

# “Where is the Promise of His Coming?”

Peter predicted that scoffers would ask this (2 Peter 3). The Lord has promised to come again. That is one thing that has not happened YET. The scoffer wants you to forget all “the prophetic word made more sure” (2 Peter 2:19f) by amazing fulfillments, but they think they have found a promise that has taken too long in their estimation to come about. They start their reasoning off with a flawed assumption that everything continues as it has always.

In the science world, it is the premise of “uniformitarianism.” All things continue as they have for millions or billions of years, they assert. However, this premise is not factual. There have been catastrophes that have interrupted and changed things in drastic ways. Already mentioned in chapter 2 is “the ancient world” in the days of Noah (2:5). The flood event was still so obvious, etched in the legends of every culture, and marked out in land formations and fossil remains everywhere.

Also mentioned in chapter 2 was the “ashes” that remained of Sodom and Gomorrah. The evidence of the

by Terry W. Benton remains was still testifying and helping people to remember the wrath of

God. Yet, the scoffer will downplay all of that and try to explain it all away with naturalistic explanations, and will exploit the subject of Jesus’ coming again. But, why would God build toward the first coming of Jesus with 4,000 plus years of preparatory history, and then cut off the redemptive program in less than 100 years?

2,000 years since Jesus came the first time is not much time for such a redemptive plan. Why would we doubt the second coming when only half the time has passed when compared to the time before His first coming? The Lord has never failed in one promise He has made, and you can be more certain that the world will pass away before God would fail to keep the promise of His coming again. You can either scoff as they did in the days prior to the flood, or you can entrust your soul to the God who cannot lie or fail in any promise. As for me and my house.....



<b>Rachel Bobo</b> <b>Julie Britnell</b> <b>Ethan Chandler</b>	<b>Graduates</b> <b>Logan Chappell</b> <b>Katie Gentry</b> <b>CConnell Hodges</b>	<b>Adam Holliday</b> <b>Erin Fields</b> <b>Jessica Yates</b>
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Lisa Carter (Daniel's mother)	Jesse and Martha Godwin (Troy's parents)	Nell Holcomb (Ben's grandmother, Joannetta's aunt)	Louise Pack (Anna and Christopher's grandmother)
Emery Anne Vest (Patsy's grandniece)	Mary Edwards (Sandra Chason's mom)	Kimzey Simpson	Ruth Addison (gmom of April and Julie)
Tory Colvin (sister of Case O'Dell)	Maria Williams	Barbara Chandler	Robert Collins (child of Walker's co-worker)
Betty Bradford	Amy Call (Seth Humphrey's cousin's wife)	Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother)	Abbie Harrison
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Arabelle Rich (Joanetta's aunt)	Matt Bishop (friend of Long's)	Doug Bailey (Keith's brother)
Landon Grace (Seth Humphrey's nephew)	William and Toni Herd	Taina Acuff (Anna's aunt)	Jesse Russell (Ron's brother)

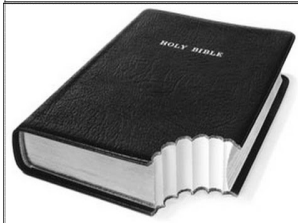
**December Birthdays**

2-Katelyn Sullivanne  
 3-Christopher Willingham  
 4-Hector Chavez  
 4- Austin Hutto  
 4-Alex Hutto  
 5-Rusty Weldon  
 5-Charlie Johnson  
 5-Allie Hosey  
 8-Macy Johnson  
 9-Anna Acuff  
 9-Kayla Reid  
 9-Anna Cagle  
 11-Lily Rogers  
 13-Dave Hosey  
 13-Will Bruce Harris  
 17-Joseph Miller  
 19-Chase Sanders  
 20-Meredith Reid  
 21-Holly Johnson  
 21-Manna Jones  
 22-William Herd  
 24-Jessica Yates  
 25-Jake Hagewood  
 27-Stan Tolliver  
 28-Turner Stephens  
 28-Gabby Borden  
 28-Jesse Gibson  
 30-Douglas Bethea  
 31-Justin Hinson

