

### Today's Sermons

Morning: Jesus: The Friend To Sinners

Evening: Song Service

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FOR THE RECORD

Sunday Bible Study	34
Sunday AM Worship	40
Sunday PM Worship	28
Wed. Bible Study	19
Offering	\$1525



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#### Minister:

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#### Times of Services:

##### Sunday

Bible Study:... 10:00am

AM Worship:...11:00am

PM Worship:...6:00pm

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday:.....1:30pm

##### Wednesday

Bible Study:.....7:00pm

##### Radio Program

Sunday:.....7:30am

"Back to the Bible"

AM 580 WSKS

93.5 FM

We Extend A  
 Warm & Cordial  
 Welcome  
 To All Our  
 Visitors!

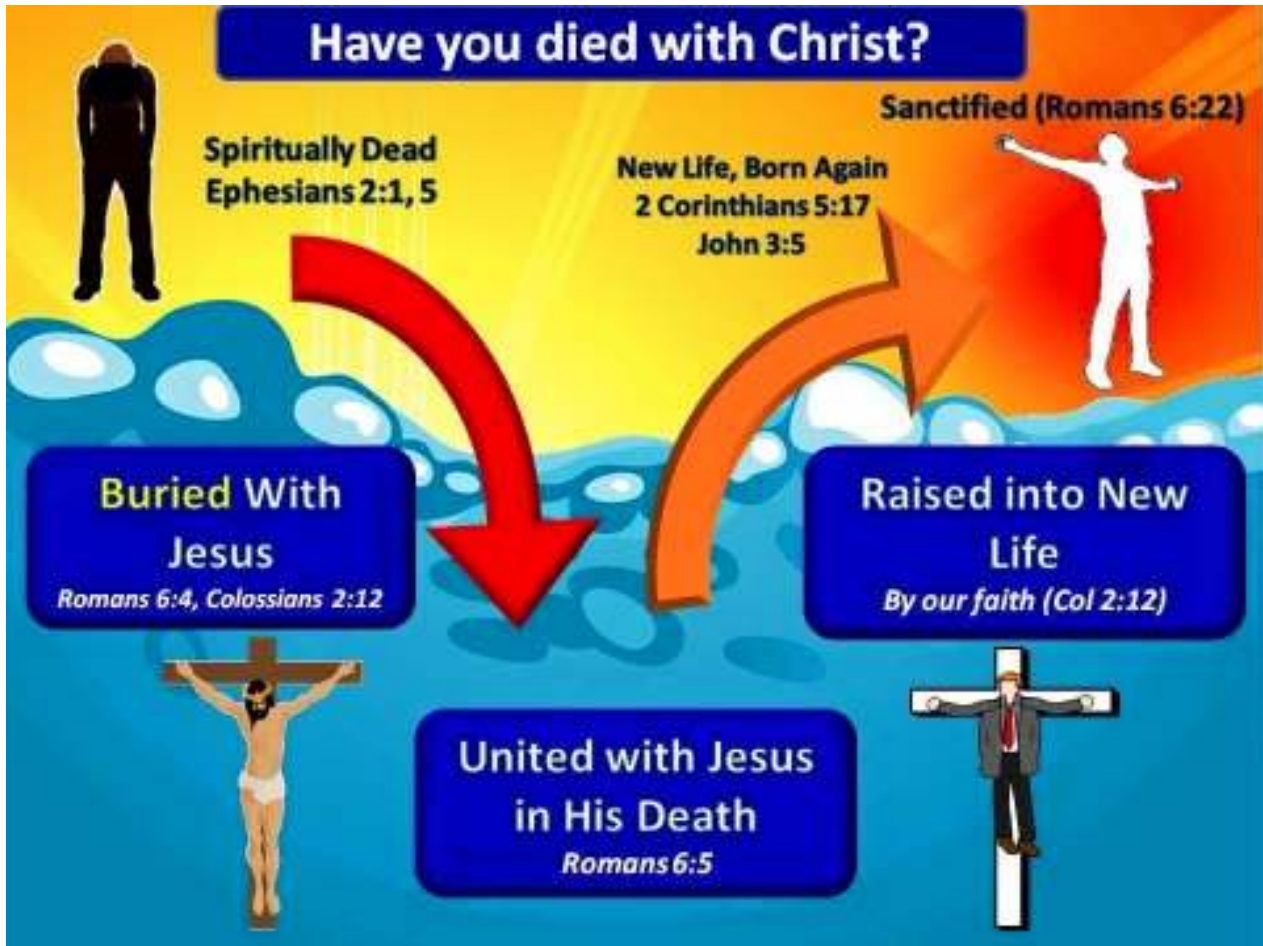
#### Miraculous Appearances?

