



Anchor of the Soul
P.O. Box 401
Spruce Pine, NC 28777



Anchor of the Soul

Vol. 5, Issue 11

December 2010

Put Mass Back in Christmas

Dan McKibben

Steve Burdine made an interesting comment the other day about the religious celebration of Christmas in the denominational world. He raised the point that many in Protestant denominations, talk about putting Christ back in Christmas. Steve asks the question, will they "put Mass back in Christmas?" You see Christmas is a contraction of the two words - Christ's Mass. Of course Mass has to do with a Catholic doctrine and practice. Most all the Protestant denominations have rejected the mass celebration as taught by the Catholic church. Yet over the years since the Protestant reformation movement began during the days of Martin Luther, various Catholic doctrines have slowly been absorbed back into Protestantism. (For instance, instrumental music is another doctrine taught by the Catholic church that has been absorbed slowly back into Protestant churches. Surprisingly, many are not aware of these historical facts.) It is ironic to talk about putting Christ back into Christmas, when he was never there to begin with. You can correctly talk about putting Mass back into Christmas, for our Catholic friends put it there. But I am not a member of the Catholic church, nor do I believe many of the Catholic doctrines that are espoused and taught by these people. The scriptures do not uphold and justify the Roman Catholic church, nor many of its doctrines. Beloved we must seek to be satisfied with only doing what God has authorized and taught us in his word. To go beyond this is to transgress God's will. "*Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.*" 2 John 9.

Absent Thomas

By Josh McKibben

"Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe" (John 20:25). Those are the words that have earned Thomas the less-than-flattering nickname "Doubting Thomas." And unfortunately, that seems to be his legacy: the one apostle who doubted the claims that Jesus was actually alive after the crucifixion.

But why did Thomas doubt the news of the risen Savior? Why was he the lone doubter in the group? The answer is found in John 20:24: *"Now Thomas, one of the Twelve...was not with them when Jesus came."* Thomas doubted, because Thomas wasn't there! Thomas wasn't in the assembly the fateful day that Jesus appeared to his disciples. Where was he? Was he out fishing? Was he at home asleep? I don't know! But I'm beginning to think that we ought to change his nickname to "Absent Thomas," because Thomas' absence clearly was a factor in his weak faith.

Just stop and think about all the things that Thomas missed on that momentous first day of the week:

- -He missed an opportunity to encourage (and be encouraged by) his brethren, during a time of great fear (John 20:19).
- -He missed the gladness & joy of getting to see the risen Savior with his own eyes (John 20:20).
- -He missed getting to hear the words of comfort & the words of instruction that Jesus spoke (John 20:21-23).
- -He missed a chance to finally have his mind opened to understand the Scriptures (Luke 24:44-48).

In short, Thomas missed out on what must've been a wonderful, faith-building experience for the other disciples. Unquestionably, their faith was strengthened by being in the presence of the Lord on that special day.

Learn the Bible For Free!

- ◆ Bible medicine for hurting homes in a wicked world
- ◆ Learning to praise our divine savior Jesus Christ
- ◆ Study in your own home by mail
- ◆ Free...and no obligation
- ◆ Based directly upon the Bible
- ◆ Completely Non-Denominational

**To Receive lesson one
cut out & mail this coupon to:
PO Box 401, Spruce Pine, NC 28777**

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

CHOOSE A FREE CD!

Pick any or all of the following topics and we'll mail it to you FREE of charge.

- “What the Lord says, We will do”**
- “Christ, our Life”**
- “Blind Bartimaeus”**

Three ways to request these CD's:

1. Call 828-467-1463
2. E-mail NCBibleQuestions@yahoo.com
3. Cut out & mail this coupon to:
PO Box 401, Spruce Pine, NC 28777

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

I wonder how many Christians today are missing out on the wonderful benefits that our assemblies provide, because they're playing the role of "Absent Thomas." Make no mistake about it, when you're not here, you miss out big time. You miss out on the encouragement of your brothers and sisters in Christ (Heb. 10:24-25), you miss the privilege of worshipping God with fellow believers (Jn. 4:23-24), you miss an opportunity to learn & grow in your knowledge of the Scriptures (II Pet. 3:17-18), you miss a chance to serve others (I Pet. 4:10-11), and most importantly, you miss an occasion to be with the Lord in His assembly (Mt. 18:20).

