

The Bulletin of
The Golden Isles
CHURCH OF CHRIST

441 Touchstone Parkway ♦ Brunswick, Georgia 31525

Volume 1

August 19, 2001

Number 21

The First Century Christian

by Bill Hall

When one reads the New Testament he reads of Christianity in its pure form; he reads of Christianity as it existed before the huge buildup of human tradition that has been blindly accepted by so many; he reads of Christianity before the growth of complex denominational systems and organizational hierarchies. How does the New Testament describe a Christian of that age?

1. He was converted through the preaching of the gospel. He was taught nothing else. He was not forced to accept some manmade creed. He was not forced to take some catechism course. The New Testament evangelists limited their teaching to Jesus Christ and His requirements (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 2:1-5).

2. He received the promises of the gospel through simple trusting faith, repentance of sins, and baptism. To the earnest inquirers on Pentecost, Peter said "*Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*" (Acts 2:38). On that day about 3,000 responded to Peter's teaching and were baptized.

3. Upon obedience to these commands, he was saved and was added by the Lord to His church, to that great body of true believers of all the ages (Acts 2:47). He joined no denomination. He submitted to no man-made rules or catechisms. He was just a saved person in fellowship with all other saved people. He was a Christian, nothing but a Christian.

4. He then became a part of a local body of believers (a local church) that was governed by the apostles' teaching (Acts 2:42), meeting on the first day of the week to break bread (Acts 20:7) and organized with bishops and deacons who were a part of that local church (Phil. 1:1; Acts 14:23); a local church functioning independently under the headship of Christ.

5. He was required to do only that which was required by the authority of Christ. Though 1900 years have passed, we see no reason why one cannot be today just what those Christians were then. And we see no reason why there cannot be local churches today just like those local churches were then. We still have the guidance of the apostles through the New Testament. We can still go back to the simplicity of teaching, worship, and organization that characterized those early churches. And why shouldn't we? This was Christianity without human tradition. This was Christianity in practice as Christ planned and arranged it, and, after all, He alone is the Head of His church.

(con't next page)

Times of Services

Sundays - 2:00 pm Bible class, 3:00 pm Assembly Wednesdays - 6:30 pm Bible class

The First Century Christian (con't)

Beware! This teaching may be more restrictive than it would appear to be on the surface. Not every church is content with the apostles' teaching, and with meeting on the first day of the week to break bread, with local bishops and deacons for its organization. What about the church of which you are a part?

- by Bill Hall (copied from article in July 20, 1998 church bulletin called *BIBLE VIEWPOINTS*, The Fry Road church of Christ, Houston Texas). Their web site is located at: <http://www.fryroad.org/>

Saved, From and In

By Robert F. Turner

In Exodus 14:13, as the Israelites were trapped against the sea, and the Egyptians pressed down upon them, Moses said unto the people, "*Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of Jehovah, which He will work for you today; for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them no more again forever.*" **That day** they were **saved**; and chapter 15 records their song of deliverance: "*Jehovah is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation*" (v. 2) They were **saved** all right, but they were forty years from Canaan; and of the men of military age at that time, only two finished the journey (Num. 14:30-33).

The Israelites had been saved from the bondage of the Egyptians, but there remained the need for a **faithful journey** before they could enter the promised land. And the significance of this bit of history is clearly shown us in 1 Corinthians 10:1-12. They were baptized unto Moses, and drank of that spiritual Rock, Christ; "*But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness*" (vs. 2-5). Brethren, there is a powerful lesson here for us. We can and should rejoice that we have been saved **from** our past sins, but we must not equate that with salvation in heaven.

Our "old man" dies as we repent and turn from sin; we are buried in baptism "*for the remission of [past] sins*"; but we must arise to "*walk in newness of life*" (Rom. 6:4-6). There is a journey before us — between Egypt and Canaan, the bondage of sin and heaven. Someone has said, "The Baptists preach the impossibility of apostasy, and we practice it"; but if this is so, both need to re-examine the Scriptures. Paul wrote, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). And Peter wrote: "*If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning*" (2 Pet. 2:20-22). Saved **from past sins**, is not equivalent to saved in heaven.

- by Robert F. Turner (copied from article in June 22, 1998 church bulletin called *BIBLE VIEWPOINTS*, The Fry Road church of Christ, Houston Texas). Their web site is located at: <http://www.fryroad.org/>

Invite Others to Hear these Topics...

"Do I Have To Go To Church To Be Saved?" August 19th

"God's Plan of Redemption for Man" August 26th

Please visit our website at: <http://www.religiousinstructor.com/church>

Editor's Note: If you would like a Home Bible Study in the privacy of your home, or would like to study further over the phone, or by computer (email), please feel free to contact us: Mark J. Ward, 445 Touchstone Parkway, Brunswick, Georgia 31525, (912) 265-6936 - markjward@yahoo.com
