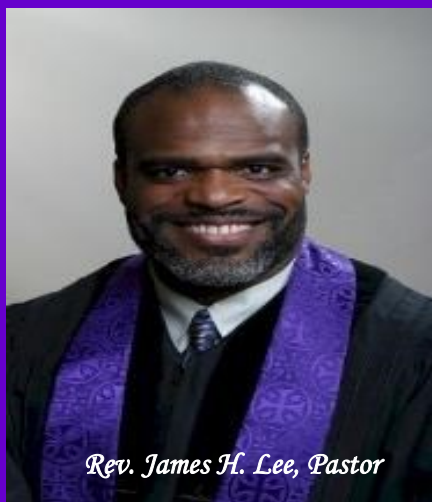


Word from Our Pastor



Rev. James H. Lee, Pastor

NCFA Family and Friends:

I continue to be grateful for your support and ownership of our ministry and care of me. Although my recovery is slow and driving me crazy, I am working from home and caring for my body. You are the church, and I celebrate the excellency of God flowing through you.

On Sunday we will celebrate Family-Friendly Sunday. It will be a joyous occasion when Deacon Connie Jones will direct and our Youth Choir will sing. Elder Nikkie Shubitz will lead the Time with Children, and the Reverend Jeff Saddington will preach.

Please remember these events:

- Oliver Smith will be taking pictures of our families for our directory, and with February fast approaching, it is a good time to schedule your photo with him.
- ⇒ Support the Souper Bowl of Caring. We have one more week to fill our baskets with nonperishable food in order to bless families in need.
- Lift up our Mobile Loaves & Fishes team going out next Friday (first Friday of each month) to bless our sisters and brothers with a meal. If you are able to help with future months, contact Rev. Jeff Saddington or Deacon Bonnie Lew for more information. If you have winter clothing to pass on, remember MLF can use it.

Yes, we will have an Ash Wednesday service on February 10th. Remember, Easter takes place on March 26th.

I pray that we all remember what Reverend Ellis Oglesby said last week: *"If we trust God in our living, then we can trust God in our death and life beyond."*

⁵ *Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight.* ⁶ *In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6)*

God Bless You All

Pastor James H. Lee



January 29, 2016



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SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13TH
PANCAKE SUPPER/
DEACON FUNDRAISER

We will also celebrate Pastor Lee's
Birthday at this event

Time: 6-7:30pm

Place: Covenant Presbyterian Church
(Northland Dr.—at 222nd and Mopac)

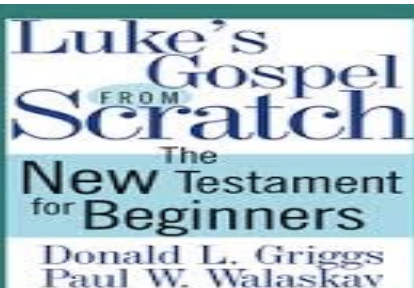


NCFA
Sewing/Craft Class

Sunday, January 31, 2016

1:00 pm

(after service)



The Gospel
According to Luke

Thursdays at 7pm
through February 18th
Fellowship Hall

For Study Notes, see Rev. Jeff Saddington
jeffsaddington@gmail.com

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WHAT: SOUPER BOWL OF CARING

**WHY: TO PROVIDE FOOD TO THE CAPITAL AREA
FOOD PANTRY TO FEED FAMILIES WHO ARE HUNGRY**

WHERE: NEW COVENANT FELLOWSHIP OF AUSTIN

WHEN: JAN. 24—FEB. 7, 2016

PROCESS:

- ♦ **LOOK FOR YOUR NAME ON THE TEAM ROSTERS ON THE TABLE IN THE BACK OF THE SANCTUARY**
- ♦ **BRING YOUR NON-PERISHABLE ITEMS AND PLACE THEM IN YOUR AREA EACH TIME YOU COME TO CHURCH UNTIL FEBRUARY 7.**
- ♦ **FEBRUARY 8TH, FOOD WILL BE TAKEN TO THE PANTRY AND BE WEIGHED**
- ♦ **FEBRUARY 15TH, THE TEAM WITH THE MOST FOOD DONATIONS WILL BE RECOGNIZED DURING WORSHIP**
- ♦ **WINNING TEAM WILL BE FEATURED IN THE NEWS-LETTER**
- ♦ **CASH DONATIONS ARE ALSO ENCOURAGED. EACH \$ EQUALS 1 POUND OF FOOD. FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS ON THE ENVELOPE TO SECURE YOUR MONETARY DONATIONS EACH WEEK.**

LET'S TACKLE HUNGER!



