

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105).

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FOR THE RECORD

Sunday Bible Study	23
Sunday AM Worship	29
Sunday PM Worship	18
Wed. Bible Study	14
Offering	\$1911

Four Factors Behind the Cross

GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE
"The determinate Counsel of God"
Acts 2:23

1

MAN'S SINFUL HATRED
"Ye have taken and by wicked hands
crucified and slain"
Acts 2:23

2

CHRIST'S SUBMISSIVE WILL
"A man approved of God"
Acts 2:22

3

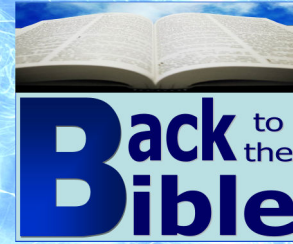
SATAN'S INFERNAL OPPOSITION
John 12:31-32; 14:30

4



Acts 2:22-24

Barnes' Bible Charts



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Times of Services:

Sunday

Bible Study:... 10:00am
AM Worship:...11:00am
PM Worship:...6:00pm
2nd 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!**

"BECAUSE THE SHADOW THEREOF IS GOOD"

Jacob B. Campbell

The religious practices of Jews in the eight century B.C. were motivated by a highly intelligent, noble, and practical point of view – they sacrificed to idols and committed whoredom when and where they did "because the shadow thereof is good" (Hosea 4:13). In other words, they liked the way the shade felt and the kind of atmosphere it produced. Quite unbelievable.

God brought a helpless, disorganized, unfit, grumbling bunch of slaves out of their bondage in Egypt, provided their every need, gave them their own law, made them His own, brought them to a land filled with blessings they did not deserve, and made out of them a successful nation. They in turn rejected Him in favor of sticks and stones and prostitutes because "I like the way the shadows make me feel."

Where will we worship this coming Sunday, and what is our reason for worshipping there? At what congregation will we become members, and why there instead of elsewhere? If the determining factor is the "shade" rather than the proper object of and pattern for worship (God and His word) and an environment conducive to spiritual growth, shouldn't we be rearranging our priorities? One common form of "shade" which draws worshippers is a nice meeting facility. Some folks choose their church based on the quality and appearance

Continued Inside

of the church building. They just love the atmosphere that stained-glass window, big fancy crosses, new carpet and padded pews, and couches and coffee tables in the foyer provide.

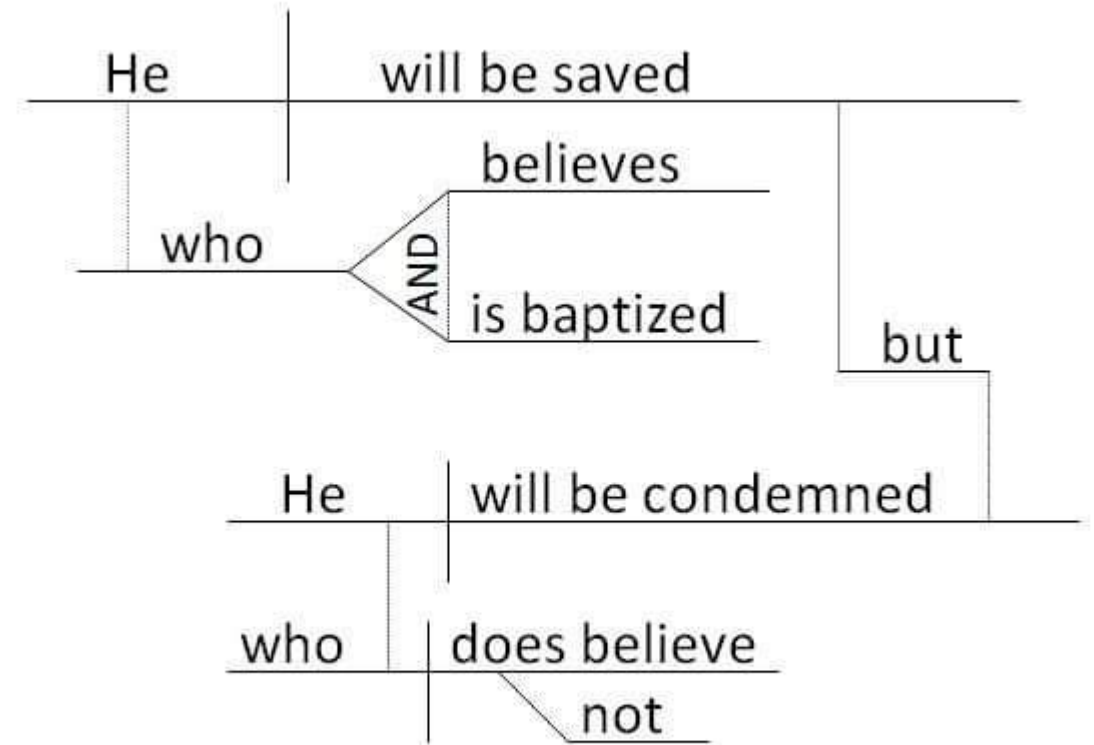
Others decide to be members of churches and worship where there are plenty of enjoyable activities being regularly conducted. A gymnasium is a must for some people. Playgrounds are essential for many parents with young children, and lots of Six Flags outings carry a lot of weight for others. For these, the fun and games that a church can provide is a more important criterion than whether Bible classes are sound and challenging, leadership is faithful and capable, the Lord's work is a priority, or worship is God-centered and scriptural.

Another shade which draws people is the enjoyment factor in worship. Some just like the way newer preachers are laid back in their speaking, the way they share their personal experiences and work in lots of stories and jokes to lighten up the audience. They love to leave every sermon feeling sweet and rosy. For others, the way the singing sounds is more important. If there is not some beautiful four-part harmony going on, then they would rather be somewhere else.

For Israel in Hosea's time, their pursuit of good shade was really just a symptom of their underlying problem. They simply did not have a deep concern for spiritual matters. Idolatry was a convenient, pleasure-motivated, self-centered, materialistic approach to religion. Finding a nice shady place to carry it out was part of that approach.

Today, we do not have to be guilty of idolatry to yet be shade-oriented. Any approach to religion that emphasizes the superficial or material over the spiritual is of no more benefit to anyone than abandoning religion altogether. There is quite obviously nothing inappropriate with making a meeting place comfortable, with spending recreation time with God's people, or with finding enjoyment in the aesthetics of church music. But, let your desire to learn and do the truth, to worship and serve God acceptably, and to associate and work with active, faithful Christians be the determining factors in your choosing a congregation with which to work and worship. Let us allow love for the spiritual rather than the superficial to guide us in our Christian service.

No doubt sometimes serving and worshipping God as He demanded meant that the Israelites did not "have as much fun" or feel as comfortable as they would have in those shady gardens. Attending solemn assemblies and traveling to Jerusalem could be a hassle, after all (cf. 1 Kings 12:28). But, for a true child of God, a single day in His courts was better than a thousand anywhere else; to be a doorkeeper in His house was better than to live in luxury where sin could be found (Psalm 84:10).



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“For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.” (II Timothy 1:12-13).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Mar 13 – Preach-N-Eat & 1:30 pm Worship Service
- Mar 27 – Prayer Service after Evening Worship
- April 3 – Men's Business Meeting & Ladies' Bible Class after Evening Worship
- Please give support money for Chinese orphans to Minnie Kennell