And when you willfully deprive yourself of these blessings, then it's only natural that your faith will become weak and your discipleship will be stunted. If you don't believe that could possibly happen to you, just re-read Thomas' words in John 20:25, because Thomas' absence caused him to literally put his faith on hold. In fact, for *eight days* Thomas lived in unbelief—can you imagine how many souls Thomas could've told about the risen Savior during that period of time? You see, lots of bad things happen whenever disciples are absent from an assembly.

Thankfully, Thomas was given a fresh opportunity to assemble with the disciples.....and this time he made it! And when Jesus appeared in their midst, Thomas was privileged to have his faith re-established in a way that you and I will never be privileged to experience in this lifetime. He got to see, and hear, and touch the Lord personally (John 20:26-29). And although we're not afforded that kind of direct contact with the Lord in our assemblies today, you'd have to be a fool not to recognize the abundant spiritual blessings that we enjoy whenever we come together as the people of God. I hope you'll resolve not to be an "Absent Thomas" and miss out on all these blessings; instead, I hope you'll make every effort to assemble with the saints whenever the doors are open, so that your faith might be strengthened, and you can be ready for the day when you finally get to see Jesus face to face.

The Reality of Hell

Part 3

By Byron Smith

The existence of hell is a Scriptural fact. To deny the reality of this terrible place is to argue against God and the verity of His Word. A better approach to take in dealing with this subject is to accept what the Bible says and to avail one's self of the provisions God has made for sinners through Jesus. Why is it so important that one avoids hell? The answer becomes clear as one considers the Bible's description of what it will be like.

First it is important that a distinction be made between two Greek terms that are both translated into English as "hell". The terms are *hades* and *gehenna*. *Hades* simply refers to "the realm of the dead", whereas *gehenna* is the term used to describe the eternal destiny of the wicked. *Gehenna* had special significance in describing a place of punishment. It originally referred to a valley outside of Jerusalem that had an ill-famed history associated with the idolatrous worship of Molech in which children were sacrificed (Jer. 7:30-31; 19:5-6; II Kgs. 23:10). The valley eventually came to be used to burn the city's trash and refuse. It was also thought to be the place where dead bodies were thrown (cf. Jer. 31:40). *Gehenna* is the term repeatedly used by Jesus to speak of the eternal fate of the wicked (Mt. 5:21-22, 29-30; 10:28; 18:8-9; Mk. 9:43-48). This does not suggest that the wicked will literally experience eternity outside the city walls of Jerusalem in a valley called *gehenna*, rather, because this location was associated with burning, horror, corruption, and filth, it was fittingly used by Jesus to symbolize the suffering that awaits the unsaved.

There are many descriptions of hell that should strike terror in one's soul. One such description that must not be ignored is that hell is a place totally void of God's presence. In the final judgment the wicked will hear the Lord say "Depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!" (Mt. 7:21

Silent Speech

I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day
I'd rather one would walk with me than merely tell the way.

The eye's a willing pupil and more willing than the ear,
Fine counsel is confusing, but example's always clear.

I can soon learn how to do it, if you let me see it done,
I can catch your hands in action, but your tongue too fast
may run.

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

From Hwy 19 E in Spruce Pine, follow 226 South to McHone Road (located just before the Mitchell Veterinary Clinic). Once you turn onto McHone Road, turn right into the second driveway. You will see our sign at the top of the hill.

Visit our Website

www.LookingToJesus.com

Dino Fuzz

Dan McKibben

I was listening to the news the other day, and they were talking about that some think that some dinosaurs were covered with feathers instead of a tough skin: which they termed this new idea as "Dino Fuzz" in the news clip. Now the point that occurs to me is that whether dinosaurs had fur, feathers or a tough hid like an alligator makes no difference to me. But that from some dug up bone(s) it is human imagination that decides what they think these "Terrible Lizards" (the definition of dinosaur by the way) look like. Now this is OK if they would let people know that it is guesswork and human imagination that is employed and not facts being presented. The word science means, "to know" not to guess or speculate about a thing. Paul warned about psuedo-science in I Tim.6:20-21, "*O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of **science falsely so called: Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen***". I don't know of any true scientific fact or law that contradicts the teachings of the Bible. Now there have been and still are many theories that contradict the teachings of the scriptures, but not true science. I would challenge any to produce one scientific fact that runs contrary to the teachings of the word of God! Now if "Dino Fuzz" is the truth, or if "Dino Hide" be the truth, or even some other covering be the truth, don't pawn off guess work and human speculation as scientific facts. If this is an opinion tell us, if it is the fact, present the evidence for all to see. This is one of the unfair things about how the general theory of evolution has been presented too many times, as if it were an established fact, when in reality it is the mere opinion of men. "Dino Fuzz" is a great illustration of this concept, the opinion of men verses true facts based on compelling evidence. May people of our day need to be clearly taught the difference between "Voodoo Science" and true science. Don't let people shake your faith in God by their speculations and theories that are presented as facts. The truth of God's word has stood through the years, and will continue to stand!

