



“GOING TO HEAVEN IS MY CHOICE”

This week let's consider this sobering fact: *whether we go to heaven depends on what we do with God's word.* When confronted with the truth of what God has said, what we do next says much about the kind of character we have. Jesus said, **“If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day”** (Jn.12:47-48). Jesus came into the world to save it, not to condemn it — BUT many will be condemned. They will be condemned, not because that was Jesus' purpose, but because they placed themselves under condemnation by their rejection of Jesus' saving word. They will have judged themselves by refusing that which could have saved them. This explains an apparent contradiction in Jesus' statements about why He came. In the text above, Jesus clearly said that He **“did not come to judge the world.”** Yet, in another place, He said, **“For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind”** (Jn.9:39). There is no contradiction when we see that although Jesus did not come for the express purpose of condemning anyone, nevertheless many will be condemned — not because He willed it, but because they refused His offer of forgiveness. The word of Christ divides mankind into two categories: those who accept it and those who do not. In this sense, Jesus is the Great Divider. His word demands a decision, and by their decision, people divide themselves in relation to His word. Jesus said simply, **“Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters”** (Mt. 2:30). It is sobering to think that we choose our destiny. If we turn away from the word which now comes to us as a message of salvation, that same word will confront us finally as a word of condemnation. To listen to Christ is no small matter. For in hearing His word, we take sides. Which side we take makes all the difference in the world! Let's reflect on that all through this week.

STUDY AND REFLECTION

MONDAY: JOHN 12:42-50: **Key Idea:** On Judgment Day, we will be judged by God's word. **Questions for Growth:** What does this passage say some of the Pharisees had done? What does it mean to “confess” Christ? What did Jesus mean when He said that His word will “judge” us in the last day if we reject Him? **Wisdom for the Day:** Proverbs 13:25.

TUESDAY: MATTHEW 7:24-27: **Key Idea:** It is foolish to hear God's word, then disobey! **Questions for Growth:** Whom did Jesus compare to the foolish man? What does the word “foolish” mean? Even if we do not deliberately disobey Jesus, what will happen if we just delay obedience and do nothing about what He says? **Wisdom for the Day:** Proverbs 14:1.

THURSDAY: LUKE 19:1-10: **Key Idea:** We ought to be eager to obey Jesus. **Questions for Growth:** What did Zacchaeus do when Jesus came to Jericho? Did Jesus have to beg and plead with him to do what was right? Why not? In v.9, what did Jesus say had come to Zacchaeus' house? **Wisdom for the Day:** Proverbs 14:3.

FRIDAY: JOHN 3:16-21: **Key Idea:** Jesus wants us to obey Him. **Questions for Growth:** According to v.16, why did God offer up Jesus to die for our sins? Will some people still be lost? Why? What did Jesus say about “truth” and “light”? How do we show that we love the light? **Wisdom for the Day:** Proverbs 14:4.

The Salisbury Beacon

Salisbury Church of Christ

3322 Old Ocean City Road,
Salisbury, MD 21804

<http://churchofchristosalisbury.org>

Douglas Post, Minister
410-742-4831

Office Hours: Tues-Thurs. 10AM-2PM

JULY 3, 2016

WELCOME TO OUR FAMILY

We appreciate your willingness to worship God with us this Lord's Day! If you would like more information about the Church of Christ, or if we may assist you in other ways, please let us know. **BECOME A MEMBER OF OUR FAMILY— *The Salisbury Church of Christ.***

****Please fill out a Visitor's Card and place it in the collection plate****

ORDER OF OUR WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS & OPENING PRAYER

SONG # 531 – DOES JESUS CARE

SONG # 429 – I COME TO THE GARDEN ALONE

PRAYER

SCRIPTURE – JAMES 1:22-25

SONG # 352 – BLESSED REDEEMER

LORD'S SUPPER

CONTRIBUTION

SONG # 845 – BEYOND THIS LAND

SERMON: "DO"

SONG # 920 – JUST AS I AM

SONG # 921 – YIELD NOT TO TEMPTATION

CLOSING PRAYER

NEWS, NOTES & PRAYERS

LET US PRAY FOR: Ida Laramore, Judy Willey's mother (heart) / Stella Reidy, Wilma Duke's mother (dementia) / Jenn Striecker (cancer) / Jack Callaway / Katie Gray / Flossie Hull / Barbara Kuykendall / John Tillman / Paul Marchesault / Marilyn Artis / Linda Alaban / Florence Tucker / the Jones/Dale family / the Gibson family / Larry Laten / Prince Ituen and all missionaries and military personnel serving overseas.

