

December 19, 2021

# The View

*“Sirs, we wish to see Jesus.” — John 12:21*

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## Welcome Visitors & Returning College Students!

We always love to see visitors and for the next month or so, we'll get to be with our college students who are home for the holidays. As a reminder, our goal is to do everything according to God's word, including respecting its silence. This is a church of Christ; we are not a denomination, not part of anything larger than this local church and we have no earthly "headquarters." The six elders oversee this work and, ultimately, we answer only to Christ. The comments you hear today are primarily aimed at our own members, as we examine Scripture and seek to be built up in our faith in Christ. If you don't understand something, please do not hesitate to ask one of the elders. We welcome and appreciate your comments and questions on any issue and especially if you see or hear anything that you feel does not correspond to God's word. We are here to serve; please help us do that.

**Please fill out a visitor's card and put it in the collection plate located near the entrance.  
We do not solicit donations from visitors. See page 4 for more information.**

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## Schedule

### The Lord's Day

**9:30 AM Bible classes for all ages**

*Auditorium: A Study of Paul's Letter to the **Philippians***

**10:30 AM: Assembly**

Preaching Today

**David Posey: Jesus on Money**

*Livestream at 10:30 <https://tinyurl.com/5f2cbm3y>*

**Bible Class @ 1:30 PM in room 15/16 **Hebrews****

**Bible Class @ 5 PM — A Study of Prayer (Auditorium)**

**Young People's Class, 5 PM @ David & Christie Posey's home**

**Middle school class: monthly** (contact Dan Stegall at 818- 209-9810)

There are several on-going Bible classes in the homes of members. Check with David Posey or one of the other elders if you would like to join one of those classes.

### Wednesday 7 PM @ Building

**Bible classes for all ages**

*Auditorium: A Study of Paul's Letter to the **Philippians***

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# Truth Decay

by DAVID POSEY

In the last two weeks, we've printed excellent articles by two of our young ladies who are in the Junior High class this quarter: Rowen Brown and Camille Rico. Both wrote excellent articles on "*How We Can Know What is True*." Both pointed to the Bible as the source of truth. As John 17:17 says, "sanctify them in truth, your word is truth." The teachers in that class have been teaching the kids the importance of know what truth is, where to find it and how to use. I can't think of anything more important.

Unfortunately, many think that truth is a flexible, fluid thing, not absolute. That flies in the face of the definition of truth, "that which corresponds to reality."

But the enemies of truth are legion. There is the outright assault on truth by those who wish to be free from its constraints; that's nothing new. Jesus said to the Jews,

You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. *John 8:44-45*

If you deny the reality of external, absolute truth, then anything goes. Dostoevsky made this point in *The Brothers Karamazov*, "If there is no God, then everything is permitted."

But there are more subtle attacks on truth. A. W. Tozer said, "*Not wanting to appear judgmental, we mistakenly try to make biblical truth fit the culture around us.*" This was said back in the 1960s but it is still true. If we are so afraid of being called "judgmental" then we may be tempted to seek a path of least resistance by making the Bible adapt to the culture instead of calling out the sins of the culture.

## "Deconstruction of the Faith"

A "deconstruction" of podcasters Rhett and Link's "deconstruction of their faith" argument.

"This conversation of truth is not only critical, its also tricky. What Rhett and Link seemed to do—at least to me—was to deny the existence of absolute truth in Jesus for the uncertainty of truth as the most virtuous display of humanity. Because our world has so many different cultures, contexts, and religions, truth is just a social construct created differently by each culture, therefore explaining reality very differently, and therefore allowing for multiple versions of truth. In other words, truth is something that ought to exist internally for each person,

rather than a universal standard that stands independent of opinions and emotions.

"In both podcasts, Rhett and Link asserted that there just wasn't enough evidence pointing to Christianity as a true and coherent worldview. Because they couldn't know with any degree of certainty, it must not be true. Yet they continued to establish a new worldview based on the same moral tenants as well as an almost zen like comfort of embracing uncertainty. This is what happens when we try to create truth internally.

"This is why truth is so critical in the lives of our youth. Don't take what God has revealed in Scripture and through Jesus for granted but teach the truth of the gospel as the best explanation for how we understand the real world, completely independent of us. It was never meant to be easy or convenient, just true.

"The Christian worldview says that through the Divine revelation of God in Jesus Christ, we have come to a knowledge of the truth. In other words, because of God, we can know. We can know the origin of the universe, the purpose of humanity, and the reasons for pain in our world and the solution. Christians call this truth. This truth is based on an objective standard — a truth revealed by faith and strengthened by reason. We know Christianity to be true primarily by the self-authenticating witness of God's Spirit. We show Christianity is true by presenting good arguments for its central claims. Therefore to be effective in doing apologetics, we must present rational and persuasive arguments for the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit and leave the results to God."

