



OakGrove Church of Christ Newsletter - 2022.12.18

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Sermon recordings

Use the short URL, or visit oakgrovecofc.org/Recordings/.

12/11/22 Speaker-AM: Jamie Rinehart

Title: Faith And Science

Recording:

tinyurl.com/JamieFaith

12/11/22 Speaker-PM: Brad Bunyard

Title: Ways To Praise God

Recording:

tinyurl.com/BradPraise

12/18/22 Speaker-AM: Josh Vinyard

Title: Salt

Recording:

tinyurl.com/jvinyardSalt

12/18/22 Speaker-PM: Nathan Vick

Title: Ezekiel 2-5

Recording:

tinyurl.com/NateEzekielCH2

Jesus looked at them and said,
"With man this is impossible,
but not with God;
all things are possible with God."

Mark 10:27



Articles

Blasphemy Among Gentiles, 12/11/2022, By Sam Bunyard

“I don’t go to church because it is just full of hypocrites!” This thinking is increasingly common. A wise preacher once told me that if I let a hypocrite come between me and God, I am just allowing the hypocrite to be closer to God than I am. Still, this is a real problem facing the church of today.

Paul addressed a similar issue in the attitudes of the Jews. “You rest on the law, and make your boast in God, and now His will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor to the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law” (Rm. 2:17-20).

It sounds like these Jews were doing pretty good when this text is isolated! However, their judgmental attitudes and self-righteous pride in their own abilities caused great damage not only to themselves, but to those outside of a relationship with God.

To those who were so proud of their knowledge and ability to teach, Paul asked “You who teach another, do you not also teach yourself?” (2:21). They failed to uphold what they boasted in, fulfilling the quoted text, “God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you” (2:24).

The reason for blasphemy wasn’t sin — everyone sins! It was that the Jews acted as if they were better than other sinners, failing to see that the only difference between the saved and unsaved is forgiveness.

Don’t give the world the excuse to blaspheme the name of God! Let’s be honest with ourselves and others about who we are: beggars who have found the bread of life!



God with Us, 12/14/2022, by Doy Moyer

The coming of Jesus into this world, with all it entails, is more important than any or all events in this world combined. The light has come into a world of darkness, and darkness could not comprehend it. God is with us.

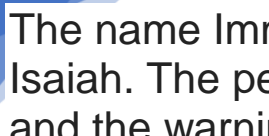
Consider that Joseph was told not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife: “She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21) All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (Matthew 1:23).

The name “Jesus” tells us that God would save His people from sin. The name “Immanuel” tells us that God is with us. This encompasses the purpose of Jesus in coming as the manifestation of God in the flesh in order to save us from sin. This is the gospel of God’s grace. Jesus is the light shining in the darkness.

John concurs with the identity of Jesus. He is the Word, God the Creator, and “In him was life, and the life was the light of men” (John 1:4). John then says, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). The glory of God is seen in Jesus even as He came in the flesh to show humanity life and light. He would do this by going to the cross, for, as He said, “‘And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.’ He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die” (John 12:32-33). The glory of God is seen because there, in the cross, the love of God is on full display.

Let’s come back to the name “Immanuel,” God with us. This is applied to Jesus in the ultimate fulfillment of the promise made in Isaiah 7:14. When a sign is promised by the Lord and fulfilled, it is evidence that God is with us. When Jesus was born, the virgin bearing a child was a sign from God of His presence. But this wasn’t just His presence in a general sense that He is there watching over. His presence was in the very person of the Son, Jesus Christ. He is Immanuel incarnate.



The name Immanuel is found again in Isaiah 8. Ahaz failed to listen to Isaiah. The people were floundering in their faith, guilty of idolatry and evil, and the warnings of judgment were clear. Assyria would come down as a flood upon Israel and sweep into Judah: “it will overflow and pass on, reaching even to the neck, and its outspread wings will fill the breadth of your land, O Immanuel” (Isaiah 8:8). The people were then told to be broken and shattered. Their counsel would come to nothing and their word would not stand, for “God is with us” (Isaiah 8:10). Judgment was upon them.

Perhaps it seems strange to think that Immanuel here encompasses judgment. Yet in Jesus, who is Immanuel, we find both the sign of God’s presence that brings salvation (“Jesus”) and also the judgment that comes in rejecting Him. Recall that Jesus is the Stone of Stumbling and Rock of Offense. He is the rejected Stone, and “the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him” (Matthew 21:44). As the people were broken and shattered because of God’s presence, so it is with Jesus. For those who reject Him, the message is the same: be broken and shattered, for God is with us. We cannot escape His judgment or His presence.

The fact that Jesus is Immanuel drives home the significance of His sacrifice. Jesus is not a lamb equal to the animals given every year, for “it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins” (Hebrews 10:4). No, this is Immanuel for whom a body was prepared with the expressed purpose of dying in humiliation on a cross. He despised the shame of it (Hebrews 12:2), but it was through the cross that He would display love and grace, and draw the world to Himself as the beacon of light and life. This is God, humbling and emptying Himself, treating others as more important even than Himself (Philippians 2:3-8). Only He could provide this gift, and He did it lovingly and willingly for us. In the cross, God is with us, and this is amazing, beyond words to express how marvelous this is!

When we see Jesus, we are left with two options: accept Him as Lord and God or deny Him as a fraud. We receive Him as the Cornerstone on which our faith is built or we stumble over Him as the Rock of Offense. Yet whether through salvation or judgment, we find this truth: God is with us!

The Proper Source of Authority, 12/19/2022, by Heath Rogers

"Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, ~By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?" (Matthew 21:23).

The chief priests and elders who confronted Jesus were asking legitimate questions. Jesus needed authority for the things He did in the temple, and this authority had to come from the proper source.

We considered in the past some improper sources of authority that people use regarding their religious beliefs and practices: themselves, traditions, creeds of men, what the preacher says, the results accomplished, and the Old Testament. Now, we will consider the proper source of authority in religious matters.

Notice our Lord's response to the questions asked by the chief priests and elders. "But Jesus answered and said to them, ~I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: The baptism of John - where was it from? From heaven or from men?" (Matthew 21:24-25).

According to Jesus, authority in religious matters can only come from one of two possible sources: from heaven (God) or from men. The reasoning of the chief priests and elders shows they correctly understood that authority in religious matters must come from God and not from men.

God has all authority. He has the right to take action, give commands, and enforce obedience. This authority or power belongs to God by right of creation (Romans 9:20-21).

God has given all authority to Jesus. "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth'" (Matthew 28:18). If Jesus has all authority, that means we are to listen to Him, not to ourselves, creeds, or traditions. God spoke to His people in the Old Testament through the prophets, but He speaks to us today through His Son (Hebrews 1:1-2).

Jesus gave the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles into all truth. "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you" (John 16:12-14). Read these verses again and notice the chain of authority. Jesus has been given all authority. The Holy Spirit would take the words of Jesus and declare them to the apostles. Therefore, the words of the apostles were the authoritative message of Jesus.

The apostles and other men inspired by the Holy Spirit wrote the New Testament. The New Testament is our source of authority in religion today. When we appeal to the New Testament Scriptures as authority for the things we believe, teach, and practice, we are not appealing to men but to heaven.