



SALEM CRUSADER

“Contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”
Jude 3

Volume 27 - Number 5 ————— MAY 2006

Dear Salem,

We live in an age when nobody seemingly wants to feel inferior - consequently many people adopt “Pluralism” it fits well with new age thinking as it makes room for all types of political, ethnic and cultural differences both in society and in the church. Tolerance is for many peoples the criteria for acceptability instead of truth. Many believers do not understand how subtly they no longer hold to the fact that truth is disclosed through the Scripture, but it is discovered by human experience.

Only when we come to grips with the fact that Jesus Christ is the name above all names who reign supreme over everything can we properly respond to the prevailing pluralistic attitudes of our day.

“He [Jesus Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or power or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things and in him all things hold together; and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.” (Colossians 1:15-17, 20).

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We need to preach the supremacy of Christ for some of the following reasons:

Jesus is the only one to make the supreme absolute assertion that He was the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6).

Jesus is Supreme because He alone taught that He was God in human flesh. Only Jesus stated that He was equal with God when He said, “If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him” (John 14:7).

Jesus was supreme in offering the free gift of eternal salvation for all who would believe in Him as the substitutionary payment for the forgiveness of sins. Jesus said, “But as many as received Him to them He gave the power to become the children of God, even to those who believe on His name. Children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God (John 1:12,13).

Only a Supreme Jesus is deserving of our total allegiance. He said, “Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.” (Matt 10:37,38) Christ’s total supremacy means that He alone deserves the right to rule, reign and control all the aspects of our life.

Only the omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent Jesus is able to say, “The thief comes only to steal, kill and destroy but I came that you might have life and have it in all abundance” (John 10:10). All other aspects of life fall short of the fullness of life offered in Christ’s supremacy.

Upward bound,

Pastor Pat

- Salem Evangelical Church - Marion, Ohio (740) 387-7560 -
- *Changing Lives . . . Transforming Hearts* -

CONSISTORY NEWS

APRIL 2006

TREASURE'S REPORT:

INCOME: \$6293.98

EXPENSES: \$6690.52

OLD BUSINESS

- Nomination Committee report
- Support for Rev. David Lippert's ministry to nursing homes
- \$50 a month - passed

NEW BUSINESS

- 4C's conference - July 17-20, 2006
- St. Cloud, Minnesota
- Cost to send Pastor Street & Diane
- Not more than \$1500
- May Congregational Meeting - May 21
- 5pm - Potluck
- 6pm - Meeting
- Summer Schedule
- June 4th - summer schedule begins
- No Sunday School
- Worship will remain at 10:30am
- Fall schedule will begin - September 17th

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Jen Street

May 14, 2006

*Heidelberg
College*



Salem Evangelical Church

is a member of the

*Conservative
Congregational
Christian Conference*

ANNA WENIG IS DEDICATED

Sunday, April 30th,
Bryan and Donyell
Wenig, along with
Areille brought Anna
before the Lord for
dedication.



EASTER BREAKFAST

Pam and Dave
Drake fixed the
breakfast for all
who attended the
Sunrise Service.

Great food and
Great fellowship
and a really Great
Blessing!

He Is Risen!



RIVER VALLEY HS FCA CLIPBOARD



VOLUME 7

APRIL 2006

ISSUE 12

Dear Vikes,

Q: Coach Street, how far is to far?

A: I once read where a father was asked the question, by his son, "Dad, how far can I go on a date?" It was obvious he wasn't asking if he could go 5 miles to Pizza Hut or 8 miles to a movie. He wanted to know what his dad thought were reasonable and biblical limits on physical contact during dating. Hand-holding? A quick peck on the cheek? A lingering kiss? A hug? A long embrace? Anything short of doing it all?

