



Arthur Church of Christ

415 West 4th St., Arthur, IL 61911-1303



The "Sower"

November 1, 2009



Ron Bartanen, Minister

Times of Worship

Bible Classes-----9:30 am

Morning Worship-10:30 am

Evening Worship—6:00 pm

Wed. Bible Study---1:30 pm

WELCOME to today's Bible class and/or worship assembly. If you are a **VISITOR**, we especially appreciate your decision to meet with us. It is our hope that you will return at every opportunity.

Have you checked our web site lately?
(www.arthurchurchofchrist.com)

Be sure to visit the "Apologetics Press" link, now in both English and Spanish. Also newly added: Sermon Outlines and "Family Minutes" (Dale Smith).

Lessons From God's Word

"*THE OCCULT (Part 2)*" will be this morning's message. The evening lesson will be, "*Can We Escape Him?*"

For Your Information

IN OUR PRAYERS: Linda has a nephew in the hospital, recovering from H1N1 flu. *** Continue to remember Paul, Lester, Inez, Linda, Rodger, Lyla, Mary's mother, Charles Moore (Tex.), Lewis & Mary Carter (Ind.), our service men and women, and our nation's and world's leaders as a way for peace is sought.

A SPIRITUAL REALM

This being Halloween weekend, thoughts seem focused upon the kingdom of darkness rather than the kingdom of light. There seems to be within man's nature a reaching forth for a realm that is foreign to his physical environment. He becomes intrigued with thoughts of witches and warlocks, vampires and goblins, ghosts and things that go "bump in the night." There seems to be an innate craving to explore a world that lies beyond what we can sense by touching, seeing, hearing, smelling and tasting. The paranormal beckons and challenges us. Through the years there has been in pagan cultures, especially, a fascination with such things as fairies, elves, and spirits for every tree, rock or mountain. Some of these have been esteemed to be good, while others seen as evil or at least mischievous. Modern man has sought to find scientific explanations for what cannot be readily understood in nature. Universities sometimes even have special studies in such matters. The Nobel Prize-winning neuroscientist, John Eccles said of science that it "cannot explain the existence of each of us as a unique self, nor can it answer such fundamental questions as: Who am I? Why am I here? How did I come to be at a certain place and time? What happens after death? They are all mysteries that are beyond science." Such is the realm of the spiritual, paranormal, or supernatural—the "non-physical," a realm that would be co-existent with the natural, but not perceived by our 5 senses.

The Bible speaks plainly that a spiritual realm exists. God, Himself, is spirit. Jesus said, "God is a Spirit..." (John 4:24). God is said to dwell "in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or

can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power” (1 Tim. 6:16, NASB). God’s domain is usually spoken of as “heaven” (cf. Matt. 6:9). In that realm are God’s angels. Psa. 104:4 says that He “maketh His angels spirits.”

We should realize also that the spiritual realm has both the light side and the dark. The dark we know of as the realm of spiritual evil, headed by Satan, of whom Jesus said, “I beheld Satan, as lightning fall from heaven” (Lk. 10:18). The Bible speaks of angels who sinned and were “delivered into chains of darkness” (2 Pet. 2:4). It even speaks of “the spirits of demons, working miracles” (Rev. 16:13).

Man alone has access to both realms—the physical and spiritual. Paul spoke of that in man which is not seen—the “inner man” (Eph. 3:16; Rom. 7:22; 2 Cor. 4:16). Life offers us a choice of kingdoms—that of God, or that of Satan. Christians are said to have been “delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son, in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Col. 1:13-14). At the return of Christ our hope is to realize the transformation of our “natural body” into a “spiritual body” that will be incorruptible and immortal (1 Cor. 15:44, 51-58).

Both God and Satan are active in the world—Satan to deceive and condemn; Christ to enlighten with the gospel and redeem. In this world we are urged by Christ to not “walk in darkness,” but follow Him who is “the light of life” (John 8:12).

