**SERVICE SCHEDULE for December 17, 2023**

**Announcements for the Week Cliff Davis**

**Morning Service Evening Service**

**Prayer**- Cliff Davis **Prayer-** Cliff Davis

**Song Leader**- Buck Phillips **Song Leader**- Jason LaChappelle

**-- Comments** – Eli Hickey **Comments** – Buck Phillips

**-- Assisting –** Andy Fuller **Communion** – Phillip Dorn

**-- Assisting** – Ron Bailey

**-- Assisting** – Jared Davis

**-- Assisting** – Cohen Esque

**-- Scripture** – Ernesto Almazan **Scripture** – Josiah Phillips

**Closing Prayer-** Scott Fleming **Closing Prayer**- Dan Woodward

**Wednesday Night – December 20, 2023**

**First Prayer–** Scott Swan

**Song Leader** – Eli Hickey

**Invitation –** Andy Fuller

**Closing Prayer –** Brandon Esque

**December 24 Evening - Prayers & Song Service**

**Upcoming Assignments**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **December** | **Communion** | **Cleaning** |
| **17** | McIlvain | Please Be Considerate |
| **24** | Shepherd | Clean the area around your seat |

**Memory Verse – James 1:26**

**If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does no bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one’s religion is useless.**

**Good Thoughts**

**IT’S PERSONAL: Jesus doesn’t save nations, churches, or families. He saves individuals. Note the personal pronoun: “He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.” Mark 16:16 – Ron Adams**

**When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die. ― Dietrich Bonhoeffer, The Cost of Discipleship.**

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***Schedule of Services***

**Sunday: 9 a.m., 10 a.m. & 5 p.m. Wednesday: 7:00 p.m.**

**This bulletin is published weekly. Edited by Bill McIlvain.**

**Send any articles for the bulletin to Office@covingtonchurchofchrist.com**

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**Elders: Jason LaChappelle, Bill McIlvain**

**Deacons: Cliff Davis, Darryl Griffing, Buck Phillips**

**December 17, 2****023**

***Supernatural Fire***

1. According to Daniel, this astonishing person had a throne like a fire of flame. Who was he?

2. What did the cherubim use to guard the entrance of Eden?

3. How did God first appear to Moses?

4. Where is the place reserved for those whose names are not in the Book of Life?

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***When Was Jesus Born?***

**By Jim Jonas**

Any standard Bible encyclopedia will affirm that the observance of Jesus’ birth on December 25 is founded upon conjecture and tradition. “Authorities are not agreed concerning the precise date of Christ’s birth. Neither is there agreement concerning the time at which the celebration of Christmas actually began in the churches. Clement of Alexandria, toward the close of the 2nd century A.D., cites diverse views concerning the date of Christ’s birth among early churchmen ... By the end of the 4th century, the eastern churches had adopted special services commemorating jointly the birth of Christ, the adoration of the Magi, and Christ’s baptism by John. Apparently, these services were held at first on January 6, but later were divided between December 25 and January 6...

***When Was Jesus Born?***

**Continued**

“Augustine points to the prevailing tradition in the 5th century among western churches ... ‘For He is believed to have been conceived on the 25th of March, upon which day also He suffered ... But He was born according to tradition upon December the 25th’”(Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, Vol. 1, p. 804).

This information, however, is of little import to those who have their hearts set on celebrating the birth of Christ. The reasoning usually goes, “The exact day of His birth is not important. What matters is that we celebrate it.” But isn’t this apparently sincere sentiment merely an assumption? The reason we do not know the day of Jesus’ birth is that God didn’t reveal that information. If God had wanted the birth of Christ to be celebrated, He would have stipulated the day and given the appropriate instructions.

A sincere desire to honor Christ is not the issue. Sincerity is no substitute for obedience. The Bible teaches many times over that those who willfully depart from the Scriptures, no matter how sincere, are in violation of God’s law (e.g., Leviticus 10:1-7). The deeper issue is respect for the authority of the word of God.

The birth of Christ was a pivotal day in human history and is to be treasured in the heart of every Christian along with every other aspect of Jesus’ life. But the appointment of a special day of worship accompanied by practices which originated with pagan festivals is simply presumptuous, self-willed religion.

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***The House of Mourning***

**By Jim Jonas**

***It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for that is the end of all men; and the living will take it to heart. [Ecclesiastes 7:2]***

What are some things we should take to heart from the house of mourning?

* That … no matter how much time is spent with loved ones, it is never enough.
* That … death is an evil and despicable thing that God never intended for us to endure. We have brought it upon ourselves.
* That … Satan is so wicked that he is happy when we are filled with grief and he rejoices when men die in their sins.
* That … so much of our attention is focused on the trivial and meaningless.
* That … the needs of the dying outweigh our fear of being present as death approaches.
* That … ***“if you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small” (Proverbs 24:10).***
* … “***every man at his best state is but a vapor” (Psalm 39:5).***
* That … God promised never to leave or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5).
* That … strangers in ICU waiting rooms are compassionate because they can relate to our pain.
* That … it’s ok to cry … even for grown men.
* That … nothing – not even death – can separate us from the love of Christ (Romans 8:38-39).
* That … death renders our earthly plans for the future pointless (Ecclesiastes 2:18-23).
* That … we, especially husbands and wives, depend on each other more than we realize.
* That … we should give our loved ones “permission” to leave us, for their sense of duty and reluctance to cause grief makes them hang on to life.
* That … if Jesus could endure it, and our loved ones can endure it – and show great courage in the process – then I can endure it when it comes my time to die.
* That … death will challenge what you truly believe like nothing else in this world.
* That … the ONLY cause for hope of life beyond is the mercy and grace extended to sinners in the sacrifice of His Son.

***“even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day” (2 Corinthians 4:16).***

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**Answers from page 1**

1. The Ancient Of Days [Daniel 7:9]

2. A flaming sword [Genesis 3:24]

3. In a burning bush that was not consumed [Exodus 3:2]

4. A lake of fire and brimstone [Revelation 20]

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