

# THE SOUTHWESTERNER



*Home of the Southwest School of Bible Studies*

*Publisher of Christian Worker*

*Published weekly in the interest of New Testament Christianity by the Southwest church of Christ in Austin, Texas*

## ARE YOU PREPARING FOR HEAVEN?

Cody Westbrook

Everyone understands the practical importance of preparation. Before taking a long vacation we first take time to secure lodging, map the route, and pack every item necessary for a successful trip. We prepare for major decisions like marriage and childbirth. We prepare for major expenditures and investments like houses and retirement funds. Benjamin Franklin said, “By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.” By and large everyone understands the truth of that statement as it pertains to major life events and decisions, but we must also realize the truth of the principle as it pertains to our eternal destiny. Heaven is the Christian’s hope but that hope should not be taken lightly. We will not enter into the dwelling place of our God by accident. It can only be a reality if we prepare properly right now.

Peter describes our hope of Heaven and the need to prepare for its realization in 1 Peter 1:3-21. First, Peter identifies the reality of our hope (1 Pet. 1:3-5). For faithful Christians, Heaven is not a wish or a possibility, but a certainty. It is an “inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away” (1 Pet. 1:4). It is a realistic hope because it is alive and because it is based upon the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (1 Pet. 1:3). Second, Peter explains the need to rejoice in our hope in spite of suffering (1 Pet. 1:6-9). Trial is not enjoyable but it is inescapable and also beneficial. Third, Peter describes the production of our hope (1 Pet. 1:10-12). Faithful men and women throughout history played a role in the achievement of God’s scheme of redemption (cf. Heb. 11). We should rejoice because we are the current beneficiaries of the blessings that “prophets have inquired and searched carefully” for and “angels desire to look into” (1 Pet. 1:10, 12). Finally, Peter discusses the need to prepare for the realization of our

hope (1 Pet. 1:13-21). Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. When the Lord returns, those who hear “Well done good and faithful servant... enter into the joy of your Lord” (Matt. 25:21) will not do so by accident. Rather, because they lived faithful lives of service to their Lord.

Three imperatives make up the preparation section (1 Pet. 1:13-21) and define for us how God expects us to live in light of our hope of Heaven. First, “rest your hope” (1 Pet. 1:13), second, “be holy” (1 Pet. 1:15-16), and third, “conduct yourselves... in fear” (1 Pet. 1:17). To “rest your hope” on Heaven is to firmly cement our attention, desire, and expectation there, and nowhere else. Jesus said “Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven” (Matt. 6:19). We are to direct our attention to “things above” and not things of the earth (Col. 3:1). Putting stock in the possessions, pursuits, and even the people of this world is futile. Heaven is the only sure investment. In conjunction with placing our hope correctly is living correctly. Peter quotes Leviticus 11:44-45 to emphasize the need for Christians to live holy lives (1 Pet. 1:15-16). Holiness is sanctification and set-apart-ness. John said, “everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure” (1 John 3:3). If we are unwilling to reject sin to live for and like the Lord now, we cannot expect to live with Him for eternity! Godly fear is the final item in the list (1 Pet. 1:17). We serve a God who “without partiality judges according to each one’s work.” Therefore, we must be ever mindful of the fact that we will stand before Him in judgment, and fear Him. That is, a healthy respect for His authority and fear of His discipline.

According to 1 Peter 1:13-21, preparing for Heaven means resting our hope there, living holy lives, and fearing God. Practically speaking, how are these things manifested in daily living? Consider the following questions:

- Do you pray? If so, how often? What are your prayers mostly about? Thanksgiving? Praise? Petition? Self-improvement?
- Do you spend time in God's Word daily? Are you reading scripture? Meditating? Memorizing? Constantly looking for ways to apply it?
- Are you focusing on spiritual growth? Are you looking for areas in which to grow, setting goals, and meeting them?
- Are you looking for ways to serve?
- Are you growing in your love for God?
- Do you reflect on the blessings the Lord has provided?

These are just a few questions that we should ask ourselves regularly because the answers can help us gauge our efforts to prepare for eternity with our Lord. Everyone understands the importance of preparing for a long trip away from home, but infinitely more important is our preparation for our eternal home. May God bless us as we live faithfully in His service, preparing to be with Him in eternity.

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## OF WHAT DOES WORSHIP CONSIST?

Guy N. Woods 1908-1993

The American Standard Version at Matthew 2:8 has a reference to a footnote defining worship as follows: "The Greek word denotes an act of reverence whether paid to a creature (see ch. 4:9; 18:26), or to the creator (see ch. 4:10)."

1. Worship, then, involves an act. it is incorrect to say that worship is simply and solely an attitude of heart. Inasmuch as worship consists of acts, it follows that such acts are as much involved in worship and are as essential to it as the attitude which prompts them.

2. The Greek word for worship denotes an act ... paid. Worship involves an attitude, but an attitude which expresses itself in acts which find acceptance in the will of another. Worship, therefore, necessitates acts. The effort to disassociate acts from attitude in worship was born of the desire to escape the opprobrium of adding unauthorized practices to the worship of God. Knowledgeable people who use instrumental music in worship are well aware of the fact that there is no authority in the New Testament for its use and they seek to avoid the charge of adding to the divine will by the allegation that, after all, worship does not involve acts but attitudes,

and therefore the instrument is really no part of worship.