Tim Forlines

An article in the local newspaper related how thousands of people gathered outside the home of a woman in Florida who claims that the virgin Mary appears to her on her ceiling on the 13th of each month. At one point on this rainy day, the sun appeared through the clouds, at which time "some reported seeing crosses in the sky and others said they saw a silhouette of Mary." Another woman remarked that she saw not Mary, but the Lord, adding that "what one person sees, another may not" (The Knoxville News Sentinel, October 14, 1994). The accompanying photograph showed one woman on her knees while others in the background squint to see something. Several years ago, when the eastern seaboard was rocked by Hurricane Hugo, a man claimed to have photographed an appearance of Jesus in the clouds. I even recall someone a few years back who had an image of Christ appearing in a shadow cast upon his freezer by some tree limbs near the window. Invariably when such things even appear to happen (and admittedly, they do sometimes appear to happen), many will declare it a miracle. Regarding these supposed miraculous "visits," consider the following:

*Continued Inside*

### Have you died with Christ?



1. When God manifested Himself to man, as recorded in the scriptures, there was no missing it, or mistaking what was happening. It is true that on one occasion when the Father spoke to Jesus from heaven, some thought it had thundered, and others thought it was an angel speaking to Him (John 12:27-32). However, even those who were confused and surprised by the voice of God knew that something had happened! When Christ or His apostles healed the sick or raised the dead, there was no mistaking it! There was no "squinting" to see what had happened. When the sun refused to give its light on the day Jesus was crucified, everyone who had eyes to see noticed what was happening, even if they did not understand the significance of it! In none of these instances did people see in an existential fashion (each seeing his own vision).

2. Miraculous works and signs had a definite purpose in God's plan, and a definite duration. The closing lines of Mark's gospel account give the purpose: to confirm the word of Christ (Mark 16:17-20). Paul, in writing to certain brethren who had come to have misplaced priorities regarding the use of miraculous spiritual gifts, pointed out the duration which they were to have: until "that which is perfect" (complete) had come (1 Cor. 13:8-10). An examination of the passage in its immediate context will show that the phrase "that which is perfect" corresponds with the things which Paul and others had "in part" (only partially). The things said to be "in part" (prophecies, tongues, knowledge) all have to do with communicating God's will to man. Hence, the "perfect" (complete) would have to do with the same idea: the revelation of God's will. That has been accomplished completely in the Word of God, which James calls the "perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25). Those who continue to demand miracles as a proof of the faith have missed the point of the New Testament miracles and the written record of them (John 20:30-31).

3. One cannot help but wonder how those who wait for hours in the rain to see some alleged divine manifestation of miraculous power feel before it takes place and after it is over. In other words, how do they fare spiritually between alleged "signs?" It seems one reason people seek signs and wonders is that the presence of such would cause them to feel closer to God. Miracles were never meant to be a basis for fellowship with God. Rather, we are told to "draw near to God" and He will respond in kind (James 4:8; cf. Heb. 7:19; 10:22; Matt. 15:8).

We should be ever thankful for the miracles recorded in the Bible. They give great evidence for the validity of what is taught therein. The Bible, however, leads one in continuing fellowship with God, in which we walk by faith in things unseen to us, yet accompanied by great proof (cf. Heb. 11: 1; John 20:29). The next appearing of the Lord will be seen and heard by all, and for it we wait and make ready (1 Thess. 4:16; Acts 1:9-11; 17:30-31).

An unknown author writes, "As the tree is fertilized by its own broken branches and fallen leaves, and grows out of its own decay, so men and nations are bettered and improved by trial and refined out of broken hopes and blighted expectations." This great principle is a very important aspect of the Christian viewpoint.

*"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 4:12-16).*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Nov 27 – Song Service
- Dec 4 – Men's Business Meeting & Ladies' Bible Class
- Dec 4 – Sunshine Basket for Della (she likes chocolate & coconut candy; cheese crackers; peanut butter crackers; cookies of any kind; ivory soap; Jergons lotion).
- Dec 11 – Preach & Eat; 1:30 pm worship
- Please give support money for Chinese orphans to Minnie Kennell