

Ministers:  
the congregation

Kenny Chumbley  
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Sunday:  
8:00 AM: WGCY  
9:00 AM: Worship

Wednesday:  
7:00 PM: Bible Study

[gibsoncitychurchof  
Christ.com](http://gibsoncitychurchofchrist.com)

**This Past Week:**  
Worship—  
Wednesday—  
Contribution—\$1260

**For meditation:**  
**Proverbs 29.25–27**  
Why is there such  
mutual antago-  
nism/abhorrence  
between the good  
and the evil?

**Radio program:**  
**WGCY FM, 106.3**  
Sundays at 8 AM

## *Forming an opinion*

An opinion is something we believe that others need not share. In what follows, I'm not talking about our opinions about sports, politics, investing, etc., but opinions involving our worshipful response to God's revelation of Himself.

Romans 14 is my text. The chapter opens (v 1) and closes (vv 22–23) talking about *faith*, and I agree with Whiteside that in this chapter, “faith means . . . about the same as the word ‘opinion.’” Accordingly, Romans 14 offers valuable guidelines for forming our opinions in a Christian context. Our opinions:

- Can be expressed and discussed, but should not be quarreled over, 1–16.
- Are to be formed and held to the glory of God, 6.
- Are beliefs for which we alone are responsible, 12.
- Must agree with our understanding of God's word, 14.
- Without love, even correct opinions are worthless, 15.
- Should not major in minors, 17.
- Should never divide brethren, 19.
- Should build up others, 19.
- Should not impede another's faith, 21.
- Should not be flaunted, 22.
- Even a correct opinion is sinful if we don't believe it is scriptural, 23.

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# Gibson City church of Christ

Highway 47 South, Gibson City, IL

## *Times That Try Men's Souls, 3*

The reason our times are trying and filled with social, economic, and political crises is due to the evil found in man. To think the evil in our world can be dealt with by putting it on the backburner and dealing with the temporal problems of life first is to have it exactly backward. Have you ever had a lawnmower that wouldn't start? The engine is mechanically sound, there's plenty of gasoline and lubrication, but you yank and yank on the cord and nothing happens. When you have fuel and compression but the mower won't run, what you're missing is fire. Check the spark plug, because if it's fouled or worn out, unable to produce that tiny flash that ignites the gas, you're not going to do any mowing. Gasoline engines need a spark, and without one, they just won't work.

Our age needs God and to think we can stay upwardly mobile by addressing social problems and ignoring the spiritual is a fatal mistake. We're in the mess we're in because there's no spark. Churches are empty; the Bible is being banned; the confession, “Christ is King,” has been labeled a “very gross and ugly statement.” Without the spark that comes from God, our culture will only pick up speed on its death spiral.

The solution to our tangible mess is the intangible, the unseen. The world's sickness can only be cured by the gospel. Let us give the world the spark it needs; by our words and deeds let us give the world God!

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Sermon: 2 Peter 3.1–11

*This is no joke*

28 April 2024

## Simon a Cyrenian

In contrast to the legionnaires who brutalized Christ, the Gospels tell about a North African bystander, Simon of Cyrene, who was suddenly and unexpectedly caught up in the great drama of the crucifixion.

As the death detail came out of Jerusalem—for executions were conducted outside of town—a man named Simon was *compelled* to bear Christ's cross. In Matthew 5.41, the Lord had referred to the statute here invoked to press Simon into service—"whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two." Roman officials in Judah could impress any Jew into service for the distance of one mile, and that statute is now used to expedite the execution of Jesus.

Cyrene was a Greek colony west of Egypt, belonging to Libya, on the northern coast of Africa. One of the Ptolemies had settled a large number of Jews there, and it had become a great resort for Jews. Simon, most probably, was a Jew who lived in Cyrene who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover and was staying in a hotel or Airbnb in a nearby village.

Should we view this scene as a chance meeting? Accident, luck, and chance are pagan words, but "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord" (Ps. 37.23) are Bible words. I would like to think Simon's encounter with Jesus was providential, divinely ordained of God. The reason God arranged it seems to be implied in Mark's comment that Simon was "the father of Alexander and Rufus." It seems a safe conclusion that at the time Mark wrote his Gospel, Simon's sons were well-known in the Christian church. The Rufus mentioned in Romans 16.13 may be the Rufus mentioned here. It's nice to think that the reason Simon's boys were Christians traced to the day when Simon bore Christ's cross. We're not told what he did after he laid Christ's cross down, but is it wild speculation to think he stayed at Calvary, heard the Lord's words, saw the three hours of darkness and the earthquake that coincided with Christ's death, and became one of the first drawn to Christ when He was lifted up (Jn. 12.32)? Might bearing Christ's cross have, in some way, been the catalyst for him leaving his Judaism and turning to the Lord? If so, what a rich reward he received for such a simple kindness shown.

Can we ever be certain that something that happened to us was by sheer chance?

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## The Ark

[I'm leaning here on Frederick A. Filby, *The Flood Reconsidered*, 1971.]

Some think the Ark was too large for Noah to build, but early man undertook some gargantuan building projects; for example: The Great Pyramid (2 million blocks of stone, each weighing about 2½ tons; each side 756' long, set within a small fraction of one degree to the four points of the compass); the Colossi of Memnon (each statue was carved from blocks of sandstone weighing 400 tons and transported 600 miles), the Colossus of Rhodes, the Lighthouse (Paros) of Alexandria, etc. In our own day, a single family, the Ziolkowskis, is carving a 641' × 563' figure of Chief Crazy Horse on a South Dakota mountain.

The dimensions God gave for the Ark were 300 cubits long × 50 cubits wide × 30 cubits high. Modern engineers say these ratios reflect an advanced knowledge of shipbuilding and would have given great stability to the Ark in a troubled sea.

Two things living creatures require are light and air. Genesis 6.16 says God told Noah to make a *window* for the Ark. The Heb. word is *tsohar*, and this is the only time it's translated "window." *Tsohar* typically means noon or midday. Keil & Delitzsch say the word indicates an opening, possibly running the full length of the ark on both sides, that allowed for the entrance of light and air.

Genesis 6.14 required the Ark be coated in and out with pitch. The Heb. word is *kāpār*, which the Septuagint translates Using the Gr. word *asphaltos*, or asphalt. Asphalt is found all over the Middle East oilfields. It was so plentiful in Babylon that the bricks of Nebuchadnezzar's city were stuck together with asphalt rather than mortar. It's worth noting that the Heb. word *kāpār* seems to have conveyed more than a petroleum residue. The primary definition of this word in the OT is *atonement* (merciful, pardon, etc.), which introduces a spiritual slant to the term. No craftsman can build a completely watertight boat; which is why pitch is needed. And no one can live a completely perfect life; which is why mercy is needed (1 Jn. 1.7).

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### News about us

- I've been away in meetings three of the last five weeks and am grateful to God to be back home safe and sound.