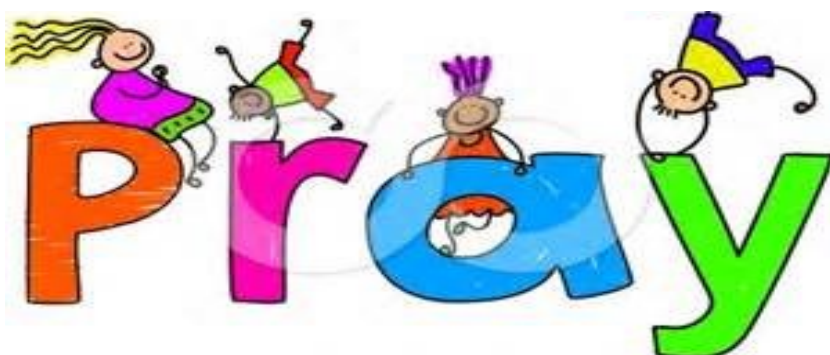
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- ⇒ Romans 8:38-39 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- ⇒ Lift up Tracey's friend Sherry and her husband Max. To try to treat his cancer, Max will undergo a bone marrow transplant from his sister. This is a 6- or 7-week process involving long hospital stays.
- ⇒ Praise for Pastor Lee resting and recuperating from his recent hospitalization. Thanks for the care, concern, and help for Pastor Lee as he recuperates. He is grateful for life!
- ⇒ Praise for visitors to NCF today.
- ⇒ Lift up provision of needs for Workers-to-Work.
- ⇒ Lift up Lucy's brother Michael who will have surgery this week for cancer.
- ⇒ Lift up safety and protection for Ian and other soldiers who have been deployed for nine months to an unknown location.
- ⇒ Lift up Nekia and George while she is deployed in Iraq and he remains in Austin.
- ⇒ Lift up travel mercies for Trish and George as they go to Houston to visit an old friend who is dying.
- ⇒ Thank you to Pastor Ellis for the historical overview of the Christian perspective on life after death. "If I can trust God with my life, I can surely trust Him with my death!"
- ⇒ Lift up Doris's granddaughter Lileisha for recovery from injuries sustained when she was hit by a car while crossing a road.
- ⇒ Lift up travel mercies as Placid returns to college in Boston which was blanketed with snow in the weekend's blizzard. Lift up all those affected by the NE snowstorm, particularly health care workers who have been snowed in in hospitals.
- ⇒ Lift up John and Krystal as he undergoes chemotherapy and radiation for non-hodgkin's lymphoma and she cares for John and their newborn child.
- ⇒ Praise for the childcare workers who make "Little Church" so delightful for our NCF children.
- ⇒ Praise for Caly's diabetes education classes filling up entirely. Lift her up for energy, wisdom, and knowledge to teach what class participants need to know. Lift up more educators to teach more classes.
- ⇒ Lift up Lupita and her twin babies to find new housing after their home burned down.
- ⇒ Thanksgiving for all the support and encouragement Matthew received from our church family as he took his board exams last week. He has one more to go, and too much time until he finds out the results. Until then, lift up clear-headedness for the remaining exams and restful sleep every night.
- ⇒ Lift up travel mercies for Richard, Nancy, and Lara as they travel to Eli and Amy's wedding.

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N C F A SUNDAY MORNINGS

NCFA Sunday Schedule

8:15am - Worship Service
1507 Wilshire Blvd.

10:15am - Worship Service
1507 Wilshire Blvd.
9am Adult Sunday School
10am Fellowship
10:45am - Children's Church



NCFA SUNDAY WORSHIP AT 8:15am -- Wilshire Blvd.

Come rise and shine with us
at our 8:30am service
where we glorify God
through the Word, Prayer, Hymns,
and Communion.

1507 Wilshire Blvd.

In the words of Phillips, Craig & Dean,
"Come, just as you are, to worship."

All are welcome to this traditional,
intimate style of worshipping our Lord.

NCFA SUNDAY WORSHIP AT 10:15am

We would love to have you and your family come share in the CELEBRATION OF THE GOOD NEWS!

We are worshipping in the Fellowship Hall of Genesis Presbyterian Church on the Wilshire Campus starting at 10:15 a.m.

Real Church...
Real People...
Real Simple...

New Covenant Fellowship of Austin PC(U.S.A.) is a racially diverse community informed by the Bible, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and motivated to share God's love with all. In response to God's love, we are called to equip disciples to faithfully serve, to encourage seekers to joyfully commit, and to implore all to worship our Lord, as we love our neighbors, grow in grace, and live by faith.

