

# GROW IN GRACE

NEWSLETTER

**Volume 40, No.13, April 1, 2014** / Southside Baptist Church & Christian School / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / **The Grow in Grace Newsletter** is a weekly Bible Study, plus local church news notes— designed first and foremost for members and those attending services at Southside Church. It is sent forth with the desire to aid one and all, (including friends far and wide), in the experience of 2 Peter 3:18. **"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."**

**Let's Call It Resurrection Day, not Easter,** by Evangelist Mike Gendron

The world calls the greatest day on the Christian calendar "Easter" in an attempt to obscure or dismiss the supernatural miracle that took place 2000 years ago. As Christians, we should call it "Resurrection Day" in celebration of the glorious resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. He "was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4). We can rejoice in His triumphant victory over death, sin and Satan. However, we must never forget that the battle for the eternal souls of men continues throughout the world. Only the truth of God's Word can slay the lies of the devil. It is the duty of every blood-bought Christian to be actively involved in the Lord's army, to expose all forms of deception and to warn victims who are embracing a false and fatal gospel. Let us have a greater compassion for people who are committed to a religion without any real understanding of the Gospel of Christ.

According to God's great mercy, "He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Pet. 1:3). As ambassadors for the resurrected King of kings, let us emulate the apostles who gave "their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all" (Acts 4:33). Let us sow the seed of God's imperishable Word and pray, in God's providence, the seed will fall on fertile soil. The Gospel is the greatest news anyone could ever hear

because it is about the Greatest GIFT ever given!  
 (<http://proclaimingthegospel.org/>)

## Quotes on the Origin and History of Easter

The quotes are from a great variety of sources. They set forth historical facts which show - even as seen in the Bible - that there is no connection between Easter and Jesus.

**1. "The term 'Easter' is not of Christian origin. It is another form of Astarte, one of the titles of the Chaldean goddess, the queen of heaven. The festival of Pasch [Passover and the Feast of Unleavens] was a continuation of the Jewish [that is, God's] feast... from this Pasch **the pagan festival of 'Easter' was quite distinct and was introduced into the apostate Western religion**, as part of the attempt to adapt pagan festivals to Christianity." (W.E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, William White, Jr., **Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words, article: Easter, p.192**)**

**2. Tammuz:** ancient nature deity worshiped in Babylonia. A god of agriculture and flocks, he personified the creative powers of spring. He was loved by the fertility goddess Ishtar, who, according to one legend, was so grief-stricken at his death that she contrived to enter the underworld to get him back. According to another legend, she killed him and later restored him to life. These legends and his festival, commemorating the yearly death and rebirth of vegetation, corresponded to the festivals of the Phoenician and Greek Adonis and of the Phrygian Attis. The Sumerian name of Tammuz was Dumuzi. In the Bible his disappearance is mourned by the women of Jerusalem (Ezek. 8.14). **(The Columbia Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition. 2001)**

**3. "There is no warrant in Scripture for the observance of Christmas and Easter as holydays, rather the contrary... and such observance is contrary to the principles of the [Christian] faith, conducive to will-worship, and not in harmony with the simplicity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. " (Morton H. Smith, **How is the Gold Become Dim, p.98**)**

**4. "When Christianity conquered Rome: the ecclesiastical structure of the pagan church, the title and the vestments of the Pontifex Maximus, the worship of the Great Mother goddess and a multitude of comforting divinities, the sense of super sensible presences everywhere, the joy or solemnity of old festivals, and the pageantry of immemorial ceremony, passed like maternal blood into the new religion, and captive Rome**

conquered her conqueror. The reins and skills of government were handed down by a dying empire to a virile papacy." **(Will Durant, Caesar and Christ, p. 672)**

**5.** "There is no indication of the observance of the Easter festival in the New Testament, or in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers. The sanctity of special times [i.e., aside from the Holy Days appointed by God] was an idea absent from the minds of the first Christians, who continued to observe the Jewish [i.e., God's] festivals, though in a new spirit, as commemorations of events which those festivals had foreshadowed.

