

*Can We Be the
Church of the
New Testament?*



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Yes, if we obey the gospel of the New Testament

On January 25, 2005 Elaine Solowey, a botanist at Ketura, Israel, planted three date seeds. The seeds were carefully prepared. After being soaked in warm water containing fertilizer to facilitate germination they were planted in three pots.

There was something remarkable about those date seeds. They were two thousand years old. They had been found thirty years earlier by archaeologist Ehud Netzer during excavations at Masada, a mountain-top fortress on the shore of the Dead Sea. Carbon dating revealed them to be 2000 years old, plus or minus fifty years.

No one expected them to grow. But in one of the pots, after five weeks, the ground was broken by the new sprout of a date tree. The first year, the tree grew to a height of 30 cm. A date tree in Israel produced a seed that was preserved for 2000 years. When given the right environment, it sprouted, and grew into a tree like the parent plant.

The gospel went forth from Jerusalem some 2000 years ago (Isaiah 2:3; Luke 24:47). It was proclaimed first by Jesus Christ, the Son of God. After His death and resurrection, it was proclaimed by His apostles and preserved in the New Testament.

This gospel seed has life-giving power. It sprouts and bears fruit when planted in good and noble hearts (Luke 8:15).

Yes, we can be the church of the



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rything that he had done and all his hard work on earth so he told him he didn't have to go out on the road anymore. He could stay in heaven. So he did. And now he helps his dad out by listening to prayers and seeing things which are important for God to take care of and which ones he can take care of himself without having to bother God. Like a secretary, only more important.

You can pray anytime you want and they are sure to help you because they got it worked out so one of them is on duty all the time.

You should always go to church on Sunday because it makes God happy, and if there's anybody you want to make happy, it's God

Don't skip church to do something you think will be more fun like going to the beach. This is wrong. And besides the sun doesn't come out at the beach until noon anyway.

If you don't believe in God, besides being an atheist, you will be very lonely, because your parents can't go everywhere with

you, like to camp, but God can. It is good to know He's around you when you're scared, in the dark or when you can't swim and you get thrown into real deep water by big kids.

But.....you shouldn't just always think of what God can do for you. I figure God put me here and he can take me back anytime he pleases.

And...that's why I believe in God.

...Received via email

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Explanation of God

This was written by an 8-year-old named Danny Dutton, who lives in Chula Vista, CA. He wrote it for his third grade homework assignment, to 'explain God.' I wonder if any of us could have done as well?

EXPLANATION OF GOD

One of God's main jobs is making people. He makes them to replace the ones that die, so there will be enough people to take care of things on earth. He doesn't make grownups, just babies. I think because they are smaller and easier to make. That way he doesn't have to take up his valuable time teaching them to talk and walk. He can just leave that to mothers and fathers.

God's second most important job is listening to prayers. An awful lot of this goes on, since some people, like preachers and things, pray at times beside bedtime. God doesn't have time to listen to the radio or TV because of this. Because he hears everything, there must be a terrible lot

of noise in his ears, unless he has thought of a way to turn it off.'

God sees everything and hears everything and is everywhere which keeps Him pretty busy. So you shouldn't go wasting his time by going over your mom and dad's head asking for something they said you couldn't have.

Atheists are people who don't believe in God. I don't think there are any in Chula Vista ... At least there aren't any who come to our church.

Jesus is God's Son. He used to do all the hard work, like walking on water and performing miracles and trying to teach the people who didn't want to learn about God.. They finally got tired of him preaching to them and they crucified him But he was good and kind, like his father, and he told his father that they didn't know what they were doing and to forgive them and God said O.K.

His dad (God) appreciated eve-

New Testament if we obey the gospel of the New Testament.

The word 'gospel' means 'good news'. What is the good news of the new covenant, and what does it mean to obey it?

God sent His Son to become "the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him" (Hebrews 5:9). Thus, to obey the gospel is to obey Christ, to heed His message of salvation.

After Jesus was crucified and rose from the dead He told His followers: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:15, 16).

You might be thinking, "Well, do not all churches preach the gospel?" Unfortunately, No! One of the most common departures from the new covenant among denominations is that they have changed the gospel.

This is nothing new. Even in the first century false teachers changed the gospel. Paul wrote to the churches of Galatia: "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who

called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:6-8).

The gospel may not be changed because it is from God. Paul continues: "But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:11, 12).

Thus, to be the church of the New Testament we must obey the gospel of the New Testament. The gospel is based on historical facts, things God has done for us in history.

"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

To obey the gospel we must believe in Christ.

When Jesus asked His disciples, "Who do you say that I am?," Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:15, 16). John the Baptist testified about Jesus: "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

"The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Thus, all of us stand condemned and are worthy of death. That is the bad news.

What is the good news? Jesus, as the Lamb of God, suffered the penalty for our sins in our stead so we can be forgiven: "Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness -- by whose stripes you were healed" (1 Peter 2:24).

"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

"God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now

been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Romans 5:8-10).

"And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world" (1 John 2:2). "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10).

"Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith" (Romans 3:4). Propitiation is 'appeasement', that which makes peace.

The Son of Man came "to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). A ransom is the price of a life, a payment made to free someone. "For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all" (1 Timothy 2:5, 6).

pray (Matthew 9:36-38). He must have vision enough to move to save them (Proverbs 29:18).

