

January 1, 2023

The View

"Sirs, we wish to see Jesus." – John 12:21

Welcome Visitors

Our goal at the Folsom church of Christ is to do everything according to God's word, including respecting its silence.

We are not a denomination, not part of anything larger than this local church; we have no earthly "headquarters."

The five elders oversee this church and, ultimately, we answer only to Christ. The comments you hear today are primarily for the benefit of 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 the preacher or 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 when is passed.
We do not solicit donations from visitors. See page 4 for more information.**

Schedule

The Lord's Day

9:30 AM Bible Classes

Auditorium: 2 Peter 2:16-21 "God's prophetic word." Room 12: Young Adult Class: "Be ready to give an answer" (1 Peter 3:15)

10:30 AM: Assembly

Preaching Today

Ed Sanderson, Sr

"Pressing On Toward the Goal"

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

Bible Class @ 5 PM — Praying the Psalms (Auditorium)

*High School Class @ 5 PM @ David & Christie Posey's home: **no class tonight***

Middle school class: monthly (contact David Sanderson (david.r.sanderson@intel.com)

or Seth Reagan (sethreagan@gmail.com)

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: Love Your Bible: Introduction

Room 12: Young Adults Class: "Be ready to give an answer" (1 Peter 3:15)

LOVE YOUR BIBLE CLASS



Bible Reading Plans

Here are some links to Bible reading plans. There are two 365 day plans and, if you're up for it, an intense 90 day plan. If you would like to finish the Bible reading plan in next six months (the duration of our class) you can double up on the full year plans or extend the 90 day plan. I prefer the Chronological Plan because it gives you a good sense of where events fit on the biblical timeline. Pick the plan that best fits your schedule. Consider reading out loud whenever feasible and, if you have children, read at least some of the time with them — make it a family time. The links below allow you to subscribe so you'll get a reminder in your inbox each day.

365 day: <https://www.biblegateway.com/reading-plans/beginning/2023/01/01?version=ESV>

Chronological: <https://www.biblegateway.com/reading-plans/chronological/2023/01/01?version=ESV>

Or <https://www.biblegateway.com/reading-plans/chronological> (this is one you can print out).

Intense 90 day reading plan: <https://www.biblegateway.com/reading-plans/bible-in-90-days/2023/01/01?version=ESV>

Bible Reading or Netflix?

"Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is." Ephesians 5:15-17.

Can we authentically expect and hope for a home in heaven if we are making poor investments of the 24 hours that are allotted to us each day? Shouldn't we honestly ask ourselves how much time is spent reading and watching secular material and how much time we spend playing, whether online or outside? If these things get in the way of some serious time spent with God's word, then how do you think God feels about that? **Almost half the books in the Bible take less than a half-hour to read. Twenty-three of them can be read in under twenty minutes!** That's less than one episode of a typical series on Netflix. That's the amount of time you probably spend checking Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter on any given morning. That's the amount of half a lunch break at work. When you're considering going to or streaming a movie on, look at the number of minutes. Most of them are somewhere around 120 minutes (Avatar 2 is 192 minutes; over three hours!). It'll be hard for us at judgment to argue that we "couldn't find the time" to read the Bible if we are spending more of our time on these secular, and sometimes questionable, media events. Just something to think seriously about. The Bible is more interesting than all this other stuff anyway.

