

Service Opportunities

Announcements: Ted Wheeler
Usher: Delbert Leavens

RECORD

Attendance **82**
Contribution \$ 2435.00
Weekly Budget \$ 2854.00

Thought For The Day

*Never be afraid
to trust an unknown future
to a known God.
Corie Ten Boom*

Church of Christ of Venice

**4301 SR 776
Venice, FL 34293**

MORNING SERVICES

Opening Prayer: Marty Wingo
Songs: Joe Austin
Sermon: Ted Wheeler
Closing Prayer: Marvin DeMeester

EVENING SERVICES

Opening Prayer: Wayne Vowell
Songs: Joe Austin
Sermon: Ted Wheeler
Closing Prayer: Larry Jenson

COMMUNION

Mike Weber Dick Navarre
Bill Burnside Dale Schwartz

Church of Christ of Venice

"A friendly church, proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ"

January 6, 2008

Volume 18, Number 01

Is God Exclusive?

God determines who is to be identified as a Christian; he has not assigned that responsibility to us.

Mike Rappaport is a journalist who writes a regular column for the Ontario, California Daily Bulletin. A recent piece (11/12/98) was titled, "If God isn't exclusive, why are some believers convinced they're the only ones who are right?" In this essay, the columnist makes several statements worthy of examination.

Rappaport tells of a conversation he had with a four-year-old girl, the daughter of some friends. The little girl said to him: "Mom says you aren't a Christian." He explained to the child that he **is** a Christian—"even if I [have] never been born again." He went on to say: "I'm just not the same kind of Christian you are . . . there are all sorts of Christians." The journalist, citing an acquaintance, concluded: "God isn't exclusive." Several important questions are prompted by this brief article.

First, just where does one obtain the information as to what God is, or is not, like? How does one determine what God approves, or does not approve? Has the Creator given a revelation of his will, or not? If the Lord has **not** given an **objective revelation**, detailing his will to humanity, one person's guess is as good as another's. Thus, it would be just as rational to assume one thing about God as anything else.

A SPECIAL WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS!

Please fill out a blue visitor card so that we might have a record of your visit. If needed, there is a nursery available at the rear of the auditorium. Bible classes for all ages are available Sundays at 10:00 am and Wednesdays at 6:30 pm. We hope that you will join us for these studies. Please come and worship with us again soon.

Elders
Delbert Leavens
Wayne Vowell
Ted Wheeler

Minister
Ted Wheeler

Sunday Services
Bible Study-10:00 am
Worship-11:00 am
Evening Worship-6:00 pm

Wednesday
Bible Study-6:30 pm.

Church of Christ
4301 Highway 776
Venice, FL 34293
USA

Telephone:
941-493-2403

Email:
mail@venicechurchofchrist.com

Internet:
www.venicechurchofchrist.com

Outreach:



In other words, to say that God **is** exclusive would carry as much weight as the assertion that God is **not** exclusive.

On the other hand, if divine truth has been made known in a body of objective information (the Bible), then the divine disposition, including whether or not God is “exclusive,” can be discerned from a study of that Sacred Volume. Is there evidence confirming the supernatural origin, and therefore the **authoritative** nature, of the Scriptures? There absolutely is—an overwhelming mass of evidence; and we have discussed it in many of our writings (especially see our small volume, Fortify Your Faith).

Second, why is it deemed unacceptable to argue that if God is perfect (which includes being consistent—cf. 1 Corinthians 14:33), then there is a **right** way of serving him, which excludes other ways? Truth, from the very nature of the case, is exclusive. The truth that two plus two equals four is exclusive. One may choose to deny it, but it is true regardless. Water freezes at thirty-two degrees Fahrenheit—not twenty-five degrees, nor forty-five degrees. Characterize that as bigotry if you must, but that’s the **exclusive** truth of the matter. Why is it so difficult to see that there also is such a thing as **spiritual truth**—revealed, inflexible, exclusive truth? For some, the only “exclusive truth” is: “There is no exclusive truth.”

Third, where did our journalist friend get the information that one can be a “Christian,” and yet not be a “born-again” person? So far as I know the only sacred book that details what it takes to constitute a Christian is the New Testament. And it connects being a disciple of Christ, i.e., a Christian (Acts 11:26), with submitting to the conditions of the new birth. Note the simple logic.

1. Jesus taught that the yielding to the requirements of the new-birth process puts one into the “kingdom” of God. Except one be born anew, he cannot “see” or “enter” the kingdom of God (see John 3:3-5).
2. But the kingdom is identified as the “church” (Matthew 16:18-19), known also as the “house of God” (1 Timothy 3:15).
3. It therefore must be the case that the new birth is essential to entering the house of God.
4. But those who constitute the “house of God” are Christians. Observe this passage: “If a man suffer as a **Christian**, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name. For time is come that judgment begin at the **house of God**: and if it begin first at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not

the gospel of God?” (1 Peter 4:16-17).

5. It thus is apparent that yielding to the terms of the new birth is essential to becoming a Christian. Look carefully at Matthew 28:19, where becoming a disciple (Christian) is preceded by obedience to the divine plan of salvation. “Make disciples, baptizing them . . .” The phrase “baptizing them” is explanatory, revealing how one actually enters the “disciple” relationship, later identified as “Christian” (Acts 11:26).
6. Additionally, note that according to 1 Peter 4:17, those who are Christians stand in juxtaposition to those who have not obeyed the gospel.

Finally, what source of information led Mr. Rappaport to the conclusion that there are **different kinds** of Christians? He certainly did not discover this from reading the New Testament. A quick consultation of a Bible concordance reveals that the term “Christian/s” is found only three times in Scripture (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16), and the word is not hyphenated, i.e., there is no such creature in the Bible as a Catholic-Christian, Protestant-Christian, etc. In the apostolic age, it was sufficient to be **just a Christian**. Such ought to be the case today.

The concluding point is this: God determines who is to be identified as a Christian; he has not assigned that responsibility to us. Just because a person claims to be a Christian, does not mean that he truly is one.

The problem with many is this: they desire some sort of association with Christianity, but they want a hybrid system, consisting of certain elements borrowed from the New Testament, blended with their own will-oriented inclinations (cf. Colossians 2:23). It just does not work that way.

Remember in Prayer

TOMMY GENDUSO
BENNIE HOUSE
CLARENCE RIGGENBACH
FRANK SMALL
IVA & LEM TURNER
RON JONES
PATRICIA FORD
JEANETTE THOMPSON

Mark Your Calendars

- ✓ Jan 6: Fellowship Meal
- ✓ Jan 21-24: FLORIDA SCHOOL OF PREACHING, 33rd Annual Lectureship – “*Do You Understand The Biblical View Of Man*”
- ✓ Jan 27: Song Service @ 6p

TODAY'S SERMONS
This New Year: Make Wise Choices
1 Corinthians 10:11
Heaven Will Surely Be Worth It All
Romans 8:18

Wayne Jackson, CHRISTIAN COURIER
http://www.christiancourier.com/articles/read/is_god_exclusive