what it was then? The only logical explanation is the aforementioned apostasy that man was warned about. Man has failed to **believe and practice the truth**.

Many today, if not *most* professed Christians, are shareholders in this long-lived apostasy. Rather than returning to the pattern of simple New Testament Christianity most have chosen to perpetuate this apostasy by maintaining their affiliation with these man-made religious bodies. Such is a grievous error. While the apostles warned that an apostasy would take place, it is now incumbent upon faithful preachers of the gospel to warn that an apostasy did take place. Now we must seek in our own lives to **restore** the New Testament pattern by **believing and practicing the truth** alone. This involves a repudiation of denominationalism and a determination to be Christians **only** (Ac. 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16) and part of the Lord's church **only** (Mt. 16:18; Rom. 16:16). It requires a return to the Bible. This return is evident by an insistence upon **book, chapter and verse** for every belief and practice. Why not **speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where it is silent** (1 Pet. 4:11)? Why not **do Bible things in Bible ways and call Bible things by Bible names**? Why not just "preach the word" (2 Tim. 4:2), for therein is the only anecdote for

For example, most churches today worship God using mechanical instruments of music such as pianos and guitars. But where is the New Testament authority for this kind of worship? Every verse in the doctrine of Christ that pertains to music in the church simply authorizes us to sing (Rom. 15:9; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:12). If we are going to worship God in truth, we must get the pianos and guitars out of the church buildings and simply sing praises to God from our hearts! Or what about giving? God has commanded the church to take up a weekly collection (1 Cor. 16:1-2), but how much are we to give? The Bible says that each one is to give, "according as he purposeth in his heart" (2 Cor. 9:6-7). Yet some churches today mandate tithing. Tithing was commanded under the law of Moses, but it is not commanded in the law of Christ. So when a church today requires that its members give a tenth, they are adding to God's divine pattern.

One might argue that these things don't really matter, but the fact is, that's not our call to make. It's God's call! If God says that it matters how we worship Him, then it matters! If He tells us to worship Him according to the pattern of His word, then we'd better do it!

Are you worshipping God "in spirit and in truth?"

More about the Spruce Pine church of Christ...

- ❖ We are undenominational (1 Pet. 5:2)
- ❖ We worship in spirit and in truth (Jn. 4:24)
- ❖ We preach **ONLY** the word of God (2 Tim. 4:2)
- ❖ We are a closely-knit spiritual family (Eph. 4:16)

Times of Services

Sunday.....	Bible study	10:00 AM
	Worship	11:00 AM
	Evening Worship	6:30 PM
Wednesday....	Bible study	7:00 PM

Directions

To get to our building, follow 226 South to McHone Road (located between the Mitchell Veterinary Clinic and the Spruce Pine United Methodist Church). Once you turn onto McHone Road, turn right into the second driveway. You will see our sign at the top of the hill.

Call (828)467-1463 for more information

WHY WORSHIP MATTERS

By Casey Head

In John 4:24, Jesus says that for our worship to be acceptable to God, it must be done “in spirit and in truth.” To worship in spirit is to worship with the right attitude; to be focused on what we’re doing. God is a Spirit, and so to worship in spirit is to reach up to God’s plane. To worship in truth is to worship according to the pattern of God’s word. John 17:17 says that God’s word is truth. We must worship God His way!

It is important to recognize that both of these elements must be present for our worship to be acceptable to God. In other words, if we worship God with the right attitude but we fail to follow the divine pattern, we are in error. Likewise, if we worship God according to the divine pattern, but our heart’s not there, we are just as wrong. **Does it matter how we worship? Yes, it does!** “We MUST worship in spirit and in truth. Let’s discuss these two elements of worship in greater detail.

Jesus said of the Pharisees in Matthew 15:8, “This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me.” The Pharisees were going through the motions, but they weren’t worshipping God from the heart. This is an easy trap to fall into. We sing the hymns but we don’t focus on the words. We take the Lord’s supper, but we don’t truly think about what Jesus did for us. We bow our heads in prayer, but we don’t pay any attention to what’s being said. This kind of worship is unacceptable to God.

But we must also worship God according to the divine pattern. Jesus continued His scathing rebuke of the Pharisees in Matthew 15:9 by saying, “But in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” Not only were the Pharisees lacking spirit, but they were also lacking truth. That is, they were worshipping God according to their own human traditions. Consider the example of Nadab and Abihu. Leviticus 10:1-2 says, “And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord.” Instead of worshipping God’s way, Nadab and Abihu added to the divine pattern.