Thus the Passover, with a new conception added to it of Christ, as the true Paschal Lamb and the firstfruits from the dead..." [is what the New Testament Christians observed.] **(Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th edition, vol. 8, p. 828, article: "Easter")**

**6.** "Ishtar: ancient fertility deity, the most widely worshiped goddess in Babylonian and Assyrian religion. Ishtar was important as a mother goddess, goddess of love, and goddess of war. Her cult spread throughout W Asia, and she became identified with various other earth goddesses (see GREAT MOTHER OF THE GODS). Great Mother of the Gods: in ancient Middle Eastern religion (and later in Greece, Rome, and W Asia), mother goddess, the great symbol of the earth's fertility. As the creative force in nature, she was worshiped under many names, including ASTARTE (Syria), CERES (Rome), CYBELE (Phrygia), DEMETER (Greece), ISHTAR (Babylon), and ISIS (Egypt). The later forms of her cult involved the worship of a male deity (her son or lover, e.g., ADONIS, OSIRIS), whose death and resurrection symbolized the regenerative power of the earth." **(www.encyclopedia.com)**

**7.** "Just as many [Non-Biblical] Christian customs and similar observance had their origin in pre-Christian times, so, ... Easter dates back to ancient nature rites... The origin of the Easter egg is based on the fertility lore of the Indo-European races...The Easter bunny had its origin in pre-Christian fertility lore. Hare and rabbit were the most fertile animals our forefathers knew, serving as symbols of ... new life in the spring season." **(Jesuit author Francis X. Weiser, The Easter Book, pp.15, 181, & 188)**

**8.** "... What means the term Easter itself? It is not a Christian name. It bears its Chaldean origin on its very forehead. Easter is nothing else than Astarte, one of the titles of Beltis, the queen of heaven, whose name, as pronounced by the people of Nineveh, was evidently identical with that now in common use in this country. That name, as found by Layard on the

Assyrian monuments, is Ishtar." [The Two Babylons (Or The Papal Worship), Alexander Hislop, 1916, Neptune, NJ, Loizeaux Brothers, Inc., p.103]

## WHAT SHALL I DO IN LIGHT OF HISTORICAL TRUTH?

**I MUST open the Word of God!** The message of the sinless life, the sacrificial and substitutionary death of Jesus; and the message of His glorious Resurrection **are MOST PRECIOUS and MOST IMPORTANT to Bible-believing Christians!** WITH THE WORD OF GOD as our plumbline it is crystal clear that **nothing about Easter has anything to do with Jesus!** THEREFORE, LET US die to manmade religion and tradition! Let us speak of, GIVE THANKS FOR, and worship JESUS CHRIST— **Praising God for the life, the death, and the RESURRECTION of our LORD JESUS CHRIST!**

**There is no Biblical reason to CONTAMINATE and DILUTE the message of the Cross and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ with trappings and manmade terms of the world's pagan religion!** \*\*\* LET US spend special time in MEDITATION upon Psalm 22; Isaiah 53, and the latter chapters of the Gospels. **LET US, AS JESUS HAS COMMANDED: "Do this [OBSERVE THE LORD'S SUPPER] in remembrance of ME![JESUS!]"**

**I UNDERSTAND— just like most of you, I grew up celebrating Easter!**

We had Easter egg hunts, Easter bonnets (well, the girls did!) and Easter Sunday. On Easter Sunday, Pastors took their texts, read Scripture about the resurrection of Christ and then preached about the 'Easter Event' as if they were one and the same. **I trusted them. I believed them; and, like the masses, I never once 'checked out' what I was taught by the Word of God!**

However, during college days I began to be struck with the reality that the Bible really is the Word of God. I did not know the term, '**Sola Scriptura**'— but I now know that is what I began to embrace:

**"That Scripture is the only infallible voice in the church, and is to be interpreted, in its own light, and with the gracious help of the Holy Ghost,** who is promised to every Christian (1 John 2:20-27), by each

individual for himself; with the assistance, though not by the authority, of his fellow Christians.” (A.A. Hodge)

**\*\*\* I have no authority to add to or subtract from the Word of God; and therefore I must be on a lifelong pilgrimage of studying the Word of God and of seeking to heed the Word of God!** (Matt. 4:4; 2 Tim. 3:13-17)

**From the Word of God I discovered that** when it comes to commemorating and celebrating the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ New Testament Christians simply obeyed Jesus and celebrated the New Testament Passover or LORD'S SUPPER! (Luke 22:19; Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 11:23-26) They NEVER contaminated JESUS; THEY NEVER DILUTED FOCUS AWAY FROM JESUS by MIXING pagan traditions with the clear Word of God. Thus, if we are going to take our cue from the New Testament, we will do as the New Testament Christians did!

