

News & Notes

Sunday, March 26, 2006

Remember in Prayer: M. B. Anthony; Sandra Albertson; Carrol Cherry; Diane Cox; Sally Etta Crawford; Lawrence Dawson; Tommy Dawson; Collette Ford; Flora Estes; Marilyn Hubbard; Carolyn Jordan; Christine Judge; Dot Kethum; James Luna; Deliah Mann; Race Minor; Diane Mize; Howard Moody; Janet Rooker; Freddie Shaw; Lillie Mae Shelby; Jayme and Trucilla Spence; Calvin and Ollie Ursery; Alvie Williford; Billy Wayne Yancy;

Sympathy is extended to the families of Terry Johnson and Billy Wayne Yancy;

Pantry item for the month of March is canned goods.

There is a **gospel meeting** with Winford Claiborne at the Ripley Church of Christ on April 2-5. Evening services are at 7:30 PM.

The new edition of **House to House/Heart to Heart** is in the foyer for those not on the mailing route.

Sermon In Preview:

AM: Preaching Through Habakkuk: Habakkuk's Prayer (3)

PM: Who Is Christ, And What Has He Done For Us (Russ Earl)

For the Record (March 19, 2005):

Attendance: 72 Contribution: \$1406.00 Budget: \$1352.00

The Ashland Church of Christ

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Sunday:

Bible Study 9:30 AM

Worship 10:30 AM

Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 PM

Shepherds:

Barney King

Carrol Street



ASHLAND ANNOUNCER

"I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14)

Destructible Doctrines: Superstitions

Jeremy Northrop

All of us have heard of various superstitions in the current culture. Perhaps some of the more popular ones are:

- Thirteen is an unlucky number.
- Possession of rabbit's foot will provide good luck.
- Proper horseshoe placement in your home will provide good luck.
- A four-leaf clover is a sign of good luck.
- Friday, the 13th is an unlucky day.
- If you break a mirror, then you will have seven years of bad luck.
- A black cat crossing your path is bad luck.
- It is bad luck to walk under a ladder.

A quick look at the internet will show this to be a very, very short list of superstitions, but it is enough to show the point: they are prominent and popular. Webster's dictionary defines a superstition as "a belief or practice resulting from ignorance, fear of the unknown, trust in magic or chance or a false conception of causation." A belief or practice resulting from ignorance would seem to have obvious ramifications. It is also true that people lie at the mercy of their own assumptions. There are those that do believe in magic, not sleight of hand but supernatural powers. Does the Bible say anything about superstitions? Should the Christian

subscribe to such philosophies? How should the Christian respond when hearing others talk of superstitions?

In Acts 17:16-21, Paul was reasoning with some philosophers and worshipers about the New Testament age and Jesus Christ. The people accused Paul of talking of some foreign god. It is interesting to see the beginning of Paul's sermon in Athens in Acts 17:22: "Then Paul stood in the midst of Mar's hill and said, *Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are too superstitious*" (KJV). Paul was noting their practice of religion as they saw it. They were ignorantly worshipping all kinds of created gods. They even had an unknown god to worship just so they were sure not to leave anyone out. Paul went on to tell them of the one true God. Notice, how Paul sums up his sermon in verse 30: "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent..." The God of Heaven does not allow ignorance. It is not an excuse for not doing His will (Romans 1:20). It will not save anyone. Yet, one of the definitions Webster gave to superstitions is a belief or practice done out of ignorance. Not all ignorance is wrong, but it is expensive. Spiritual ignorance will cost a person his or her soul.

Another point in consideration of superstitions is that many of them deal with a concept that is foreign to the scriptures: the idea that the soul will survive on earth without the body. For example, the belief that breaking a mirror will bring seven years of bad luck goes back to the early Roman belief that a person's reflection was their actual soul. Thus, when the mirror broke, it was the result of the soul being separate from the body. They also believed that that the soul was renewed every seven years. The idea of walking under a ladder comes from the days when men were hanged from the top rung of a ladder. It was believed their soul could still be around to haunt those of us still on Earth.

Now, what does the Bible say? James 2:26 says, "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." A body cannot live without the soul. At the point that the soul leaves the body, it will return to God (Ecclesiastes 12:7). Further, God is in control of our souls. Matthew said, "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28). Paul proclaimed: "Now may the God of peace Himself

sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1Thessalonians 5:23).

Interestingly, the word luck never appears in the Bible. It is not a biblical concept. A person's path in life is not determined by luck. Destiny is not a matter of chance, it is a matter of choice. If I do not go to Heaven, it is nobody's fault but mine. Paul wanted the saints in Philippi to choose to rejoice (Philippians 4:4). Christians are to walk in the light (1John 1:7). Anything which is contrary to the will of God is not living in the light. These things do not come by chance or luck, they come by choice or willful obedience. One fundamental thing wrong with all superstitions is that they put hope in a concept which is simply foreign to the Bible — the concept of luck.

Finally, John makes a powerful statement in 1John 10-11, "If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds." A Christian cannot engage in superstitions or support others who do so and still be pleasing to God. Therefore, it is the duty of the Christian to teach others the way of the Lord and show them how things like superstitions are wrong. It is true that by and large, most people in the current U. S. culture do not take superstitions seriously. However, there are those who do and they need to be taught. One person said, "as knowledge increases, superstition fades." The closer we get to God and His truth, the further from false ideas we get. The Psalmist declared: "I will meditate on Your precepts, And contemplate Your ways" (Psalm 119:15).

As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power (Colossians 2:6-10).