**News and Notes**

☒ - Tonight is singing night!  
 ☒ - Laura Humphrey's dad, Frank Hand, continues in ICU in Bham, but has made improvement.  
 ☒ - Please pray for friends of Scott Perkins who recently lost their daughter, Addison Auza, in AZ.  
 ☒ - A friend of the Roberts, Stacia Godbolt, had successful surgery to remove a benign cyst.  
 ☒ - Abbie Harrison will have an MRI on Wed to help diagnose her back issues.  
 ☒ - Sarah Chandler's sister, Barbara, will go home from rehab on Monday!  
 ☒ - There will be a funeral service for Nathan Diehl's father, Denny, on Tuesday in San Diego  
 ☒ - Ron Russell's brother, Jesse, remains in hospice care in Montgomery.  
 ☒ - Pray for our expectant mothers: Cheryl Carthel, Kristen Diehl, Megan Hester and Rachel Simpson.  
 ☒ - Keith Bailey's brother, Doug, is awaiting a future surgery.  
 ☒ - All audio is immediately posted to www.auchurch.com

# The Auburn Beacon



**Thoughts to Ponder**  
 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' "  
**(Matthew 4:4)**

**Elders**  
**Walker Davis**  
**(334) 703-0050**  
**Larry Rouse**  
**(334) 734-2133**

**SCHEDULE OF SERVICES**  
**Sunday**  
 Bible Class .....9:30 AM  
 Worship .....10:20 AM  
 Evening Worship ..... 6:00 PM  
**Wednesday**  
 Bible Classes.....7:00 PM  
**E-Mail:**  
[larryrouse@aubeacon.com](mailto:larryrouse@aubeacon.com)  
**Larry Rouse**  
**Evangelist and Editor**

## “It is Written”: Reflections on Authority, CENI, and Grace

By Doy Moyer

Those claiming to be Christians will make the claim on the basis of what they believe the Scriptures teach. This is so, regardless of how far right or left on the spectrum of thought they find themselves. This is not to say that all interpretations are correct or that as long as they make the claim, they are fine. It's just a starting point.

Today, we might say, "the Scriptures teach" or something similar. This is essentially on par with the idiom, "It is written," recognized as the way Jesus answered His temptations (Matt 4; Luke 4). The "writings" (i.e., Scriptures) were considered authoritative by Jesus and the Jews of His time. To appeal to what was written was to appeal to authority. Scriptures were considered God's word to man, and "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Matt 4:4; Deut 8:3). Though the word of God was more than only what was written down (e.g., Jesus is the Word, the prophets, etc.), what was written down was nevertheless seen as God's word, and if God's word, then it carries the authority of God.

To say, then, that the Scriptures teach something implies that there is something authoritative about them and we should listen. We aren't Christians because we think some self-help book or blog said something important. Christians recognize that there is authority in the Scriptures because of that deeper-

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held belief that God is behind what is revealed (1 Cor 2; 2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:20-21). All of this seems simple enough, but clearly there is more to the issue because we all know it is not good enough just to point to a passage and say, "See, this is what the Bible says." Anyone can do that, but if the passage is being taken out of context or misapplied, then we know there is a problem. Even the devil quoted Scripture to Jesus (Matt 4:6).

Regardless of who it is interpreting Scripture, there is a basic process, often unspoken, employed by anyone who thinks Scripture is authoritative that cannot be denied without denying fundamental logic or sounding outright silly. This process involves looking directly at

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what is said, considering examples given, and then inferring from what is said and shown how important and applicable these matters are. Even those who fuss and pejoratively poke at CENI (Command, Example, Necessary Inference) do the same. At the end of the day, if they are going to say, "this is what Christians ought to believe or do," they will only get there through the same means. They will appeal to what Scripture says, to the examples provided, and through a reasoning process (inferring) come to conclusions that they think are important. So it is with everyone. Everyone! People will differ on outcomes, but there is no denying the process of how communication works. It astounds me when some try to deny it.

I've been told that when I speak of all of this in terms of "telling, showing, and implying," that I'm just repackaging the old CENI in new terms. First, I don't deny that this is basically true, though I do deny some of the baggage they attach to it (e.g., that it is a "Church of Christ hermeneutic"). I have long said that "Command, example, necessary inference" is a more formal way of saying that God tells us, shows us, and implies what He expects us to get — something every interpreter will necessarily have to agree with (try denying it). I prefer the latter terminology because I think the former was a little too narrow ("command" is narrower than "tell," and not everything told is a command). I have argued that, perhaps, had these matters been explained more in terms of basic logic and communication, maybe there wouldn't have been such a kickback against it all later. Now we find ourselves having to defend the simple and undeniable. Second, saying it is just repackaging doesn't deal with the issue. If that bothers someone, maybe that person can suggest a better way to communicate than through telling, showing, and implying. Maybe that one thinks that God has communicated in ways other than this. I don't know. When it's all over, though, I guarantee that the person disagreeing with all of this will go to the Bible and point to something that is said, or to some example, or infer something from what is said and shown that he thinks makes his point. Fussing about CENI is a red herring. It isn't the real problem.