**The New Testament Christians did not commemorate Christ nor His suffering, death and/or resurrection by any of the following:** Lent, Fat Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Fourteen Stations of the Cross, **Service of Darkness or Service of Shadows, Holy Saturday**, Easter egg hunts, Easter Sunrise services, Passion Plays and/or Easter Sunday!

**These are all** religious customs and traditions which have basically come to the twenty-first century through Roman Catholicism. In reality, many of these beloved customs were borrowed from other religions and then *Christianized*. In varying degrees many Protestants have further adapted them. None of these are in or from the Bible!

In contrast and with simplicity, **JESUS SAID— "...This Do In Remembrance of Me."** (Luke 22:19) Neither He nor the Apostles referenced or spoke of Easter. Why should we?

**Think about it:** Whenever the world wants to get their point across or promote their product— they spend mega-bucks. They put on a Big Show and DAZZLE the physical senses. Strayed Christian Religion follows in that train with dazzling displays as they seek to be relevant in the eyes of the world via their self-created religious holidays.

**But again and in great contrast, Jesus calls His Church to genuine, profound and ultimate CELEBRATION of the most significant of all events in history with His words: "...This do In Remembrance of Me." The LORD'S SUPPER is amazingly simple in what is required to carry out our LORD'S command.**

**The LORD'S SUPPER** is equally within the reach of the poor and the rich, the educated and the uneducated, the famous and the forgotten.

**LET US 'MAKE MUCH OF' THE LAMB OF GOD!** WITHOUT any artificial enticements or inducements—the pure Word of God and the blessed Holy Spirit are ready to carry us to the most ultimate heights of wonder and awe **as we come to the LORD'S TABLE ON RESURRECTION SUNDAY, APRIL 20, during the 10:45am worship service.**

**\*\*\* On subject after subject IT COMES DOWN TO THIS: WHAT IS MY ATTITUDE ABOUT THE BIBLE, THE HOLY WORD OF GOD? \*\*\***

*The following quotes have been shared several times in recent years. But I get the sense that the truth of them has not yet gotten into the 'spiritual bloodstream' of very many! **PLEASE CAREFULLY READ, MEDIATATE UPON THESE:***

**Sola Scriptura, by A. A. Hodge:** "That Scripture is the only infallible voice in the church, **and is to be interpreted, in its own light, and with the gracious help of the Holy Ghost**, who is promised to every Christian (1 John 2:20-27), by each individual for himself; with the assistance, though not by the authority, of his fellow Christians.

Creeds and confessions, as to form, bind only those who voluntarily profess them, and as to matter, **they bind only so far as they affirm truly what the Bible teaches, and because the Bible does so teach.**"

**The Rule of Faith, by Charles Hodge:** "...The word of God, as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only infallible rule of faith and practice."

**The Scripture Sufficient, by Thomas Manton:** "Proposition: The Scripture is a sufficient rule of Christian Faith, or a record of all necessary Christian doctrines, without any supplement of unwritten traditions, as containing any necessary matter of faith, and is thus far sufficient for the decision of all controversies."

**The Inspiration of Scripture, by Loraine Boettner:** "The answer that we are to give to the question, "What is Christianity?" depends quite largely on the view we take of Scripture."

**If we believe that the Bible** is the very word of God and infallible, we will develop one conception of Christianity. **If we believe that it is only a collection of human writings**, perhaps considerably above the average in its spiritual and moral teachings but nevertheless containing many errors, we will develop a radically different conception of Christianity, if, indeed, what we then have can legitimately be called Christianity.

Hence we can hardly over-estimate the importance of a correct doctrine concerning the inspiration of the Scriptures."

## **James R. White— What then is sola scriptura?**

**First, what the doctrine of sola scriptura does not say.**

**First of all, it is not a claim that the Bible contains all knowledge.** The Bible is not exhaustive in every detail. John 21:25 speaks to the fact that there are many things that Jesus said and did that are not recorded in John, or in fact in any book in the world because the whole books of the world could not contain it. But the Bible does not have to be exhaustive to function as the sole rule of faith for the Church. We do not need to know the color of Thomas' eyes. We do not need to know the menu of each meal of the Apostolic band for the Scriptures to function as the sole rule of faith for the Church.