Colossians 3:17 says that we’re to do all things “in the name of the Lord Jesus.” That is, we need to seek book, chapter and verse for everything we do in our worship to God. That’s why Peter tells us to “speak as the oracles of God” in 1 Peter 4:11. Sadly, the religious world today ignores this concept altogether. They may worship God “in spirit,” but they do not worship in truth.

apostasy.

Since inspired writers had solemnly warned about departures from the faith, and since the Bible nowhere teaches conflicting doctrines, one might wonder how the devil was so successful in pulling off such a great deception in the tangled mess of the man-made churches. The answer is simple. The devil was successful, and will continue to be successful, because man did not have “the love of the truth” and because they “did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thess. 2:10, 12). When there exists an aversion to truth, whether it is admitted or not, error will flourish, denominationalism will thrive, and apostasy will be rampant.

Does it matter what one believes? If one does not **believe and practice the truth** there are dire consequences. Certainly, it matters to God! But, does it truly matter to you?

The Purpose of Baptism Matters

by Casey Head

Does it matter why one is baptized? After all, the denominational world baptizes for different reasons. Some baptize infants to wash away the stain of inherited sin. Some baptize for the sole purpose of adding new converts to the local church membership. Some baptize as “an outward sign of an inward grace,” or to show the world that you are saved; to display outwardly what has already occurred in your heart. Are any of these reasons acceptable? Or does it matter why one is baptized? Yes, it matters!

Paul says in Romans 6:17 that we “obey from the heart” when we are baptized. So baptism is effective because it involves obedience to God. When we are baptized for an unscriptural reason, are we obeying God from the heart? No, we are obeying man from the heart. If it doesn’t matter why we’re baptized, then Romans 6:17 would be nonsensical.

Furthermore, we see in Acts 19:1-5 that when one is baptized incorrectly, they are to be rebaptized. This example proves that the purpose of baptism matters. *Have you been baptized correctly, for the right purpose?*

Mark 16:16 and 1 Peter 3:21 teach that baptism is for salvation. Peter says in Acts 2:38 that baptism is “for the remission of sins” (see also Ac. 22:16; Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12). Baptism puts us into Christ (Gal. 3:27). Baptism is not “an outward sign of an inward grace.” It is unto salvation!

There is just “one baptism” (Eph. 4:5). So surely, it matters why we are baptized. Have you been immersed in water to have your sins washed away, to obtain salvation by the blood of Christ? If not, you are yet in your sins!

Why Baptism Matters

By Curtis Carwile

We talk a lot about baptism in the religious discussions. It is actually one of the major points of division among many in the religious world. Some people say that it is necessary while others say that it isn't. Some people say that it requires a conscious belief on the part of the one being baptized while others say it requires no belief on the part of the baptized, allowing for the baptism of infants and the physically dead. Some people say that baptism requires immersion into water, a "total overwhelming washing," while others say pouring or sprinkling of water is just as good. Whatever the conflict, it is sad that something that God intended to be a point of unity has become a source of conflict and division. It makes any open-minded person ask the question: "Why does baptism even matter?" For the sake of "unity," many say that baptism doesn't matter and that "we" should not divide "ourselves" over the matter. However, for the sake of REAL unity with God (1 John 1:5-7), the Bible says that baptism DOES matter.

We can clearly see that the issue of baptism is important because it is discussed in the Bible. Baptism is a practice that was prefigured in the Old Testament ceremonial washings and purification rites (Numbers 19). In Exodus 30:17-21, Moses instructed Aaron and his sons to wash their hands and feet before entering the Tabernacle. In Leviticus 14, Moses instructed the Israelites on the ritual cleansing for lepers who had been healed of their leprosy. In 2 Kings 5, the prophet Elisha tells Naaman to go dip (or immerse) himself in the Jordan River seven times and, then, he would be healed. The Greek Old Testament actually uses the word *baptizo* (translated "baptize" in the New Testament) in reference to Naaman "dipping" himself in this passage. By New Testament times, Gentiles who converted to Judaism were immersed as a part of their conversion. The point is that this was not an uncommon practice. So, when John the Baptizer appeared in Matthew 3, it was not odd that he was baptizing people, calling them to repent and to "clean up" their lives.

Another reason it is so important to discuss BAPTISM comes from the direct commands, the examples, and the unavoidable conclusions found within the pages of the New Testament. After Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, Jesus commanded the eleven remaining Apostles to **"Go into all the world, BAPTIZING them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you"** (Matthew 28:19-20, emphasis mine). This is exactly what the Apostles did. In Acts 2:38, Peter commanded those listening to **"Repent and let every one of you be BAPTIZED in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins"**

Why Attitude Matters

By Jason Pieratt

Your attitude can be seen in what you say and what you do. *Carefully consider* your attitude and associated actions. **Your attitude matters** because...