--Ron

GIVE HIM NO REST

Have you ever taken a rather lengthy car trip with your children and wished they’d just fall asleep so that you could get some “rest”? You know what I mean. Just how many times in a seven hour trip can your children ask, “Are we there yet?” or “How much longer till we’re there?”

I found it interesting while reading from Isaiah 62:6-7 that the prophet Isaiah instructed God’s people to “give Him [God] no rest” with reference

to prayer. In other words, don’t stop praying. Don’t stop making intercession. Don’t stop asking. Don’t stop petitioning God until your prayers are answered. “Give Him no rest!”

Praying “without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17) and giving “God no rest” does not imply that we “aggravate” God by our repeated petitions, but what it does do is demonstrate to God just how serious we are about the petitions we are making. Remember the effective “fervent” prayer of a righteous man avails much (James 5:16).

Is there something in your life that you need to pray about? Then do so, but do so in such a way that, to borrow Isaiah’s phrase, you “give Him no rest.”

--Steve Higginbotham, *MercEmail*

A NON-CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

(The following is the major part of an article by Robert N. Lambert in *The Main Street Harbinger*, the weekly publication of the Main St. Church of Christ in Milan, Tenn. It is one of a series of articles on current worldviews that stand in opposition to the Christian faith. We need to be aware of the tactics of Satan in seeking to nullify our faith in Christ.)

The inhumanity and horror perpetrated by Hitler’s Third Reich and Stalin’s Soviet purges caused a substantial group of Enlightenment humanists and Neo-Marxists to abandon their worldview and create a new one. This resulted in what is known today as Postmodernism. By the late 1980s professors of this ideology were making significant progress in humanities and social science departments at universities around the world.

Postmodernism comes in many forms, but there are three unifying values: 1) a commitment to relativism. This means that such things as truth are relative. Thus, what is true for you may not be true for me. It all depends on my point of view and experiences. You may believe that 2+2=4, but

my experiences may lead me to believe that $2+2=4.1$, and you have no right to question or challenge my conclusion. Imagine what happens to the consistency of scripture if one approaches it carrying this philosophy. 2) An opposition to comprehensive explanations of reality that are true for all people of all cultures. Similar to the first, this holds that what is real and ethical for one culture may be totally different in another. Thus, if murder is a reality that is wrong in your culture, my culture might not see it that way, but view murder as something that is positive and necessary; therefore, murder is not a reality to me. Of course, no Postmodernist would argue this point, but when their philosophy is carried to its limits, this is the result. 3) Postmodernism has the idea of culturally created realities. In other words, reality is whatever your culture wants it to be.

Postmodernism's most effective tool is known as deconstruction. This means that words do not represent reality and concepts expressed in sentences in any language are arbitrary. This means that reality cannot be expressed in language, and since language is how we communicate, then there is no definite reality; or to put it another way—reality is relative. Again, if you apply that to the study of the Bible, the Bible becomes reality only if I decide it is real. God is real only if I decide He is real. Truth is real only if I decide something is true, but I cannot deny your reality, nor you mine.

Sadly, this concept has even crept into the Christian world in a farcical concept known as Christian Postmodernism. God is who He is only because you declare Him to be God. Otherwise, He is an arbitrary concept with no real power. Obviously, this worldview is very dangerous. All (non-biblical) world views are dangerous in one common aspect—they deny the truth of the Bible. One author wrote, "Society will flourish in the light of truth only when the emphasis shifts back to a Christian perspective. This...emphasis can be brought about through the leadership of...informed, confident Christians who think deeply and broadly from a well-honed biblical worldview and emerge as leaders in education, business, science and government."

(NOTE: This worldview is evident today in many ways. One that is becoming especially prominent is the idea that our nation's Judeo-Christian culture and heritage is not superior to others, such as that of Islam. This politically correct concept is suicidal to a free republic. Some may view such thinking as being arrogant, but the statement of Jesus, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). With no absolute truth, there can be no absolute freedom—spiritually or otherwise. -Ron