The father made a comment that I thought was very wise . . . and which agrees with the message of 1 Thessalonians 4:

"No one should wrong his brother [or sister] or take advantage of him [or her]" (vs. 6)

He said, "Keep in mind that when you go out on a date, the person you are with is probably not the person you will marry. Thinking ahead, how far would you like your future wife to have gone with that person in a dating situation?"

Interesting answer, isn't it? How would you like someone to treat your future husband or wife? With utmost respect and purity, right?

On the other side, if you are the one who is pressured to satisfy someone's cravings, you're left feeling cheapened and thinking less of yourself.

SET YOUR DATING
STANDARDS BEFORE
YOU DATE!



In today's world, however, the message seems to be: "Don't bother to think ahead to what your actions will do to your date's relationship with God. Don't think about his or her emotional well-being or future marriage partner. Think only of your immediate pleasure."

In the matter of sex, the apostle Paul said, "No one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him." With that as your guide, how would you answer someone who asked you, "How far is to far?"

Upward bound,
Coach Pat Street



NEED TO TALK?

CALL COACH STREET

360-3354

OR

E-MAIL

streetfca@hotmail.com



The highest
motive for
obeying the
Lord is the
desire to
please Him!

TIME-OUT SPORTS MINISTRIES

Check Out the new website

www.timeoutsports.org



GOD'S COACHING TIP:

GOD USES YOUR SETBACKS TO MOVE YOU AHEAD!

Your worst circumstance may be the Lord's best opportunity. Trust Him (2 Corinthians 1:9). He'll bring new meaning to your life.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q: Coach Street, I've gotten in with the wrong crowd. I don't like the things I'm getting into. How can I get out?

A: You may feel like you can't get away from the crowd in your own strength but God wants to help you, if you let Him. The Bible says, "I can do everything through Him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13), and that's the key to changing your life - Jesus, is the One who gives you strength.

The first thing you need to do is to honestly confess your sins to God, ask His forgiveness, and invite Jesus to come into your heart by faith, but when Jesus comes in to your heart and life things will be different. The Bible promises that, "If anyone be in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (1 Corinthians 5:17).

With Jesus in your life you must make a clean break from the crowd and find a new set of friends who will honestly help you. Look for other Christians, they will help you grow spiritually and become stronger in your faith - get involved in FCA at school, go to a Bible teaching youth group - get plugged into where God's presence can empower you and His Word is building you up.

Remember, the crowd you run with will determine the direction you're running.

Upward bound,
Coach Street



Dealing With Da Vinci

By Pastor Bob Leroe

Cliftondale Congregational Church

Saugus, Massachusetts

Dan Brown's provocative book, *The Da Vinci Code*, has topped the best-seller list for over half a year and has inspired TV documentaries; the movie will be out soon in 2006, directed by Ron Howard. In the guise of a thriller, Brown has raised serious questions about the legitimacy of Christianity. This work of fiction paints a revisionist view of Jesus, a modern spin claiming that Jesus didn't die on the cross, but instead married Mary Magdalene; they had several children, and moved to France. In the novel, the "Holy Grail" turns out to be, not the chalice used at the Last Supper, but the bloodline, the children born of the marriage of Jesus and Mary Magdalene. The heroes of the book go in search for Mary's tomb, which promises to reveal hidden secrets that will shake the Christian world. It all sounds preposterous, even blasphemous, but many people are buying it as fact. Brown offers an alternative, speculative view of history that lacks historical evidence.

Dr. Karen King, professor of Church History at Harvard, authored a book, *The Gospel of Mary of Magdala*. In it she disputes any theory of a married Jesus as myth and legend completely devoid of any historical basis. King also disputes Brown's claim of accuracy for the supposed "facts" within his fiction. Unfortunately, King's scholarly book isn't a bestseller, while Dan Brown's book is causing many people to wonder if the truth about Jesus has been suppressed. Brown bases his conspiracy theory on the "Gnostic Gospels" discovered in 1945 at Nag Hammadi in Egypt. They are a collection of unconventional writings about Christ.