- **You will have victories.** When you win, when your child gets an award, when your employer promotes you, etc. – how do you react? Do you have an "I made that success happen" attitude? With a selfish attitude, the achievement will likely be short lived and shared by you alone. Instead, respond with thanksgiving to God, recognition of others who had a part, and humbling of yourself. With an unselfish attitude, you will be prepared for future victories and also have others to share them with. *"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time"* (1 Peter 5:6).
- **You will make mistakes.** Perfection has only been accomplished by the Son of God (Hebrews 4:14-15). No one will live without ever making a single error (Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:8). However, God's holy standard is that we do not sin (Romans 6:1-2; 1 John 2:1; Hebrews 10:26-27). Have you put off becoming a follower of Christ because you might make a mistake and sin? Instead, have an attitude and works of repentance. Carefully consider the wrong, aggressively turn from the error, zealously do the right thing, and fear God (2 Corinthians 7:11). *"...but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish"* (Luke 13:3).
- **You will stand accountable before God.** One option is to humble yourself before God, believe and obey His Son Jesus, turn from sin, be baptized into Christ to receive forgiveness, and live faithful until you die. Choose this and your attitude will be that of a servant to the one, true, living God and you will be presented *"perfect in Christ Jesus"* in judgment (Colossians 1:28). Your other option is to reject Christ, disregard the salvation of God, live in sin, and stand guilty before God to receive eternal punishment. No matter which option you choose, a rebellious or submissive attitude, *"every knee [including yours] shall bow"* to our Creator (Romans 14:11; Philippians 2:10).

Ultimately, your attitude about your soul, serving God, serving and loving others, and doing His will is what matters. **You have free will over your attitude and choice.** I encourage you to yield your life to the Lord by obeying the gospel of Christ.

Call (828)467-1463 if you have questions or need our assistance.

Why Doctrine Matters

By Andy Mitchell

- Those who teach the precepts of men as the doctrine of God worship in vain (Mt. 15:7-9; Mk. 7:6-9).
- Early Christians continued in the apostles' teachings (Ac. 2:42).
- Early disciples endured great persecution rather than give up the apostles' doctrine (Ac. 5:27-29, 40-42).
- Early disciples were taught that obedience from the heart to a certain form of doctrine is what saved them (Rom. 6:17-18).
- Those who cause division contrary to the apostles' teachings are to be marked and avoided (Rom. 16:17-18).
- We're not to be carried about by every wind of doctrine (Eph. 4:14-15).
- The doctrines of men are of no value (Col. 2:20-23).
- Paul commanded Timothy to charge certain ones to teach no other doctrine (1 Tim. 1:3-4).
- Paul told Timothy to take heed to his teaching (1 Tim. 4:13, 16).
- Christians are to conduct themselves in such a manner that the doctrine of God will not be blasphemed (1 Tim. 6:1).
- The man that teaches a different doctrine is puffed up (1 Tim. 6:3-5).
- Those who leave sound doctrine are condemned (2 Tim. 4:1-4).
- We are to speak the things that befit the sound doctrine (Tit. 2:1).
- Our doctrine is to be uncorrupted (Tit. 2:7-8).
- We are not to be carried away by strange teachings (Heb. 13:9).
- Those who don't abide in Jesus' doctrine don't have God (2 Jn. 9-11).

Because doctrine **DOES** matter, we should be willing to study together and work out our doctrinal differences. Below is a list of some of the doctrines we view as unscriptural and therefore oppose...

Calvinism (TULIP)	"Once Saved, Always Saved"
Premillennialism	Modern Day Miracles (Pentecostalism)
Catholicism	Salvation by Faith-Only
Denominationalism	Modern Day Observance of the Sabbath

Would you like to study any of these issues with us? If so, give us a call at (828)467-1463 or email us at NCBibleQuestions@yahoo.com.

"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3)

(emphasis mine). In vs.41, we have an example of those who gladly received that command being BAPTIZED. As a result of that, the unavoidable conclusion of the passage is that those people were saved (Acts 2:40), received the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:23), and were added to the Church (Acts 2:47). This was not an unusual occasion. In Acts 8:12-13, people were BAPTIZED when they believed what Philip taught about Jesus. In Acts 8:36-38, the Ethiopian Treasurer was BAPTIZED after believing that Jesus was the Messiah spoken of in Isaiah 53. Paul was BAPTIZED when He believed in Jesus (Acts 9:18). In fact, everywhere the Apostles and other Christians went, they preached Jesus and that those who believed in Jesus are to be BAPTIZED (Acts 10:48, 16:33, 19:5). As we can clearly see, BAPTISM is commanded for those who believe in Jesus. That is the unavoidable conclusion which we must all draw.