JOIN US IN THE CELEBRATION OF THE GOOD NEWS

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1st Kimberly Hall
3rd Katie Keeler
4th Doug Caroom
6th Craig Dyer
7th Josh Harris
13th Patricia Caroom
15th George Washington IV
16th Stacy Robinson
17th Nora Quinn
17th Ashley Phillips
25th Awudizi Vida-Torku
29th Roman Duran
Doug Smith
Tiffany Williams



1-5 Wonho and Charlie Shin
1-15 George and Grace Washington
1-20 George and Trish Holland
1-21 Scott and Ashley Phillips
1-31 Oliver and Elizabeth Smith

Session Members

*Rev. James Lee
Pastor/Moderator
*Elder Kathy Smith
Clerk of Session
*Rev. Oliver Smith
Administration & Personnel
*Elder Bill Harris
Buildings & Grounds
*Elder Randy Mojica
Children and Youth
*Elder Ben Hooks
Discipleship & Men's/
Women's Ministry
*Elder Mary Jo Mojica
Finance & Stewardship
*Elder Robert Booth
Congregational Life/
Lay Ministry
*Elder Vernon Bailey
Missions/Evangelism
*Elder Matthew Aldas
Worship & Membership

Deacons

Kathryn Aldas
Ashley Phillips
Scott Phillips
Carol Saddington, Chair
Cathy Trifiro
Roxann Vallejo

January-February 2016

31st 4th Sunday after Epiphany
8:30am Early Worship at Wilshire
9-10am Adult Sunday School
9:30am Psalm 150 Praise
Team Rehearsal
10:15am Worship at 1507 Wilshire
Rev. Jeff Saddington, preaching
Sunday School during worship;
Ages 3-5-Rm 1, Grades 1-5 -Rm 7
2nd 6:30pm Men's Ministry Dinner,
7pm Study
3rd First Wednesday Night Ministry Mtgs.
Dinner followed by 7pm Meetings .
4th 7-8pm Luke Bible Study-Fellowship
Hall
7th Transfiguration of the Lord Sunday
Souper Bowl of Caring
8:30am Early Worship at Wilshire
9-10am Adult Sunday School
9:30am Psalm 150 Praise
Team Rehearsal
10:15am Worship at Wilshire Blvd.
Rev. Bill Harris, preaching
Sunday School Ages 3-5 (Rm. 1);
Grades 1-5 (Rm. 7)



FEBRUARY 20th
Church Leadership Retreat

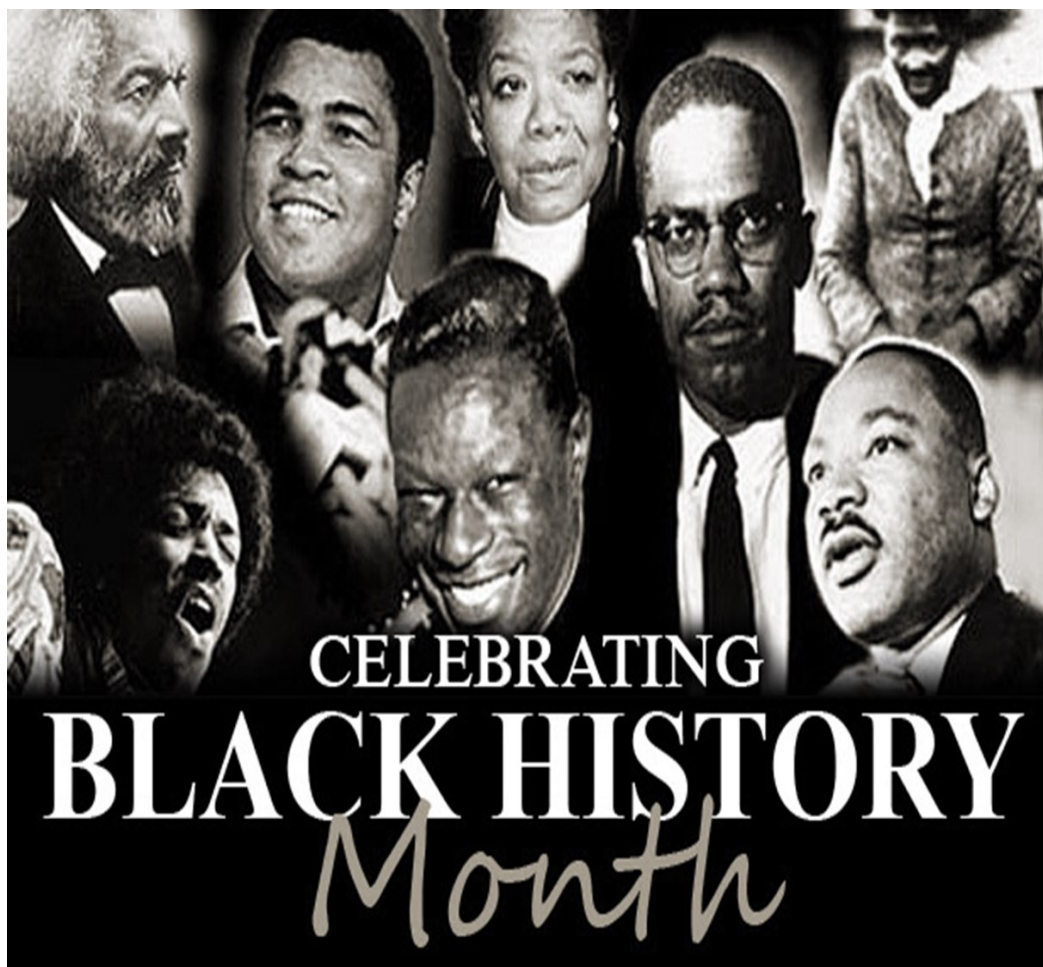
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At NCFA February 2016