It should come as no surprise that the writers the Holy Spirit used to produce the NT weren't the only ones writing about Jesus. We know that Paul wrote letters that weren't included. Not everything "made the cut". As evangelical Christians, we believe that God superintended the process by which godly church leaders determined what to include in the canon, i.e. the list of writings that were declared the inspired word of God. Some writings were turned down because they contained false teachings, or were late (post-1st Century works) or because the authorship was questionable.

Although the non-canonical Gnostic writings were rejected, there was no secret conspiracy afoot to suppress them. They were simply never considered Scripture. The Gnostic writers claim their writings reveal secret knowledge, but many of them simply quote and reinterpret existing Bible passages. A common Gnostic theme is that all knowledge worth knowing comes from looking within one's own self to discover the divine...all of which sounds suspiciously like the message of the Eastern Hindu and Buddhist religions. The Gnostic gospels present a Jesus far different than the One found in the New Testament; he is an enlightened Revealer, an "Illuminator," but not a crucified Redeemer.

Armchair theologians have pondered what would happen if some ancient writings surfaced that contradicted the Christian message, what that might do to faith. Well, ancient writings have been found, but they do not make the Scriptures false. They provide a useful standard of comparison with the Biblical writings. The truth of the Bible contradicts the error of all other writings. Go to any bookstore and you'll find plenty of books that reject God's written revelation. In my study I have books about the Bible, and while they're very useful, the Bible alone is God's word. It is appalling that some scholars are treating these writings as accurate historical documents. They are lumping all ancient religious manuscripts together, denying that there is a definitive written word from God.

How did the "Gnostic Gospels," which the *Da Vinci Code* relies on, come about? Gnosticism was a philosophical system Christians and some Jews adapted from Greek influences. Gnosticism was a complicated worldview that stated, among other things, that the flesh was evil. Some Gnostics taught that, because the flesh was evil everyone should be ascetic and celibate; others claimed that the flesh was an illusion and it didn't matter what we did with our bodies. Because of their view of the body, the Gnostics denied that Jesus came in the flesh, and they in turn rejected His virgin birth and bodily resurrection. They claimed that Jesus only appeared to be a man. They copied some of His sayings, and added ones of their own. They borrowed from a mix of religious ideas and traditions. The most well-known example is the *Gospel of Thomas*, discovered in the 1890's. Rather than a narrative, it contains a collection of detached, haphazard sayings. According to tradition, Thomas became a missionary to India, which may connect the "Gospel" bearing his name to Eastern religions (no scholars believe the disciple Thomas is the author). Among snatches of material from reliable sources are inserted some rather enigmatic, mystical and cryptic statements.

(Continued on the next page)

Da Vinci Code author Dan Brown claims that the Gnostic writings prove Jesus was just a man; yet they in fact say that Jesus was more divine than human. As for Jesus' connection to Mary Magdalene, the Gnostic Gospel of Philip describes her as a "companion" and "friend" of Jesus, which could be said of all His disciples. Brown reads too much into the word "companion". He is guilty of wanting to revise and reinvent Jesus to accommodate his own wishful thinking. An article in US News and World Report quotes a reader of The Da Vinci Code admitting: "I knew that many of the things in Brown's book weren't true, but I just wanted them to be."

Absent from Thomas and other similar writings is the reason Jesus came--to offer Himself as a sacrifice for sin. Because the Gnostic writers denied the humanity and sacrifice of Jesus, they devised alternative accounts. They also rejected the Old Testament. Their view was that 'secret knowledge' was the key to salvation. Yet the Good News is no secret! It is for all people. The NT writers and the early Christian church rejected Gnosticism, and it deservedly died out.

