

Blue Ridge Brandmarks

“...I bear on my body the brandmarks of Jesus” - Gal. 6:17

Volume 5

March 6, 2011

Number 3

You are Invited

to a

Gospel Meeting

at the meetinghouse of the

Blue Ridge Church of Christ

with Biblical preaching by

Gale Towles
of Casey, Illinois

Friday, March 26th at 7:30pm
Saturday, March 27th at 4:00 & 7:00 pm
Sunday, March 28th at 9:15, 10:00
& 11:00 am

Please bring your Bible and join us for this special series of lessons!

Bible Q & A

This question was recently submitted by one of our Bible correspondence students.

QUESTION:

“Is it okay to read some of these other gospels on the internet that were not put in the Bible like Maccabees, Apocalypse of James, Gospel of Judas, etc.?”

ANSWER:

There are two major categories of writings that are sometimes identified as lost books of the Bible. I will use the terms Old Testament Apocrypha and New Testament Apocrypha. The word “apocrypha” means “hidden”. Some of these books have been hidden from history for long periods of time. Nearly all have a hidden or obscure origin. We have no idea who wrote them, in spite of some bold claims from the writings themselves. None of them are inspired, nor should they be held at the same level as the Bible, any more than other human writings.

Old Testament Apocrypha

The Old Testament Apocrypha includes Jewish literature from the time between the Old and New Testaments. Among these books are 1st & 2nd Maccabees, which tell the history of the Jews during that time, additions to the books of Esther and Daniel, collections of proverbial statements and wisdom writings, and religious fiction. None of these writings are inspired, but the historical writings are very useful in understanding the events of that time period, many of which were in fulfillment

of prophecy. The other writings can be interesting to read and not harmful or dangerous as long as their claims to be written by Bible characters such as Manasseh, Baruch, Daniel, Ezra or Solomon are not taken seriously.

The Catholic Church in the 1500s insisted that the Old Testament apocrypha had the same level of authority as the rest of the Old Testament. But these are Jewish writings, and the Jews themselves never considered these books to be inspired or authoritative.

New Testament Apocrypha

The New Testament Apocrypha includes writings from the 2nd-4th centuries after Christ. There are many of these, most of which claim to have been written by one of the apostles or other early Christians, and which were either unknown to the early church or rejected by them as spurious. Whereas the authors of the Old Testament apocrypha, even when writing fiction, wrote within the literary, religious and moral tradition of Judaism, many of the New Testament apocrypha were active attempts to put the teachings of various sects and heretics in the mouths of Jesus and His apostles. As such, the writers of these documents were engaged in direct attacks against Christianity, seeking to subvert it, usually in an attempt to import into Christianity the Gnostic philosophies of the Greeks and other pagans.

In our time, the existence of these documents has been used in attempts to undermine the authority of the Scriptures. Those who promote them do so, not

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because they believe their contents (the Gnostic teachings are very outlandish and the morals of the Gnostics were in many cases repulsive and decadent!) but rather because they seek to undermine the faith of Christians in the New Testament. In trying to offer these writings as somehow equal to the writings of the New Testament, they overlook or brush aside the fact that we have thousands of early copies of nearly every part of the New Testament in the original language, whereas most of these apocryphal writings are supported only by one or two extremely incomplete documents dating from several centuries after the time of Christ that are not in Greek but usually in Coptic or some other language that was unknown to the writers of the New Testament.

To sum up, the Old Testament apocrypha can be read with profit by careful Bible students just as they might read other works of men, such as devotional writings or religious fiction, or historical works related to Bible times. The New Testament apocrypha should be handled with extreme caution, if at all, by

mature Christians who are on guard against the original false teachings they will find there and the use currently being made of them to undermine Christian faith.

Are there any lost books of the Bible? No, and we have God's word for it:

1 Peter 1:22-25 NKJV *“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, 23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, 24 because ‘ALL FLESH IS AS GRASS, AND ALL THE GLORY OF MAN AS THE FLOWER OF THE GRASS. THE GRASS WITHERS, AND ITS FLOWER FALLS AWAY, 25 BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER.’ Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.”*

Do you have a Bible question? Let me know and we will seek out the answer from God's word!

◀Brent Paschall▶

If you want to be DISTRESSED, look within.

If you want to be DEFEATED, look back.

If you want to be DISMAYED, look ahead.

If you want to be DISTRACTED, look around.

If you want to be DELIGHTED, look to Christ.

MARCH 2011 DUTY ROSTER

Weekday	SUN	WED	SUN	WED	SUN	WED	FRI	SAT	SAT	SUN
Date	3/6	3/9	3/13	3/16	3/20	3/23	3/25	3/26	3/26	3/27
Opening Prayer	Jon. L.		David T.		Leo R.		7:30 PM	4:00 PM	7:00 PM	Randy F.
Morning Message	Eric B.		Jimmy F.		Charlie K.					Gale T.
Announcements	John M.	Don H.	Charlie K.	David T.	Don H.	Jon. L.	Alan M.	Jimmy F.	Jimmy F.	Bill A.
Leading Songs	Bill A.	Randy F.	Brad F.	John M.	Alan M.	Leo R.	David T.	Alan M.	Larry P.	Brent P.
First Prayer	Larry P.	Matt M.	Alan M.	Eric B.	David T.	Matt M.	Jimmy F.	Charlie K.	Leo R.	John M.
Lead at Lord's Table & Contribution	Jimmy F.		Larry P.		Jerry D.					Larry P.
Assist	Ed M.		Eric B.		Randy F.					Leo R.
Assist	Jerry D.		Ed M.		Jeremy P.					Ed M.
Assist	Matt M.		Cody M.		Kevin H.					James M.
Read Scripture	Jeremy P.		Jon. L.		Brad F.					Jerry D.
Preaching	Brent P.		Brent P.		Brent P		Gale T.	Gale T.	Gale T.	Gale T.
Wed. Exhortation		Jimmy F.		Larry P.		John M.				
Closing Prayer	Kevin H.	John M.	James M.	Don H.	Ed M.	Bill A.	Randy F.	Brent P.	Brent P.	Don H.

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Sunday

9:15 - Morning Message

10:00 - Bible classes for all ages

11:00 - Worship

Wednesday

7:30 - Bible Classes for all ages

Elders:

Jim Fields, Alan Moeller & Leo Rodrigue

Deacons:

Eric Bridge & John Malloy

Evangelist:

Brent Paschall

Read articles, sermons and download
class material at

www.blueridgecoc.org

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