Minutes to Read Bible Books Shortest to Longest

3 John - 219 words, 2.2 minutes

2 John - 245, 2.5 minutes

Philemon - 335, 3.5 minutes

Obadiah - 440, 4.5 minutes

Jude - 461, 4.6 minutes

Titus - 659, 7 minutes

2 Thessalonians - 823, 8 minutes

Nahum - 855, 8.5 minutes

Haggai - 926, 9 minutes

Habakkuk 1,011, 10 minutes

Jonah - 1,082, 10 minutes

2 Peter - 1,099, 10 minutes

Zephaniah - 1,141, 10 minutes

2 Timothy - 1,238, 12 minutes

Malachi - 1,320, 13 minutes

Joel - 1,447, 15 minutes

1 Thessalonians - 1,481, 15 minutes

Colossians - 1,582, 16 minutes

1 Timothy - 1,591, 16 minutes

Philippians - 1,629, 16 minutes

1 Peter - 1,684, 17 minutes

James - 1,742, 17.5 minutes

Song of Songs - 2,020, 20 minutes

Ruth - 2,039, 20 minutes

Micah - 2,118, 21 minutes

1 John - 2,141, 21 minutes

Galatians - 2,230, 22 minutes

Lamentations - 2,324, 23 minutes

Ephesians - 2,422, 24 minutes

Amos - 3,027, 30 minutes

Hosea - 3,615, 36 minutes

2 Corinthians - 4,477, 45 minutes

Ecclesiastes - 4,537, 45 minutes

Zechariah - 4,855, 48 minutes

Esther - 4,932, 49 minutes

Hebrews - 4,953, 50 minutes

Ezra - 5,605, 56 minutes

1 Corinthians - 6,830, 68 minutes

Romans - 7,111, 71 minutes

Nehemiah - 8,507, 85 minutes

Daniel - 9,001, 90 minutes

Revelation - 9,851, 98 minutes

Proverbs - 9,921, 99 minutes

Mark - 11,304, 113 minutes

Job - 12,674, 126 minutes

Judges - 15,385, 153 minutes

John - 15,635, 156 minutes

Joshua - 15,671, 156 minutes

1 Chronicles - 16,664, 166 minutes

2 Samuel - 17,170, 171 minutes

Matthew - 18,346, 183 minutes

Acts - 18,450, 184 minutes

2 Kings - 18,784, 187 minutes

Leviticus - 18,852, 188 minutes

Luke - 19,482, 194 minutes

1 Kings - 20,361, 203 minutes

1 Samuel - 20,837, 208 minutes

2 Chronicles - 21,349, 213 minutes

Deuteronomy - 23,008, 230 minutes

Numbers - 25,048, 250 minutes

Isaiah - 25,608, 256 minutes

Exodus - 25,957, 259 minutes

Ezekiel - 29,918, 299 minutes

Psalms - 30,147, 301 minutes

Genesis - 32,046, 320 minutes

Jeremiah - 33,002, 330 minutes

IF THERE IS NO GOD, CAN ANYTHING BE WRONG?

BY DAVID POSEY

During a podcast, a young female atheist was asked if rape is objectively wrong. Simple question, right? First, she said, "what do you mean by 'objectively'?" But she knew what he meant. Is rape *always* wrong? She couldn't answer the question. If she said "yes" then she would have to admit that there is such a thing as objective morality — a moral standard that is set in stone, from a greater source outside of us. But to agree to that would be to admit that there is some "force" outside the human realm that defines morality and she knew that to agree to that leads to an acknowledgement that God exists. After all, what other non-human reality can we possibly imagine?

The morality argument for God may be the most difficult argument atheists and agnostics face. After all, like all of us, they have no problem describing some things as "good" or "bad," but if there is no universal standard, what possible basis are using to make that judgment? Fyodor Dostoevsky said, "If God does not exist, everything is permitted" (*The Brothers Karamazov*). If God does not exist, then what becomes of objective morality?

Non-believers may point to the standards of the community to define morality. But they are silent when Hitler's Third Reich is mentioned and realize that the majority of Germans were on board with the abuse of their Jewish neighbors. That was the "community standard" for a time. If there is no objective morality how can we say it's immoral?

Some argue that conscience is good — if you can live with it, then it is good. That hardly warrants comment; "seared consciences" (1 Timothy 4:2) are so common today, what would become of society if that becomes the ultimate standard?

Lately, some are even arguing that "consent" defines morality. If a person gives their consent to any action, then the actor is not guilty of "immorality." For example, if a cancer patient desires to die, their consent to euthanasia absolves the killer of any fault. But what about the case of a 15 year old girl who gave consent to a double mastectomy because she thought she wanted to become a boy? Later, she regretted giving her consent. Who is competent to give consent? Consent does not make it right.

Benjamin Franklin, in a letter dated December 13, 1757, responded to an author who wrote an article promoting the removal of religious (i.e., God's) influence from society. His response is eerily prophetic:

Were you to succeed, do you imagine any good would be done by it? You yourself may find it easy to live a virtuous life, without the assistance afforded by religion; you having a clear perception of the advantage of virtue, and the disadvantages of vice, and possessing a strength of resolution sufficient to enable you to resist common temptations. But think how great a portion of mankind consists of weak and ignorant men and women, and of inexperienced, inconsiderate youth of both sexes, who have need of the motives of religion to restrain them from vice, to support their virtue, and retain them in the practice of it till it becomes habitual, which is the great point for its security. And perhaps you are indebted to her originally, that is to your religious education, for the habits of virtue upon which you now justly value yourself. You might easily display your excellent talents of reasoning upon a less hazardous subject, and thereby obtain a rank with our most distinguished authors. For among us it is not necessary, as among the Hot-

tentots, that a youth, to be raised into the company of men, should prove his manhood by beating his mother.

I would advise you, therefore, not to attempt unchaining the tiger, but to burn this piece before it is seen by any other person, whereby you will save yourself a great deal of mortification by the enemies it may raise against you, and perhaps a great deal of regret and repentance. If men are so wicked with religion, what would they be if without it?

Franklin's advice is more pragmatic than scriptural, but it recognizes the value of objective morality. And, his fears have come true historically — the tiger has been unchained. Paul predicted this in II Timothy 3:1-5:

But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.

When God's influence is eliminated, anything goes.

That's what Paul is saying and that is what Dostoyevsky and Franklin were trying to say.

To deny that there is objective morality is to affirm that a person's own morality is his god. Or, it is to affirm that a society's morality is god. But how does that work when a Hitler or a Stalin or a Pol Pot is in charge? Were the storm troopers in Hitler's Germany justified because

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they adopted the morality of the society they lived in? Some will say, "that's ridiculous!!" Of course, I agree because I believe they are condemned by the objective morality of God. But what possible argument can the atheist lodge against the norms adopted by the majority in 1930-40s Germany and Russia (or any other government in any other time)? If the law in Salem, Massachusetts in the 1700's demanded that men seek out witches and burn them at the stake, what "law" will the atheist use to condemn it?

The young atheist who could not answer the simple question, "Is rape objectively wrong?" was, at least, being honest in her silence. There is no answer because, "without God, anything is permissible."