- ⇒ **February 7-Black History Month Theme**
- ⇒ **February 14-Guest: LaToya Devezin, Austin History Center**
- ⇒ **February 21-A Station on the Underground Railroad**
- ⇒ **February 28-Focus on an African American Inventor**

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Wednesday Night Fellowship Homework Help 5 – 6 PM and 7 – 8 PM

Bring your homework. Enjoy a family – friendly meal. Finish assignments.

Don't miss out on this wonderful opportunity!

MATH WITH MAŠA!!!!

**2nd / 4th Sundays,
Noon-1:30pm
following Worship**

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial a} \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f(x, \theta) dx = \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} \frac{\partial}{\partial a} f(x, \theta) dx$$
$$\frac{\partial}{\partial a} \ln f_{a, \sigma^2}(\xi_1) = \frac{(\xi_1 - a)}{\sigma^2} f_{a, \sigma^2}(\xi_1) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi\sigma^2}} \exp\left(-\frac{(\xi_1 - a)^2}{2\sigma^2}\right)$$
$$\int T(x) \cdot \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} f(x, \theta) dx = M\left(T(\xi) \cdot \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} \ln l(\xi, \theta)\right)$$

- ⇒ Do you *love* math, *hate* math, or *need* help with math?
- ⇒ Are you getting ready for a big test or college entrance exam?
- ⇒ Bring your arithmetic, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, geometry, trigonometry, statistics and calculus math problems.
- ⇒ All school-aged students, elementary through undergraduates
- ⇒ 2nd and 4th Sundays, immediately following worship service
- ⇒ (Noon – 1:30 PM)
- ⇒ Maša Prodanović holds a Bachelor of Science in Applied Mathematics from the University of Zagreb, Croatia and a PhD in Computational Applied Mathematics from Stony Brook University, New York. She is an Assistant Professor and Chevron Teaching Fellow in the Petroleum and Geosystems Engineering Department at the University of Texas at Austin.



Don't miss out on this wonderful opportunity!

DUH!



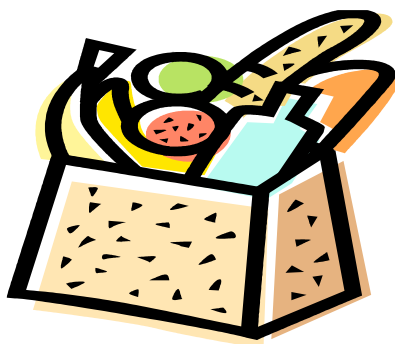
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We Care Kits

"But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect." 1 Peter 3:15

We are currently accepting the following donations

Food/Drink Items:

Granola Bars, Trail mix, or peanut butter and crackers

Vienna sausage – 5 ounce size cans

Water bottles – 8 ounce size

Hygiene/Personal Items:

Travel Size Toothbrush & Toothpaste

Travel size hand sanitizer or hotel size bar soap

Men's size small crew ankle length white or black socks

Quart size freezer bags

Please note: this is a smaller kit with fewer items.

All donated items should be placed in the donations box located on the back table by the AV equipment. If you have any questions, please email me: calyflower2020@yahoo.com or call me at (512) 228-4712.