The issue of baptism isn't important just because it is discussed in the Bible and because of the commands, examples and unavoidable conclusions found in the New Testament. In addition to those things, baptism matters because of what it means. Romans 6:3-4 says, "**Or do you not know that that as many of us have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore, we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.**" The biggest reason why baptism matters is because it is what gives the baptized believer a reason to live. And, even more than that, baptism into the blood and death of Jesus is how those who are dead in their sins (Romans 6:23) can be made alive again to God! Truly, in 1 Peter 3:21, Peter said it best when he said, "**There is also an antitype which now saves us- baptism... through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.**"

Baptism matters for so many different reasons. That is why, if you haven't already been baptized into the blood of the Savior Christ Jesus in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit for the remission of your sins, you need to be. It is the only way to be pleasing to the LORD God Almighty.

Would you like to be baptized for the remission of sins? "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest" (Ac. 8:37). Won't you finally surrender your life to the supreme authority of Jesus Christ (Col. 3:17)? Let us help you.

Call us at (828)467-1463 or email us at NCBibleQuestions@yahoo.com

"Behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2)

Why the Church Matters

By Bryan Matthew Dockens

The church matters because it came at a high cost. Its worth must never be understated. Nothing less than the blood of Jesus Christ was spent to purchase the church (Acts 20:28), the same price, in fact, of man's salvation (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14; 1st Peter 1:18-19).

The church matters because it consists of all saved people. The church is the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23), of which there is only one (Ephesians 4:4). Admission into this body is achieved through baptism (1st Corinthians 12:13), the same action whereby one enters Christ (Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:3), whereby one is saved (Mark 16:16; 1st Peter 3:21), and whereby sins are expunged (Acts 2:38; 22:16).

The church matters because it is the setting in which Christians grow. The Lord assigned to the church the task of edification, which means to build itself up (Ephesians 4:11-16). This means we promote each other's individual spiritual development (2nd Peter 3:18). We do this by assembling regularly for mutual exhortation (Hebrews 10:24-25).

The church matters because it is the setting in which God is honored. Paul wrote, *"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen"* (Ephesians 3:20-21). We aim to glorify God through our praise of Him (1st Peter 2:9).

The church matters because it serves an eternal purpose. The apostle Paul said, *"now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Ephesians 3:10-11). The reason God established the church, and it was always in His plan to do so, was to make His wisdom known. Thus, *"the church of the living God"* is identified as *"the pillar and ground of the truth"* (1st Timothy 3:15), meaning that its mission is to uphold the truth. Each local church can accomplish this goal, fulfilling the Lord's plan of worldwide evangelism (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16). Addressing *"the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ"* (1st Thessalonians 1:1), Paul commended their success in spreading the gospel, saying, *"from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place"* (1st

Thessalonians 1:8). It is our goal to accomplish the same as the Thessalonians, broadcasting the truth of the gospel near and far.

The church matters because it is the only institution given by God to propagate His will. We have no use for the denominational churches established by men, nor for their theological institutions, seminaries, or missionary societies, neither religious colleges nor Bible camps because we know Jesus said, *"every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted"* (Matthew 15:13). We consider His church sufficient for the purposes He gave it to fulfill. We cannot improve on it.

Identifying Marks of the New Testament Church

By Casey Head

Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, "I will build My church," and Ephesians 4:4 says that there is just "one body." Since the body is the church (Eph. 1:22-23), the conclusion is that there is just one church...and this must be the church that Jesus promised to build, the church that was purposed by God from eternity (Eph. 3:11). In the 21st century, there are over 1,200 religious bodies, so how can we identify which one is truly the New Testament church? We must consider the identifying marks of the early church!

- It began in Jerusalem (Is. 2:1-4; Lk. 24:49; Ac. 2:1-4).
- Founded during the days of the Roman empire (Dan. 2:40-44).
- Jesus Christ is the head of the church (Eph.23-24), which means that all things are done according to His authority (Col. 3:17).
- The terms of admission into Christ's body include faith, repentance, confession and water baptism (Mk. 16:16; Ac. 2:38).
- Worship is done in spirit and truth (Jn. 4:24); human traditions not incorporated into worship (Mk. 7:7-9).
- Local churches are self-governing (Ac. 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2).
- It engages in evangelism, edification and benevolence (Eph. 4:12). Christ's church does not promote the social gospel (1 Cor. 11:34).
- It does not tolerate false doctrines (Rom. 16:17-18; 2 Jn. 9).
- It wears the name of Christ (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Tim. 3:15).

Are you a part of the one church which belongs to Christ? Or are you a member of a human denomination? This is a serious matter! Matthew 15:14 says, "Every plant which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up."