The effort fails for at least two reasons: (1) We have seen that it is based on the erroneous concept of what worship is; (2) it does not elude, but merely postpones the fatal dilemma. For, this worship which is alleged to be solely a matter of the heart and expresses itself, not by divine law but by the will of the worshiper, is either restrained or unrestrained. If unrestrained, then the will of the worshiper becomes the sole arbiter of the suitability of the act thus leaving the one who worships free to resort to whatever expressions of it one desires. The pompous worshiper behind stained glass windows in a great cathedral, the Salvation Army lass with her tambourine, and the religious snake handler may all properly claim justification for their choices of expression. Acts 2:42 may be disregarded as the expression of the divine pattern, and thenceforth each of us may be governed by our own wishes and preferences in our worship to God.

If, however, no will worship is acceptable but proper worship is restrained (as is the case, Colossians 2:20-23), we may inquire, What is the restraining influence? We are thus brought back to the place where we should have started in any manner involving our duty to God: What does the New Testament authorize us to do in worship? The early church, under the guidance of inspired men, continued "steadfastly" in the apostles' teaching, which included singing, the Lord's Supper, the contribution and prayers. These divinely given items are specifically said to have been the means by which the first Christians worshiped (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2). Less than these we cannot not offer him and be in conformity to his will; more than these is an unwarranted and officious intermeddling with the will of God.

It follows, therefore, that in this, the Christian age, the use of instrumental music is unauthorized and unacceptable in the worship of God. "It was used in the Old Testament." Yes, along with the burning of incense, the offering of animal sacrifices and the practice of polygamy. These are not patterns we may properly follow today. The shadows of the old order have given way to the substance of the better way and under the clear light of Christianity such matters are conspicuous by their absence (Hebrews 8:6-13). Let it be remembered and never forgotten that our Lord never commanded the use of instrumental music in worship, no apostle ever sanctioned it, no New Testament writer ever authorized it and no apostolic church ever used it!

*[Guy N. Woods, Questions and Answers Vol. II, pages 149-150]*

*Seek Ye First, A Quarterly Journal of Biblical Studies, Summer 1997.*

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## SOUTHWEST

Southwest School of Bible Studies

# FIRST QUARTER—CLASS SCHEDULE

November 4, 2019-January 24, 2020

### MONDAY — WEDNESDAY — FRIDAY

8:00-8:50	1	John	<b>S. Lloyd</b>
	2	Isaiah 2	<b>M. Gibson</b>
9:00-9:50	1	Numbers	<b>C. Bond</b>
	2	Philippians/Philemon	<b>L. Summers</b>
<b>10:00-10:30</b>	<b>CHAPEL</b>		
10:40-11:30	1	Intro to Preaching	<b>C. Bond</b>
	2	Jer./Lam.	<b>L. Summers</b>
<b>11:30-1:00</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>		
1:00-2:00	1	Theology	<b>S. Lloyd</b>
	2	Theology	<b>S. Lloyd</b>
2:00-2:50	1	Herm. 2	<b>S. Lloyd</b>
	2	Psalms (2)	<b>C. Bond</b>
3:00-3:50	1	Rhetoric	<b>L. Summers</b>
	2	Greek 2	<b>S. Lloyd</b>

### TUESDAY & THURSDAY

#### Tuesday

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8:00-11:30	1	Luke	<b>R. Scherffius</b>
	2	1 Cor.	<b>M. Gibson</b>

#### Chapel from 9:30-10:00

1:00-3:50	1	GSP	<b>Staff</b>
	2	Church History	<b>R. Scherffius</b>

#### Thursday

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8:00-11:30	1	Intro to OT	<b>M. Gibson</b>
	2	Christian Doctrine	<b>W. Jones</b>

#### Chapel from 9:30-10:00

1:00-3:50	1	Lev.	<b>L. Summers</b>
	2	Romans	<b>C. Westbrook</b>

**Record for the Week of November 3, 2019**

Bible Class .....	159
Morning Assembly.....	229
Evening Assembly .....	142
<b>Iglesia de Cristo</b>	
Morning Assembly.....	N/A
Contribution .....	\$N/A

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**PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER:**

**Aiden Ortega** was baptized into Christ last week.

**Rosemary James** is now in Room 315 B at West Oaks Rehab after being hospitalized last week.

**Health Concerns:** Mark DeAvila, Lucile Johnson, Diana Rodriguez, Sue Shamburger, Bonnie Thetford, Bud Wade, Angela Young, Jo Young.

**Shut-ins:** Jeannette Hansen, Rosemary Garrett, Jon Little, Bobby Johnson, Elvira Martinez, Ginny Oswald, Jan Smith.

**Others:** Sonny & Lee Barr, Rodney Boes, Olivia Carson, Caleb Crouchet, Bill Ellison, Ada Fleming, Bonnie Gomer, CK Holt, Deborah Hoover, June Lee, Nell McCown, Bill & Nancy Ponds, Cynthia Puente, Kay Westbrook, Gib Young.

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Brett Gerhardt  
Bill Siebert  
Mark Speir

**Preacher:**

Cody Westbrook

**SOUTHWEST SCHOOL OF BIBLE STUDIES**

**Director:**

Steven Lloyd

**Associate Director:**

Clay Bond

**WORSHIP AND STUDY OPPORTUNITIES:** Sunday, Bible Classes 9:30 am, Worship 10:30 am and 6:00 pm  
Tuesday, 10:00 am (September-May), Men's and Ladies' Bible Classes | Wednesday, Bible Classes, 7:00 pm

**RADIO PROGRAM** – *The Word of Life* | Sunday, 7:30 am | KLBK, 590-AM and 99.7 FM | online at [swcofc.org/word-of-life](http://swcofc.org/word-of-life)