

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—26  
Wednesday—12  
Contribution—\$

**For meditation:**  
**Ecclesiastes 1.1-2**  
Solomon begins  
Ecclesiastes the  
way honest athe-  
ists, like Sartre,  
begin their books,  
by talking about  
the meaningless of  
life without God.  
If there is no God,  
if all that exists is  
that which is  
“under the sun,”  
what does that  
mean for your  
life?

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

## Assyria's judgment

There are two ways to view the fall of Assyria.

**Historically**, “The disaster in which the Assyrian military power met its end in 614–610 BC was one of the completest known to history. It involved not only the destruction of the Assyrian war-machine but also the extinction of the Assyrian state and the Assyrian people” (Toynbee). This fate wasn’t because Assyria had grown fat and lazy, which usually explains a nation’s demise; the Assyrian military-industrial complex was cutting edge to the very end. Assyria’s collapse was primarily due to the fact that in its bloodlust it stretched itself too thin. As if its resources weren’t burdened enough maintaining the territory it had already conquered, Assyria continued to push, even involving itself in a two-front war, until it came to a catastrophic collapse in the battle of Nineveh in 612 BC.

**Biblically**, Assyria’s fall was the result of God’s judgment against a cruel and wicked nation. He had warned them by sending Jonah to preach repentance. They did better for a while, but like Israel, Assyria’s repentance was like the dew that goes away (Hos. 6.4). They forced God’s justice, and He acted.

“Destroy Assyria, and make Nineveh a desolation, as dry as the wilderness. The herds shall lie down in her midst . . . a place for beasts to lie down! Everyone who passes by her shall hiss and shake his fist” (Zeph. 2.13ff).

“But with an overflowing flood He will make an utter end of its place” (Nah. 1.8).

God’s inevitable judgment against the self-absorbed is guaranteed.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,  
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;  
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,  
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

Lord Byron  
kenny

# Gibson City church of Christ

Highway 47 South, Gibson City, IL

## ***“I walked to the gallows with the Nazi chiefs”***

In the September 1, 1951, *Saturday Evening Post*, Henry F. Gerecke, the Army chaplain assigned to Nuremberg Prison during the Nuremberg trials, wrote of his experiences counseling the twenty-one men of Hitler’s inner circle. Whereas Simon Wiesenthal’s book, *The Sunflower*, recorded how victims of the Nazis thought about their tormenters, Gerecke revealed how the tormentors thought about themselves. They had no illusions about what they had done or what the verdict would be. Reading it left me with tears.

There are numerous anecdotes in the article that touch on the gospel story, but the one I’ll mention involved Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, Hitler’s favorite general.

When Gerecke first met him, Keitel was reading a book that turned out to be the little Bible he had carried with him through both world wars. He told Gerecke, “I know from reading this book that God can love a sinner like me.” The At the first communion the prisoners were allowed to take, Keitel said, “May Christ stand by me all the way. I shall need Him so much.” After receiving his death sentence, he spent his remaining time concentrating on the scriptures that spoke of redemption through Christ. His last words to Gerecke as he stood on the gallows were, “I thank you, and those who sent you, with all my heart.”

I don’t know how God judged these men, but if the chief of sinners can be saved, so can a Nazi. Even more, so can I. God be merciful to a sinner like me.

kenny

Sermon: James 1.1–5

## Laws of the Christian life

17 November 2024

## *The Gospel and sin*

In Edith Hamilton's book, *The Way of Rome*, she devotes a chapter to each of two Roman poets who illustrate two attitudes society has about society.

Catullus, a century before Christ, wrote glowingly of Rome's excesses, flinging "a wreath of roses" (Maclaren) over Roman debauchery. Humanity may not be properly developed, but it isn't diseased. Juvenal, though, in his *Satires*, a century after Christ, saw Rome as having a terminal illness in its mania for vice and evil. (These polar perspectives were evident in our recent election.) Although Christ was closer to Juvenal—"the whole world lieth in wickedness" (1 Jn. 5.19, KJV)—He didn't share Juvenal's pessimism about the situation. He, and He alone of all religious founders, proposed to **save people from their sins**.

- Christ never discussed the origin of sin—He doesn't tell us how or why the devil became the devil.
- Instead, He offers an analysis of sin: it is selfishness; it is the preference of self to God (the violation of the first commandment), the assertion of the human will against the will of God. It doesn't matter what the sin is, it touches and wounds the heart of God, it is a personal offence against Divine love; "Against You, You only, have I sinned" (Ps. 51.4).
- Christ utterly rejected the atheism that reduces all human behavior to random, chance, natural processes. Man is not a puppet who is "little more than the resultant of certain forces, a projectile shot forth from the past." No, Jesus held men accountable and responsible for their decisions.
- Jesus distinguished between two types of sinners: the self-righteous and the unrighteous. Each type comes with its own punishment, but Christ held out more hope for the unrighteous than the self-righteous. "Assuredly, I say to you [Pharisees] that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you" (Matt. 21.31).

To study Christ's doctrine of sin in depth, get into the parable of the prodigal son. Jesus there depicts sin as the willful abandonment of a father's home, a life wasted in recklessness, the terrible consequences of such a life, but the possibility of a return and a joyful reunion. So counterintuitive is this possibility, that it's barely mentioned in any other religion.

But it's this possibility that makes the gospel the "good news" that it is.

kenny

## *The greatest revelation in the Gospel of John*

**"He who has seen Me has seen the Father" John 14.9**

In Exodus 33.18, Moses asked God, "Please, show me your glory." He was wanting to see God as God; to see what a divine being looked like. But God's answer was "You cannot see My face, for no man shall see Me and live" (33.20). Just as our retinas can't survive unfiltered staring at the sun, or our physical frame survive the energy released by an atomic bomb explosion next to us, so the finite cannot survive direct exposure to the infinite.

Rather than let Moses see what he could not handle, God called his attention to what he needed most: an understanding of the divine character, not a glimpse of God's face. "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion" (33.19, NIV). Lest Moses miss the import of it all, God followed up by saying, "The Lord God merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin" (Ex. 34.6–7). Moses wanted to see God's glory, and God showed him His character—which is what matters to sinners.

The connection of this episode to the Gospel of John is obvious. In the incarnation, God appeared in a way that wouldn't blow the fuse of those who saw Him. He appeared as a man *who was full of grace and truth*. Not the color of Christ's skin or eyes or His height was of any help to us in our need. It was His grace and mercy, long-suffering and goodness and truth that saves.

That's gospel. And the only revelation that matches it is when Jesus told Philip there is nothing in God except what we see in Him (Jn. 14.9). If we've seen and heard Him, we've been in the presence of ultimate reality and life.

Like Son, like Father. To see Christ is to see God.

### *News about us*

- Jerry is at home. He and Carolyn and the family very much need our prayers.
- As do Kellee, and Bev, and Nancy and the rest of us walking wounded.