- Joy LaGates friend of Ruth Banks had a stent put in. Please continue to keep Joy in your prayers. .
- Janet Jones, the Kings, and Dukes are traveling. Please pray for their safe travels.
- Visitors: Bill & Linda Tompkins, McConnelsville, OH.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

JULY 4 (Monday) HAPPY BIRTHDAY AMERICA!! Remember our freedom. Pray for our country.

JULY 22 (Friday Night) ... Family Game Night & Chili & Cornbread – 6pm

AUGUST 7 (Sunday) Pot Luck

RECORDS YOU HELPED MAKE LAST WEEK

Sunday Bible Classes: 23 Sunday AM Worship: 38 Wednesday Bible Class: 14

Contribution: \$1,466 Weekly Budget: \$1,948

SERMON PREVIEW

For the month of July, we will have a series of lessons from the book of James on being an “authentic Christian.” We need to verbs to our faith. Of course, verbs are words of actions.

JULY 3: “DO” JULY 24: “SUBMIT”

JULY 10: “LOVE” JULY 31: “WAIT”

JULY 17: “CHRISTMAS IN JULY” AUGUST 7: “PRAY”

“A Secular Nation or One Nation Under God?”

Michael D. Greene, Bowling Green, Kentucky

For some folks, nothing could be contemplated that would be more boring than reading or studying history. That is not the case for me. I enjoy reading history. It is fascinating to read and understand how people in the past lived their lives and dealt with the problems they faced. To know history is to know ourselves, because we are where we are and what we are due to the events and people that make up our own history. There is no more exciting story of history than the story of the founding of the United States of America. July 4th of every year gives us the opportunity to celebrate the beginning of our country as 56 men declared “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

That Declaration of Independence concludes with this powerful pledge “And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other, our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor.” And so the path was chosen for the British colonies to become a free and independent nation. But it was not to be an easy path. The story of their struggles and

the fortunes they sacrificed is one that all citizens should be familiar with. But all too often, revisionist historians have neglected to tell the story of what those 56 men and many others sacrificed to give us the land of the free and the home of the brave. Of particular concern is the revisionist purpose to convince modern Americans that these men set out to establish a purely secular society, devoid of any religious influence or presence. We learn such is not the case when the facts are examined. When they are, it becomes clear these were men who believed in God and regarded themselves as Christians who sought the will of God in their lives and the life of the country they were hoping to establish.

The case can almost be made by a casual examination of the above two quotes from the founding document signed by such founding fathers as Thomas Jefferson, Samuel Adams, John Adams, John Hancock, Benjamin Franklin and others. These men signed their names and pledged all they had and their sacred honor in support of a document that declared the rights for which they were willing to fight and die came from their Creator. This was self-evident. No argument needed to establish these self-evident truths. Would these men so pledge if they did not believe in a Creator? They concluded their declaration by signing their names to a plea for protection by divine Providence. Many have claimed these men were Deists. A Deist believes in a Supreme being, but the god of the Deist is a god who is uninvolved in the world he created. The classic description of the god of the Deist is of a god who created the world and then left it to its own devices. He is likened to a clockmaker who would wind up a clock and then leave it to run down without further concern. But if these men believed that, why look to this Creator who grants the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness to guard those rights or protect those who sought them through His providence? The god of the Deist would have no interest in so doing. But the God of the Bible is a God who is seen in the scriptures as a God who is providentially involved in the lives of His people.

Even more telling are the words of some of the founders themselves. John Quincy Adams, son of John Adams, and sixth president of the United States said the following in speeches celebrating the signing of the Declaration of Independence: “From the day of the Declaration, the people of the North American Union and of its constituent states were associated bodies of civilized men and Christians... They were bound by the laws of God, which they all, and by the laws of the gospel, which they nearly all, acknowledge as the rules of their conduct...” (1821) “The Declaration of Independence cast off the shackles of this (British) dependency. The United States of America were no longer colonies. They were an independent nation of Christians.” (1837) In 1892, in a decision in the case “Church of the Holy Trinity verses the United States,” the Supreme Court of the United States made the following statement: “These, and many other matters which might be noticed, add a volume of unofficial declarations to the mass of organic utterances that this is a Christian nation...” Finally, consider the words of our first and arguably our greatest President, George Washington, in his famous farewell address: “Of all the dispositions and habits which led to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports... And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle. It is substantially true that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government.”

A secular nation devoid of religious influence where God is not welcome in its hallowed halls or public places? When we examine a few facts we can easily see such a conviction is not consistent with the facts of history. Let us pray that our great nation will once again find its roots and again draw from them the strength that made it the greatest nation the world has ever seen.