2. To reclaim the FALLEN

The child of God who has fallen away, who is, "out of duty," as church goers used to say. If an erring child of God does not repent and turn from sin and return to the Lord and the church, he/she will be lost eternally! Read: (1 Corinthians 10:12; Hebrews 3:12; 2 Peter 2:20-22). Our Christian responsibility to those is found in (Galatians 6:1, Hebrews 10:23-25).

3. To Edify the Church

The word edify means to build up, instruct in the faith, to teach. Observation: We worship our work; we work at our play; we play at our worship!

A bird can go 9 days without food, a dog 10 days, a turtle 500 days, a snake 800 days, a fish 1000 days and some insects 12000 days (about 33 years)! For man, the limit is about 14 days! Sooner or later, all of God's creatures must have food

or perish!

"Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, 'If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.' But He answered and said, 'It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" (Matthew 4:1-4)

...David Kelley
Almost Daily

"Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand. By which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ dies for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."

1 Corinthians 15:1-4

Why a Gospel Meeting?

I tried to hand a *Christian Appeal*, with an advertisement for our Summer Gospel Meeting attached, to a Jewish lady this morning. She quickly looked at it and said, "We'll be gone out of town on vacation later this week." I laughed and told her there were a lot of folks going on vacation this week. Then she smiled and said, "Besides that looks like one of those 'Come to Jesus Meetings!'" I replied, "Yes mam it is." She said, "I'm sorry but that's not my religion." I closed by saying, "If you ever want to talk let me know." This is a sweet and very community minded person whom I have known for a long time. But remember what Jesus said to the Jews of his day, "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24).

Which Brings Up: Why A Gospel Meeting? (adapted from a little article Wendell Langham gave me)

"Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the

harvest?' Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!" (John 4:35)

The term Gospel Meeting simply speaks of a good news meeting. When is the last time you received truly good news? Jesus died to give us life and to give birth into His church on earth.

A Gospel Meeting Serves Three Purposes:

1. To Save the alien sinner -- The one who has never obeyed the gospel of Christ.

To become a child of God, one must be born again (Jn. 3:3-5) of water and the Spirit. And each one is begotten by the word of God (1 Peter 1:23). Simply, folks need to hear the word preached so they will obey it, and be saved (Acts 11:16).

The Christian has a Threefold Duty Toward the Lost

He must look -- "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields." He must have compassion and

Christ's death for us and His resurrection are the foundation facts of the gospel. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you -- unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

The gospel "is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16). To obey the gospel we must believe in Christ.

To obey the gospel we must repent.

"Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel'" (Mark 1:14, 15).

To repent is to be sorry for our

sins and to determine to turn away from sin and dedicate our lives to God. Shortly before His ascension Jesus told His apostles: "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:46, 47).

To obey the gospel we must confess our faith in Christ.

"But what does it say? 'The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart' (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:8-10). Of unbelievers, Paul goes on to say: "But they have not all obeyed the gospel" (Romans 10:16).

Thus, to obey the gospel we must repent and believe in our heart that Jesus is the Christ and that God raised Him from the dead. We must confess this faith

with our mouth. This may seem to be a small thing, but many Christians through the ages have been killed because they confessed their faith in Christ. Paul wrote to Timothy: “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses” (1 Timothy 6:12).

To obey the gospel we must be baptized.

Jesus commanded: “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:15, 16).

Few denominations obey this simple command. Jesus places faith and baptism before salvation. Churches that practice infant baptism place baptism before faith. They do not obey the gospel. Churches that teach salvation by ‘faith only’ place salvation before baptism. They do not obey the gospel. Jesus said, “He who believes and is baptized will be saved.”

Baptism in the New Testament

is by immersion. John baptized in Enon “because there was much water there” (John 3:23). “Both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him,” they then “came up out of the water” (Acts 8:38, 39). These two passages demonstrate that baptism is by immersion. The Greek word translated ‘baptize’ [βαπτίζω] means ‘to immerse’. Churches that baptize some other way, are not obeying the gospel.

When Peter was asked on Pentecost, “What shall we do?” he replied: “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). To obey the gospel we must be baptized for the remission of sins. Churches that do not baptize for the remission of sins are not obeying the gospel.

When we obey this gospel-command and are baptized on the basis of faith and repentance, we are born again spiritually. Paul explained to the Christians at Rome: “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him

through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:3, 4). Jesus told Nicodemus: “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5).

Peter explains the rebirth thus: “Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever. ... Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you” (1 Peter 1:22, 23, 25).

When Jesus comes again He will punish the disobedient: “When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8). “For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us

first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?” (1 Peter 4:17).

We can be the church of the New Testament if we obey the gospel of the New Testament. Jesus died for our sins and rose the third day. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He bore our sins in His own body on the cross. We sin and deserve to die. But God loved us so much that He sent His Son to die for us and make amends for our sins. We obey this good news by believing in Christ, repenting of our sins, confessing Christ and being baptized for the remission of our sins to be born again of water and the Spirit, that we might rise to walk in newness of life.

Can we be the church of the New Testament? Certainly, if we keep the covenant, and obey the gospel of the New Testament.

...Roy Davison

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