Now none of that is to say that all the particulars are worked out. What I'm defending is a process, not all of the conclusions that have been reached through the process by various interpreters. What people are really fussing about is not the process so much as whether or not some conclusions really are necessary, or whether or not some commands are still binding. If some think they can take the Lord's Sup-

per on a day other than the first day of the week, they will argue that those who teach the latter are binding where God has not and have inferred what is not necessary. But they will still argue their position on what they think is to be inferred from the revealed information because they cannot bypass the process without just making things up out of thin air.

Let's take this issue into the area of grace and law. Some speak against those whom they think put too much stress on God's commands, saying that they don't say enough about grace. They think we put too much on authority and need to allow for more freedom based on grace. But here is the kicker: those who teach their view of grace do so by going to the text and arguing that it's what the authoritative text either states or implies. That is, they go right back to the "Tell-Show-Imply" process to prove their point about grace. To make their case, they must rely every bit as much on the authority of the text as those with whom they disagree. Authority is still at the foundation of any of these discussions. The only other option is to make things up out of the blue.

Further, grace is only possible when one is authoritative enough to grant that grace. Mark 2 shows that Jesus had authority to forgive sins. Not just anyone can forgive the sins of others. This can only come from God's power. Therefore, to pit grace against authority is fallacious because to talk grace, we must necessarily confess God's authority to grant the grace on His own terms.

We know what we know about grace because of what the authoritative text tells us. We know what we know about God's commands because of what the text tells us. No one knows anything authoritatively apart from what is revealed in the authoritative text. It is certainly possible that we put more stress on one matter over another, and we may indeed fail in our teaching because we ignore what the text teaches. But the standard for judging any of this still needs to be the text, and not our personal preferences.

Regardless of which position we take, the authority of the text must be key. Why? Because it is the revelation of God's mind. The only other option is to invent our own doctrines, and then where are we? We may disagree with each other on exactly what the text teaches, but there is absolutely no basis for unity when we give up the authority of the text. "It is written" needs to be the appeal. Without it, we will wallow in self-willed authority with no foundation for anything other than our own desires serving as the standard. I would hope that all of us would emphatically deny that alterna-



## Does Man Have to Sin

By Johnie Edwards

It is often wondered if man has to sin. The discussion comes about when one looks at the temptation of Jesus. It is reasoned that Jesus was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (**Heb. 4:15**). A reading of the temptation of Jesus in **Matthew 4:1-11** will show that he was tempted through the same three

avenues as we are today: "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (**1 Jn. 2:16**). Jesus did not give in to the temptations of the devil. He called Scripture to mind as he said, "It is written." He resisted the devil and the devil fled from him (**Jas. 4:7-8**). There was nothing miraculous about Jesus not sinning on this occasion; he just did not give into the devil's temptations.

What about us? Do we have to sin? The answer is no. We don't have to sin. We can resist the devil (**Jas. 4:7-8**), just as Jesus did. There is a way of escape. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (**1 Cor. 10:13**). Often we are not willing to take the way of escape!

It is not a question of "Do we have to sin?" but "Do we sin?" How do we answer this question?

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**1. All have sinned.** Every person who reaches the age of accountability before God is said to be a sinner. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (**Rom. 3:23**). Sin comes about when one commits sin and transgresses the law of God (**1 Jn. 3:4**).

**2. Sin has pleasure.** Moses chose rather "to suffer

affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (**Heb. 11:25**). Man likes sins and the evil things a person wants becomes the problem. James said, "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away from his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (**Jas. 1:14-15**).

**3. Sinners by choice.** We are free moral agents and can obey God or disobey. We are not born a sinner but become sinners by omitting doing what God says or committing acts of unrighteousness (**1 Jn. 3:4; 5:17**). We make the choice. Who is there among us that would say, "I have never sinned" or "I cannot sin"? John said, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us . . . If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (**1 Jn. 1:8-10**).

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