**Secondly, it is not a denial of the Church's authority to teach God's truth.** I Timothy 3:15 describes the Church as "the pillar and foundation of the truth." The truth is in Jesus Christ and in His Word. The

Church teaches truth and calls men to Christ and, in so doing, functions as the pillar and foundation thereof.

**The Church does not add revelation or rule over Scripture.** The Church, being the bride of Christ, listens to the Word of Christ— which is found in God-breathed Scripture.

**[NOTE: Harlot Churches DO ADD to and/or deny or subtract from the Word of God; and place themselves and/or their leaders OVER the Word of God.]**

**Thirdly, it is not a denial that God's Word has been spoken.** Apostolic preaching was authoritative in and of itself. Yet, the Apostles proved their message from Scripture, as we see in Acts 17:2, and 18:28, and John commended those in Ephesus for testing those who claimed to be Apostles, Revelation 2:2. The Apostles were not afraid to demonstrate the consistency between their teaching and the Old Testament.

**And, finally, sola scriptura is not a denial of the role of the Holy Spirit in guiding and enlightening the Church.**

### **What then is sola scriptura?**

The doctrine of sola scriptura, simply stated, is that **the Scriptures and the Scriptures alone are sufficient to function as the regula fide, the "rule of faith" for the Church.**

All that one must believe to be a Christian is found in Scripture and in no other source. That which is not found in Scripture is not binding upon the Christian conscience. To be more specific, **I provide the following definition:**

The Bible claims to be the sole and sufficient rule of faith for the Christian Church. The Scriptures are not in need of any supplement. Their authority comes from their nature as God-breathed revelation.

Their authority is not dependent upon man, Church or council. **The Scriptures are self-consistent, self-interpreting, and self-authenticating.**

**The Christian Church looks at the Scriptures as the only and sufficient rule of faith and the Church is always subject to the Word, and is constantly reformed thereby.**

**BUT WHO CARES ABOUT ANY OF THIS?**

**WHAT DOES IT MATTER?**

**IT DOES NOT MATTER AT ALL— IF the Bible is not our true and sufficient rule of faith!**

**BUT IF 'SOLA SCRIPTURA' is true— then let us line up with the Word of God!**

Grace to all in Christ!

James Bell [www.southsidegallatin](http://www.southsidegallatin)

## **SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES!**

**TUESDAYS: Come and sing with us every Tuesday night at Gallatin Health Care nursing home.** Meet at the front door at 5:30PM. Any questions contact Bradley Pennington at 615-804-3054.

**\*\*\* WEDNESDAYS: PRAYER SERVICE at 7:00PM! NOTE:** Jody Allen is ministering to young Children, up to about age 10 during Prayer Service. Older children, but not old enough for the Youth Group... will be with their parents in the Prayer Service.

**YOUTH GROUP: Wednesdays 6-8pm...** led by Byron Smith\_

**➔ NEXT LADIES BIBLE STUDY— Thursday, April 3, 11:00AM,** led by Cindy Bell

**\*\*\* SATURDAY MORNINGS @ 8am: Men's Fellowship/Bible Study!**  
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**REGULAR SUNDAY SCHEDULE FOR April 6, 13, 20, 27**

- 1. 9:30am- Sunday School→ Bible Study and Small Group Fellowship**
- 2. 10:45am- Morning Worship / Children's Church**
- 3. Noon:** Fellowship 'covered-dish' Meal together!
- 4. 1:00pm-** Early afternoon Service, in the Fellowship Hall

**\*\*\*\* APRIL 20 IS RESURRECTION SUNDAY! \*\*\*\***

**1.** During the 9:30AM Sunday School hour, we will have a BRUNCH. **2.** DURING THE 10:45AM WORSHIP HOUR we will sing praise to God for the life, the death, and the resurrection of our LORD; Dr. Bobby Gupta, President of Hindustan Bible Institute, Chennai, India, will be preaching; **3.** We will conclude at the LORD'S TABLE. **4.** NO noon meal or afternoon service.

## **SOUTHSIDE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL!**

***Children are like young plants in a garden— while young and tender they must be protected.*** Southside Christian School works in harmony with the local Church and empowers parents!

**<http://www.aceministries.com/curriculum/?content=presentingACE>**