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"When We All Get to Heaven"

Ecclesiastes 9:4-12; Acts 23-6-10

Rev. Wm. Ellis Oglesby

New Covenant Fellowship of Austin

January 24, 2016

Ecclesiastes 9:4-12

⁴ But whoever is joined with all the living has hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion. ⁵ The living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing; they have no more reward, and even the memory of them is lost. ⁶ Their love and their hate and their envy have already perished; never again will they have any share in all that happens under the sun. ⁷ Go, eat your bread with enjoyment, and drink your wine with a merry heart; for God has long ago approved what you do. ⁸ Let your garments always be white; do not let oil be lacking on your head. ⁹ Enjoy life with the wife whom you love, all the days of your vain life that are given you under the sun, because that is your portion in life and in your toil at which you toil under the sun. ¹⁰ Whatever your hand finds to do, do with your might; for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going. ¹¹ Again I saw that under the sun the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favor to the skillful; but time and chance happen to them all. ¹² For no one can anticipate the time of disaster. Like fish taken in a cruel net, and like birds caught in a snare, so mortals are snared at a time of calamity, when it suddenly falls upon them.

Acts 23:6-10

⁶ When Paul noticed that some were Sadducees and others were Pharisees, he called out in the council, "Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. I am on trial concerning the hope of the resurrection of the dead." ⁷ When he said this, a dissension began between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. ⁸ (The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, or angel, or spirit; but the Pharisees acknowledge all three.) ⁹ Then a great clamor arose, and certain scribes of the Pharisees' group stood up and contended, "We find nothing wrong with this man. What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?" ¹⁰ When the dissension became violent, the tribune, fearing that they would tear Paul to pieces, ordered the soldiers to go down, take him by force, and bring him into the barracks.

Wasn't that a great song? "When we all get to Heaven, what a day of rejoicing it will be. When we all see Jesus, we'll sing and shout the victory." It's actually one of my favorite hymns, and guess what? It's not in the new Presbyterian Hymnal. It's not in the old one, either. It's not even in the maroon one, the last true Presbyterian Hymnal.

I have confessed before that when we visit my people in Georgia, we often worship at a Primitive Baptist Church in lower Appalachia. These folks are the real deal. 'Jesus is Lord...God is a white man...I'm going to Heaven, and if you don't get saved soon, you're going to Hell.' I love these folks. They are as poor as Job's church mouse, but they love the Lord, they love the land, and they love one another. Compared to us, they have a pretty hard life, and they are excited about going to Heaven. They sing about it every Sunday.

We Presbyterians don't sing about Heaven much. Our theologies are more sophisticated. Focusing on the afterlife is an "escape hatch" theology that makes us complacent about suffering injustices on earth. The idea that our souls escape our bodies of corruption and ascend to Heaven is textbook Gnosticism. That was first declared heretical in 381 AD and several times since then. And most importantly, Jesus came to save this world because this world is important.

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Ecclesiastes 9:4-12; Acts 23-6-10

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New Covenant Fellowship of Austin

January 24, 2016

I learned all of this in seminary. There are so many reasons not to preach on Heaven, that Presbyterians rarely do. In this case I'm afraid we may have thrown the baby out with the bathwater. The afterlife is important to people. It's important to me. So I figured I would preach about it while still trying to sound like a Presbyterian.

I'm going to say three things about Heaven:

- First, the Bible shows that the Judeo-Christian understanding of Heaven has morphed over the centuries.
- Second, compared to other religions, we don't show a lot of interest in the specifics of the afterlife.
- Third, and most important, it doesn't really matter anyway. Our desire to know the details of what awaits is merely idle curiosity.

We're looking at this this morning because we are curious people. I'm going to tackle these in reverse order.

For the Christian, there is only one relevant statement on the afterlife. This is the punch line of the sermon. If you only remember one sentence that I say, remember this one, and let's repeat it:

"If I can trust God with my life, I can trust God with my death."

"If I can trust God with my life, I can trust God with my death."

This one sentence has totally satisfied me, and I am completely at ease with what comes after I take my last breath. Personally, I hope it is the "Big Rock Candy Mountain." I'd rather not get angel wings and sit on clouds...I look horrible in white. But whatever it is, it will be wonderful, because God created it for the people God loves.

God has delivered me through a lot in my life, and God is not going to abandon me just because my heart stops. I don't love my sister any less because she's dead; I will always love her. And I'm sure that our love is only a pale reflection of the perfect love God has for each and every one of us.

If I can trust God with my life, I can trust God with my death.

So what happens after we die? When asked that question, Christianity basically shrugs and goes back to what it was doing, especially compared to other ancient religions and cultures. Think about the Egyptians:



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The pyramids are all about the Egyptian theology of the afterlife. And you don't do all of this work because you have a hunch about what happens after death. You only go to this much trouble if you know for certain that it will pay off.

The Egyptians had very detailed beliefs about what lies beyond. If an Egyptian man asks his priest what happens after you die, he might pull out a diagram like this one:



First you go past the fourteen sages. After that, a god puts your heart on a scale to see whether it is lighter than a feather. If so, you are presented to the chief god of the underworld. The beautiful and lovely Isis stands behind him.