Excerpt from *The Truth Is*, by Steven Kozak

## Truth v. Feelings

"There are people who put stress on sentiment and emotion in religion. If they 'feel good,' they have no doubt as to their present security and their acceptance with God. These people covet moods and states of feeling. They revel in songs and prayers and hallelujahs. The thrill of sentiment and the warm currents of emotion are 'the all and in all' of religion. Such saints forget that mere mental exhilaration and good feeling may coexist with carnal hearts, selfish aims, and utter worldliness of temper." — J. H. Vincent

# When should a child be baptized?

A common question asked of preachers by parents is this: “*at what age, state of mind or stage of development should I encourage my child to consider being baptized?*” It’s one of the most difficult questions we are asked and the range of answers — at least short answers — are not very helpful. I grew up hearing that we are to be baptized when we reach the “age of accountability.” But what’s the ‘age if accountability?’ The answer was, “when you know the difference between right and wrong.” That wasn’t very helpful because I had a pretty good grip on what was right and wrong by the time I was 5 or 6 years old.

## Biblical Examples

When we look at Biblical examples of accountability, we might conclude that we are not accountable until we are 20 years old, since men under 20 when they came out of Egypt were allowed to go into the promised land (Numbers 31:11). Some argue that, therefore, those below 20 are cannot be sinners. I don’t see that as a relevant example, however, because that circumstance was unique and the times and situation were much different then than they are this side of the cross.

But even when we look at examples of people who were baptized in the New Testament, it’s hard to nail down an “age of accountability.” In Acts 2:38ff. 3,000 “souls” were baptized but there is no age reference. As we read through the book of Acts, we find several examples of people being baptized but no ages are given. However, we know that the Ethiopian, Cornelius, Lydia, and the Philippian Jailer were adult enough to know why they were being baptized but then in all of those cases there is a reference to “all their household.” We can surmise that it included spouses and children and servants. But we have no way of knowing how old any of them were at baptism.

The “age of accountability” seems to be a moving target. And what happens if you don’t get baptized at the moment that you become “accountable”? There must be a better answer.

## Scriptures on baptism

This is not an exhaustive list of texts that reference baptism, but these provide enough to understand what baptism is and accomplishes: Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:38-41; 8:12; 8:38; 9:18 (22:16); 10:48; 16:15, 38; 18:8; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26, 27. It would be wise to read these texts to a young person before he or she is baptized.

## The main thing

Obviously, it isn’t required for a child to explain the texts above in detail because the *primary* prerequisite to baptism, according to Matthew 28:18-20, is that one who desires to be baptized is a disciple of Christ.

A disciple is one who follows Christ and who believes Christ is the Son of God. Being a disciple does not mean he

can explain spiritual things in detail. It simply means that he has chosen to follow Christ instead of the world.

Even as I’ve gotten older and more knowledgeable, I have questioned, now and then, whether I knew enough when I was baptized in March, 1965 at 17 years old. But such misgivings are faulty. The act of getting dipped in water is not what saves us.\* We are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8). Faith demands obedience to God’s commands. When we believe and confess that Jesus is the Son of God and repent and are baptized (Acts 2:38) we are obeying the commands of God. When we come up out of the water, we “rise in newness of life” (Romans 6:4) and our relationship has changed in the mind of God. We are now his children (see Galatians 3:26-27) and our obedience has the effect of clearing our conscience (1 Peter 3:21). A marriage ceremony is analogous. When the officiant at a wedding says, “*I now pronounce you husband and wife,*” the relationship changes, not only between the man and woman getting married, but in the mind of God.

Obedying the command to be baptized has other profound effects, but we are not expected to know all of them before we are baptized. Just look at any of the examples of baptism in the book of Acts and it doesn’t appear that there was a year-long class with the person before she was baptized; all the examples, at least as they are recorded for us, are of baptism after a relatively short amount of time.

This suggests that, before one is baptized, there is something he or she should know or, better, **be**, that is more important than a deep knowledge of baptism itself. The real question for a parent is this: *is your child a disciple of Christ?* Does he or she exhibit the qualities of a “disciple”? There are many traits of a true disciple but the primary one is that, by definition, he or she is following Christ. To simplify, is your child’s default mentality to believe in Jesus, to believe the Bible is true and to do what God says? The age factor becomes important when the child begins to feel guilt and that guilt is not because he or she disobeyed you but it is a guilt because he disobeyed God. I’m not sure one has to exhibit the attitude of David as seen in Psalm 51:4 when he said, “*Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.*” But we must understand that sin is something we commit against God, not just a friend or family member. Before we are baptized for forgiveness of sins we should feel guilt for our sins.

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\*1 Peter 3:21 is not saying the water bath is a magic potion of some kind; the emphasis in that text is that Noah obeyed by getting into the ark and thus was saved “though water”; baptism, Peter says, has a similar effect: we obey and are baptized (cf. Romans 6:17).