

December 22, 2024

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.

We do not solicit donations from visitors. Please fill out a visitor’s card and put it in the collection plate when it is passed. See page 4 for more information.

Schedule

The Lord’s Day

9:30 AM Bible Classes

Auditorium: Ecclesiastes

Young Adult Class (room 12): “Acts, Sharing Our Faith”

Room 13/14: “Relationships”

10:30 AM: Assembly

Preaching Today: David Posey
“Blest Be the Tie”

Livestream at 9:30 & 10:30 <https://tinyurl.com/5f2cbm3y>

Sunday Afternoon and Evening Bible Classes @ the Building

1:30 PM, Genesis (see Grant Mulligan)

5 PM, Praying the Psalms (Auditorium)

Additional Classes

High School Class, 5 PM on Sundays @ David & Christie Posey’s home
Young people monthly meeting (middle school): 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, Len Baker or one of the elders.

2nd Saturday Men’s Bible Study: 7 to 8 AM

Bel Air Market on Bidwell in Folsom. “Iron sharpens iron” (Proverbs 27:17). Mentoring (Titus 2:1-6).

Wednesday 7 PM @ Building

Same classes as Sunday, 9:30 AM

Articles published in the View reflect only the thoughts and opinions of the author alone, not necessarily the editor, the elders or any member of the church at Folsom.

Jesus is the Reason for *Every* Season

BY DAVID POSEY

Do you remember that illustration about the camel that wants to get into the tent. First, he pokes his nose under it, and says, “do you mind?” You say, “Well, OK, but just your nose.” You know the rest: first one hump, then the other hump, then the whole camel... finally, you’re outside, wondering what happened.

In some churches of Christ there is now an inclination to go along with the denominations and celebrate Christmas as a day to honor Christ’s birth. There are sermons planned for today that will emphasize Jesus’ birth, with only the slightest reference, if any, to the fact that the date of Jesus’ birth is unknown to us and never mentioned in the Bible. There will be no reference to the fact that even most Protestant churches in the 1600s banned any observance of Christmas.

The reality today is that you can set foot in some local churches of Christ that fully endorse the setting aside of a special day – December 25th – to observe the birth of Jesus. Some will even have a “Christmas Eve” service.

Some churches have morphed into whole-hearted “reason-for-the-season” celebrants and are going all out to show it. A look in your mailbox or in ads in newspapers or on the web and you may be surprised about how some of these churches are handling “Christmas” these days. One church in the area has five sermons this month based on “Christmas.”

Why would they do that? There are two possible reasons for this. First, the preacher and the church may indeed endorse the celebration of Christ’s birthday as a religious holiday and feel that December 25th is as good a time as any. Or, they may feel that a “hands-off, no comment” policy is best, because to tell the truth may alienate those who are visiting for the first time. Instead, we should make them feel welcome and use these as opportunities to teach the truth. I’m happy when visitors come, no matter what motivates them to come. But we must studiously avoid allowing folks to believe that we endorse “Christmas” as a valid “holy day,” to be observed religiously.

We are told to speak the truth (Ephesians 4:15) and to “speak as the oracles of God,” (I Peter 4:11). Celebrating Christmas as the birthday of Christ is doing neither of those things. If the Bible is silent (a) about the date of Jesus birth and (b) about setting aside any day as holy except the first day of the week, are we not presumptuous to endorse such a special day?

Some say, “but the birth of Jesus is recorded in Scripture!” Yes it is, and we should study it and teach it. But the fact that the story is told in the Bible strengthens the ar-

gument against setting aside a special day to celebrate it. God decided that it was fitting to record the event, but gave no instructions about the date of Christ’s birth or about honoring it. So upon what basis would we claim to do so? If we are authorized to set up that day as a special day, then we are authorized to take any event recorded in the New Testament and set up a special day for that, too.

“...why not set up a Sunday to honor the day of Jesus’ baptism? Or a ‘Pentecost Sunday,’ or a day to honor the miracles of Jesus, or even ‘Ethiopian Eunuch Sunday’? I don’t doubt that there are churches that would have no problem doing any of that but we are not one of those churches.”

For example, why not set up a Sunday to honor the day of Jesus’ baptism? Or a “Pentecost Sunday,” or a day to honor the miracles of Jesus, or even “Ethiopian Eunuch Sunday”? I don’t doubt that there are churches that would have no problem doing any of that but we are not one of those churches.

Scripture urges us to make a **daily** commitment to Christ (Matthew 16:24) and to glorify God and

Christ in our everyday life. God knew that setting up one or two “extra-special” days a year would have the effect of leading people to think that if they serve God on those days, that should be sufficient. But Christ is 24/7, 365 and He’ll accept nothing less.

We aim to avoid, at all costs, adding to or taking away from what the Holy Spirit has given in God’s word. We are convinced that doing that is right and cannot be wrong.



A blanket of snow covers the little town of Bethlehem, in Pieter Bruegel’s oil painting from 1566. Although Jesus’ birth is celebrated every year on December 25, Luke and the other gospel writers offer no hint about the specific time of year he was born.

Photo: Scala/Art Resource, NY.

*From Biblical Archeology Review, Bible History Daily
December 17, 2024*

Our Theme for 2025

“Building Up...”

“...for building up the body of Christ...”

Ephesians 4:12

Each year, we choose a theme, primarily for our group meetings. In 2023, our theme was “Love Your Bible”; in 2024, it was “Sharing Our Faith.” For 2025, it will be “Building Up.” The concept of building up is found in several New Testament texts. Our theme text will be Ephesians 4:11-16:

“And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, **for building up the body of Christ**, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”

Another word for “building up” is “edification.” Edify is defined as “the instruction or improvement of a person morally or intellectually.” The word comes from the Latin, “to build.” For a local church, like Folsom, the building up takes place internally. That is, our first priority is for each active member of the church to be edified, built up. The church is for builders, not for the wrecking crew. Jude warned his readers,

“These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage. But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. They said to you, “In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.” It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.” **Jude 1:16-21**

This year, in sermons, classes and group meetings, we’ll talk about how we carry out this task of “building up.” It starts with a renewed dedication to loving your Bible, not just to get a higher Bible IQ, but to learn how to make the church better and stronger. We can only do that if we are dedicated students of God’s word. Here are the classes we’re offering starting on January 5th:

- Classes for all ages of children and young people starting with toddlers, through high school.

For the adults:

- Auditorium, a study of “Joy” [See Scott Gardner]
- Classroom #13/14 – “Transformed Relationships” from Romans 12-16. [see David Posey for availability]
- Classroom #5-6 – “Getting to Know the Holy Spirit” [see Ed Sanderson, Sr. for availability]
- For additional classes at the building on Sunday afternoon and evening, see the front page of the View.
- Classroom #12, “Journeys with Jesus: small group discussions on the masters teachings.” See Terry Raposa
- If you’re interested in attending a Sunday afternoon class in a home, check with Len Baker or David Posey.

“For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.”

Proverbs 2:6