(I suspect I'm the only preacher who used the words "beautiful" and "lovely" to describe Isis this morning.)

Babylon and Assyria? Same thing.



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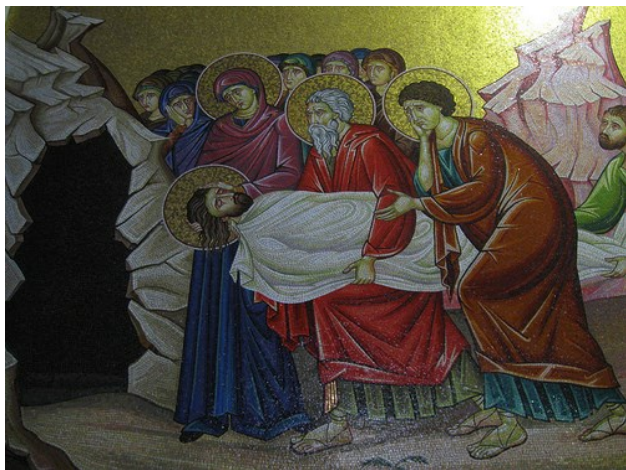
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This obsession with the afterlife was not unique to the middle east. Think about the Aztecs and Mayans in the Americas; their religion is unique. Whether you go to Paradise or the place of torment doesn't depend on how you lived, it depends on how you die. And it seems like you could arrange for someone else to die for you, while still accruing the benefits.

Why did they build their pyramids? To have a fancy place to die. (Technically, to be sacrificed.)



To what lengths did the ancient Christians and Jews go to assure our place in Heaven?



A naked body wrapped in a sheet, covered in spices, and stuck in a hole. And here is the kicker. You don't even get to stay there. In a year, they remove your remains, put the bones in a special box called an ossuary, and toss out the rest. That's what the spices are for, by the way. They aren't to preserve the body; they are to help it decompose and to make the process of separating bone from flesh less pungent.

Other religions have volumes of sacred text dedicated to what happens after we die. What did Jesus say about it?

"In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also." (John 14:2-3)

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One day I'll preach on this beautiful text, but for now, I'll point out that we will all be together with Jesus.

If I can trust God with my life, I can trust God with my death.

Although the Bible doesn't say much about the afterlife, it does say something. Like all other cultures of the world, the Judeo-Christian understanding has evolved over the centuries. It has gone from simple to relatively complex. This is pictured in the following slide.

Moses

On the simple side, we find the ancient Israelites. What happens after you die? You're dead. Period. That's it. Game over.

Think about the second creation account, ***Genesis 2:7. “Then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being.”***

We are composed of the earth--already declared good by God--and the breath or spirit of life. Those two comprise a living being. In the Hebrew, the word used for “living being” is soul. We don't have a soul; we are a soul. That is, until the breath of life leaves us and then we become dirt again.

The only vague concept of life after death is living on through your family. May the House of Ellis continue forever. That is as close as we got to immortality.

Babylon

In the 500's BC the Assyrians and Babylonians conquered Israel and dragged the people off to exile. Remember, these people had extremely detailed beliefs about the afterlife, and they performed all kinds of rituals to assure their place in paradise. It is rather amazing that none of this found its way into Judaism.

This is the first time we see any writing about resurrection. We find it in the ***12th chapter of Daniel: “And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.”***

We need to be clear that the Hebrews didn't get this idea from the Babylonians. In Babylon you did what you could to have a pleasant existence after death. In resurrection, you cease being dead. You become alive again. That is so much cooler and completely unheard of in the ancient world. In Babylon everyone believes that once you're dead, you're dead. Ghosts, Zombies, people in heaven--they are all dead. Resurrection defeats death.

That's good if you're good. However, Daniel also suggests a different fate for good and evil resurrected persons.

Intertestamental Period

Several hundred years pass between the end of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament. The belief in resurrection holds firm. It still holds true today.

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However, people asked a difficult question. What happens to a person between death and resurrection? The Old Testament doesn't say, and there is no New Testament. I don't know where the idea came from. I will say that many Hebrews believed that the soul of everyone who died went to the underworld a.k.a. Hades, and this is was really the primary belief throughout the ancient world.

At first, Hades is a neutral place. Everyone goes there. Then at some point, Hades is split into multiple sections. One of them, Elysium or Paradise or The Garden, is where good people go. The other is Tartarus. This is where the souls of evil people go, not for eternity, but to await the last judgment and resurrection.

This brings us to Jesus and, a bit later, to our scripture lesson. Here we find Paul defending himself in front of the Sanhedrin against the charge of blasphemy. He can't argue his way out of this; he said the things they say he said, he did the things they say he did.