The Gnostic writings are 2nd & 3rd Century at the earliest, whereas the NT writings were authored in the 1st Century by the Apostles and their close co-workers. The Gnostic gospels are at best secondary sources lacking the authority of Holy Scripture. Their authorship, late date, and content show that they are uninspired and unreliable. The Gnostic writers excluded themselves from the NT. The editor of Christian History magazine suggests a better title for the Gnostic Gospels is: "The Hidden Texts of Comparatively Late Fringe Groups". Paul's Epistle to the Colossians expressly refutes Gnostic teachings as heresy: "Don't let anyone lead you astray (take you captive) through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which comes from human reasoning rather than according to Christ" (2:8).

The early church fathers and canonical councils, guided by the Holy Spirit, had good reason to reject the Gnostic writings. We don't have to worry that God may be looking down with regret that some books failed to get included in the Bible, or with concern over any books that shouldn't have been added. We have a reliable Word that we can trust.

The agenda of scholars who claim these extra-biblical writings are valid is to cast doubt upon the entire Bible. By claiming that these writings are legitimate, though they contradict the NT, they are in effect suggesting that all Christian writings lack divine authority. They do not believe there is an authoritative account of Jesus (whom they reject as God-the-Son) and they admit harboring animosity towards the organized Church. Their efforts are causing anxiety among Christians and causing doubt to fester.

The early church overwhelmingly worshipped Jesus as their risen Savior and Lord. The deity of Christ is supported throughout the New Testament and is echoed by early creeds and councils. The Council of Nicea in 325 AD responded to the heretical claims of Arius, an Alexandrian pastor who was teaching that Jesus was not God-in-flesh. The Council reaffirmed the historic Christian view, but did not invent the doctrine of the divinity and eternity of Christ. Also it wasn't what Dan Brown calls a "close vote". Only 2 of 300 bishops chose not to sign the Nicene Creed.



Ultimately we have to return to and trust our authoritative historical documents--the writings of the New Testament. Though written by many, they provide a coherent, unified Message, without contradiction, upholding the Lordship of Jesus and His redemptive work.

The current controversy over the historicity of Jesus gives us opportunities to engage people in conversation about the message of the Bible. The "real" Jesus is found in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. We need to point people to the authoritative sources. When the issue is raised we gain an opening to talk about the historical, Biblical Lord Jesus in a caring and constructive way.

Prayer: Sovereign Lord, equip us to clearly address false teachings when our faith comes under attack. Help us to respond with compassion; it's easy to be argumentative, which is how the world handles conflict. Help us to speak the truth in love, even when we're stirred up over the ways evil is being called good. Your power is in us, and Your word upholds us. Cause us to put on Your armor and fight the good fight of faith; in Your strong and mighty Name, Amen.

In a changing world you can trust God's unchanging Word!

a **May** a

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Happy Birthday Matt Street 7:00pElder's Meeting	2 7p Abraham Prayer Ministry	3	4	5	6
7 Holy Communion Food Pantry Souper Sunday	8 7:00pExecutive Meeting 7:30p Consistory Meeting	9 7p Abraham Prayer Ministry	10 Happy Anniversary Dyan & Dan Wade	11	12 Happy Birthday Jennifer Humes	13
14 	15 Happy Birthday Maria Rowland Happy Anniversary Harmon & Mary Binkley	16 7p Abraham Prayer Ministry	17	18 Happy Birthday Scott White	19 Happy Birthday Mary Binkley	20
21 5p Pot Luck 6pCongregational Meeting	22 Happy Anniversary Kevin & Susan Croman	23 7p Abraham Prayer Ministry	24 Happy Anniversary Shawn & Cindy Luikart	25	26	27
28	29 	30 7p Abraham Prayer Ministry	31	<p>Let us love one another For love comes from God. ~ 1John 4:7 ~</p>		



*3 TIMES A DAY!
PASTOR PAT
WITH
OF THE DAY
GOD'S COACHING TIP
CHECK IT OUT!*

Salem Evangelical Church
230-232 East Church Street
Marion, Ohio 43302-3821

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



*Changing Lives ...
Transforming Hearts!*