-23) Jesus again spoke of such separation from the blessings and fellowship of God's presence as He depicted the judgment scene, again saying "**Depart from Me**, you cursed, into the everlasting fire..." (Mt. 25:41ff). These will be separated from God for an eternal duration (Mt. 25:46). As the apostle Paul described the fate of those "who do not know God, and...do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" he spoke of them being "punished with everlasting destruction **from the presence of the Lord** and from the glory of His power..." (II Thess. 1:8-9). In hell there will not be the slightest flicker of light emanating from God's glorious presence. What that means and what that will be like is beyond man's comprehension, for even the most wicked among men presently enjoy some manifestation of God's presence (cf. Mt. 5:45; Ac. 17:26-28). Know for sure that such presence will not be felt in hell.

Hell will be terrible not only because of **who will not be** there (God), it will also be terrible because of **who will be** there. It is where the devil will one day be cast (Rev. 20:10). Hell will be the future residence of "anyone not found written in the Book of Life" (Rev. 20:15). All "lawless" souls will be there (Mt. 7:21-23). The "cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8; cf. 22:15). Yes hell was originally prepared for the devil and his angels (Mt. 25:41), but it will also serve as a place of punishment for the wicked of all ages. **It is a prepared place for unprepared people!** Hell will be the never-ending confinement of every vile, despicable, unforgiven, and unsaved soul that has ever been or ever will be.

In light of who will and will not be in hell make your determination firm to avoid such a dreadful place. You can avoid hell by becoming a Christian (Mk.16:16; Ac. 2:38) and living faithful in service to God (Rev. 2:10).

Call **828-467-1463** for Bible Study

Martyrs, Continued

From Fox's Book of Martyrs

Jude

The brother of James, was commonly called Thaddeus. He was crucified at Edessa, A.D. 72.

Bartholomew

Preached in several countries, and having translated the Gospel of Matthew into the language of India, he propagated it in that country. He was at length cruelly beaten and then crucified by the impatient idolaters.

Thomas

Called Didymus, preached the Gospel in Parthia and India, where exciting the rage of the pagan priests, he was martyred by being thrust through with a spear.

Luke

The evangelist, was the author of the Gospel which goes under his name. He traveled with Paul through various countries, and is supposed to have been hanged on an olive tree, by the idolatrous priests of Greece.

Simon

Surnamed Zelotes, preached the Gospel in Mauritania, Africa, and even in Britain, in which latter country he was crucified, A.D. 74.

Listen to our radio program!

1470 AM / WTOE

Sundays at 7:30 AM

December Bible Reading

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
			1 Study With Us! 7 PM	2 1 Sam. 18-20 Jn. 7:28-53	3 1 Sam. 21-24 Jn. 8:1-27	4 1 Sam. 25-27 Jn. 8:28-59
5 Worship With Us! 11 AM & 6:30 PM	6 1 Sam. 28-31 Jn. 9	7 2 Sam. 1-3 Jn. 10	8 Study With Us! 7 PM	9 2 Sam. 4-7 Jn. 11:1-27	10 2 Sam. 8-11 Jn. 11:28-57	11 2 Sam. 12-14 Jn. 12
12 Worship With Us! 11 AM & 6:30 PM	13 2 Sam. 15-17 Jn. 13	14 2 Sam. 18-19 Jn. 14	15 Study With Us! 7 PM	16 2 Sam. 20-22 Jn. 15	17 2 sam. 23-24 Jn. 16	18 1 Kgs. 1-2 Jn. 17
19 Worship With Us! 11 AM & 6:30 PM	20 1 Kgs. 3-5 Jn. 18	21 1 Kgs. 6-7 Jn. 19	22 Study With Us! 7 PM	23 1 Kgs. 8-9 Jn. 20	24 1 Kgs. 10-12 Jn. 21	25 1 Kgs. 13-15 Ac. 1
26 Worship With Us! 11 AM & 6:30 PM	27 1 Kgs. 16-18 Ac. 2	28 1 Kgs. 19-21 Ac. 3	29 Study With Us! 7 PM	30 1 Kgs.22-2 Kgs.2 Ac. 4	31 2 Kgs. 3-5 Ac. 5	