He has another plan. Listen:

⁶ When Paul noticed that some were Sadducees and others were Pharisees, he called out in the council, “Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. I am on trial concerning the hope of the resurrection of the dead.” ⁷ When he said this, a dissension began between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. ⁸ (The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, or angel, or spirit; but the Pharisees acknowledge all three.)

Here we see two things. First, scripture is bearing witness to conflicting theologies among the Jewish leaders. The Sadducees only accepted the first five books as Torah. Their understanding of Heaven is stuck in 50 BC. They know it and they are proud of it. “We will not be corrupted by modernity. I'm sorry if you don't like it, but when you're dead, you're dead.”

On the other side, we have the Pharisees. They hold the prophets and the wisdom literature to be scripture. They also believed in books that ultimately didn't make it into our Bible, like 1st and 2nd Enoch. They believe that if you die, your spirit goes to Hades to await the resurrection.

This wasn't just a minor disagreement between the two sects. These were fighting words. Imagine yelling “Hook ‘em Horns” in a bar full of UT and Aggie fans. A fight breaks out, so the guards come in and rescue Paul.

What did Jesus believe? The best evidence from scripture and from early Christianity is that Jesus believed in Sheol as a divided intermediate state before resurrection. On the cross, Christ said to the thief, “Truly I say unto you, today you will be with me in paradise” with paradise being a pleasant part of Sheol. That implies that the other thief will be somewhere else--i.e., the unpleasant part of Sheol. Of course, he could have understood Sheol as a place where everyone went after death to await the resurrection.

You would think the question of Heaven would be pretty much settled by Jesus. I want to run us through some later developments.

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New Covenant Fellowship of Austin

January 24, 2016

We should mention a Christian-ish sect that was first declared heretical in the 300's. They believed that matter was bad, despite the fact that God called it good. Souls were good. So our soul is prisoner in a body until physical death, when it can ascend to the perfect and eternal spirit world. My experience is that most Christians today believe something very similar to this.

In the middle ages the Roman Catholic Church officially endorsed the theology of Purgatory. This was a contributing factor to the split between them and the Eastern Orthodox Church. Let me throw in a caveat that I'm not Catholic so this may be a little hazy. Like us, they believe that no one is without sin. So how could anyone be in Paradise? They kicked everyone except for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob out of Paradise, put them in Tartarus, and renamed it Purgatory. The fire serves a purpose. It purifies us. And there are varying points of view as to whether or not the fire should be understood literally.

Dante

A few centuries later, Dante wrote The Divine Comedy.

Now this is just a play—3 plays, actually. This is not theological or scriptural material. But our understanding of Heaven gets taken over by what Dante writes in “The Inferno.” Heaven has the form of realms—a realm for every planet, and the 10th realm is for God. So when we hear of people speaking of “7th Heaven,” this is where it's coming from. But this gets taken over in the popular imagination. People believe what Dante has written and call it truth.

The Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church split over Purgatory in 1100; that's the first big schism.

Reformation

But then Martin Luther comes along and says “Kids, you've missed a few things here.” And so we have the Reformation and the second big schism in the 1500's. Luther said only what we read in the Bible is what we should believe in.

Presbyterianism

The last step in our journey here is the foundational literature of Presbyterianism—the Westminster Confession, drawn up in the mid 1600's by a bunch of geniuses called the Westminster Assembly. They wrote this enormous confession, this enormous catechism, which is fundamentally where our Presbyterian belief starts. And I'm going to read to you what Westminster says about what happens when we die. It's important for you to know that you don't have to stop being Presbyterian if you don't believe this—that's not what this is! *This is the beginning of a place for conversation.*

Q. What happens to men after death?

A. The bodies of men after their death return to the dust and see corruption. But their souls which neither died nor sleep, having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them; the souls of the righteous being then made perfect of holiness are received in the highest heavens (Dante again) where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies. And the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torment and utter darkness, reserve the judgment of the great day. Besides these two places for the souls separated from their bodies, the scripture acknowledgeth none.

January 29, 2016



NCFA CONNEXION!

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Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

“When We All Get to Heaven”

Ecclesiastes 9:4-12; Acts 23-6-10

Rev. Wm. Ellis Oglesby

New Covenant Fellowship of Austin

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So what this is really saying is we're not buying into the Catholic idea of other places. But there are still tremendous strains of Gnosticism in here—you live for awhile and then your body goes back to God. This is why we talk about people “going home” at funerals. Now, of course none of this is in the Bible, or at least you really have to stretch to talk about it as being scriptural.

I've said three things:

1. What really matters is that if you trust God in your life, you can trust God in your death.
2. Other people have wasted a lot more time, energy, and resources on the afterlife than Christians have; and this is to our credit. Think about what those Egyptian slaves could have been building if it weren't pyramids for dead pharaohs.
3. We have this arc of belief, and what I want to leave you with here is that all of these except for Gnosticism and Dante have been considered orthodox at times. So really it doesn't matter that much, the details of what you believe, as long as that image you have is grounded in Christ who saves us, and it serves you. Personally, I'm hoping to go to the Big Rock Candy Mountain...”you never change your socks, the little streams of alcohol come trickling down the rocks....” But if not, Heaven will do.

Remember, if I can trust God with my life, I can trust God with my death. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, Hallelujah! and Amen.

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

2016 POINT IN TIME COUNT **REGISTER NOW!**

ABOUT

The Austin/Travis County Point in Time (PIT) Count is part of the national effort to eliminate street homelessness spearheaded by the federal Departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Veterans Affairs (VA). By knowing who is on the street, where they are, and what they need, ECHO and its partner agencies can most effectively target services to those that need them the most.

OBJECTIVES

- ♦ Determine the total number and characteristics of those who are homeless in Travis County
- ♦ Provide quantitative results including demographics, trends in homelessness, with stratified outcomes by homeless sub-populations (veterans, unaccompanied youth, etc.)
- ♦ Compare annual results with previous count information to assess and improve community performance in preventing and ending homelessness

WHEN AND WHERE

- ♦ **Shift 1:** Saturday, Jan. 23rd from 3-7am-Downtown
- ♦ **Shift 2:** Saturday, Jan. 23rd from 5-9am-Suburban
- ♦ **Shift 3:** Saturday, Jan. 23rd from 6-9am-Rural

WWW.AUSTINECHO.ORG

TRAINING

Echo will provide volunteer training and assign volunteers to areas. All teams will receive maps, clipboards, flashlights, pens, and all necessary forms. All volunteers will be required to attend at least (1) volunteer training prior to participating in the count.

VOLUNTEERS

We are looking for:

60 Team Leads

600 General Volunteers

Note: Team leads must register by November 24th!

THE COUNT

Teams generally consist of at least three members. Volunteers will observe and count homeless individuals within a defined area of Austin or Travis County. Each volunteer will choose from 3 available shifts.

JOIN US

Raise awareness and learn about homelessness in our community, along with the need for viable, long-term solutions that will alleviate suffering and improve the quality of life for all Austinites.

REGISTER!

www.austinecho.org/2016-point-in-time-count-registration/

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day

Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day and the Girl Day STEM Festival will be held on **Saturday, February 27, 2016**. Over 5,000 elementary and middle school students are expected to participate with over 900 volunteers and over 100 [student organizations, community organizations and companies](#) volunteering. Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day (Girl Day) is an international event celebrated during [Engineers Week](#) each year. Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day is presented by [Halliburton](#) & the Girl Day STEM Festival is presented by [Google](#).



Students and their parents or educators are invited to UT for an afternoon of engineering fun. UT's national award winning Girl Day, presented by the Women in Engineering Program (WEP), gives elementary and middle school students a chance to:

- ⇒ explore engineering through Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day grade-specific, hands-on engineering activities and explore engaging demonstrations hosted by volunteers, student organizations, corporate partners and community organizations.
- ⇒ have fun exploring computer science and all of STEM through hands-on STEM activities and engaging demonstrations hosted by volunteers, student organizations, corporate partners and community organizations in the Girl Day STEM Festival.
- ⇒ **interact with over 100 organizations and over 900 students, faculty and engineers from industry.**

January 29, 2016



NCFA CONNE~~X~~ION!

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Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day



Date & Time: Saturday, February 27, 2016 from 12 - 4 p.m.

Register at: <https://www.givepulse.com/event/14462-Girl-Day-at-UT-Austin-2016>

Activities for kinder - 8th graders are housed in UT's engineering and natural sciences complexes. Students are encouraged to create and experiment at their own pace with all of the age-appropriate activities. There are no volunteers or guides to take students around to the activities, so parents, counselors, or teachers are expected to remain with students during the event.

Parking

Details

NEW FOR GIRL DAY 2016! Parking will be free for participants in our 2 garages: 27th Street Garage (109 W. 27th Street) and Speedway Garage (105 E. 27th Street)! We are so excited to be able to provide parking for free this year! We hope to have enough spaces for everyone, but if spaces in the garages run out, there will be paid parking options in other close-by garages.

If you are traveling by school bus you must let us know so we can arrange for a bus parking permit for a fee. Buses will be able to drop-off and pick-up participants near the event check-in. Bus parking WILL NOT be within walking distance of the Girl Day event.