

**Today's Order of Worship**

Announcements: Greg Lowery

Song Leader: Billy Box

Opening Prayer: Eddie Dickinson

On the Table: Head - Greg Lowery  
Servers - Josh Berryhill  
Bradley Box  
Ralph Burleson

Closing Prayer: David Key

Preparing the Lord's Supper Linda Lawrence

**Weekly Service Times**

Sunday

Bible Study	10:00 am
Morning Worship	10:45 am
Evening Worship	5:00 pm

Wednesday

Bible Study	7:00 pm
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**Visit Our Website**

[www.brilliantchurchofchrist.org](http://www.brilliantchurchofchrist.org)

Elders: Leonard Key / David Key  
Billy Box / Eddie Dickinson

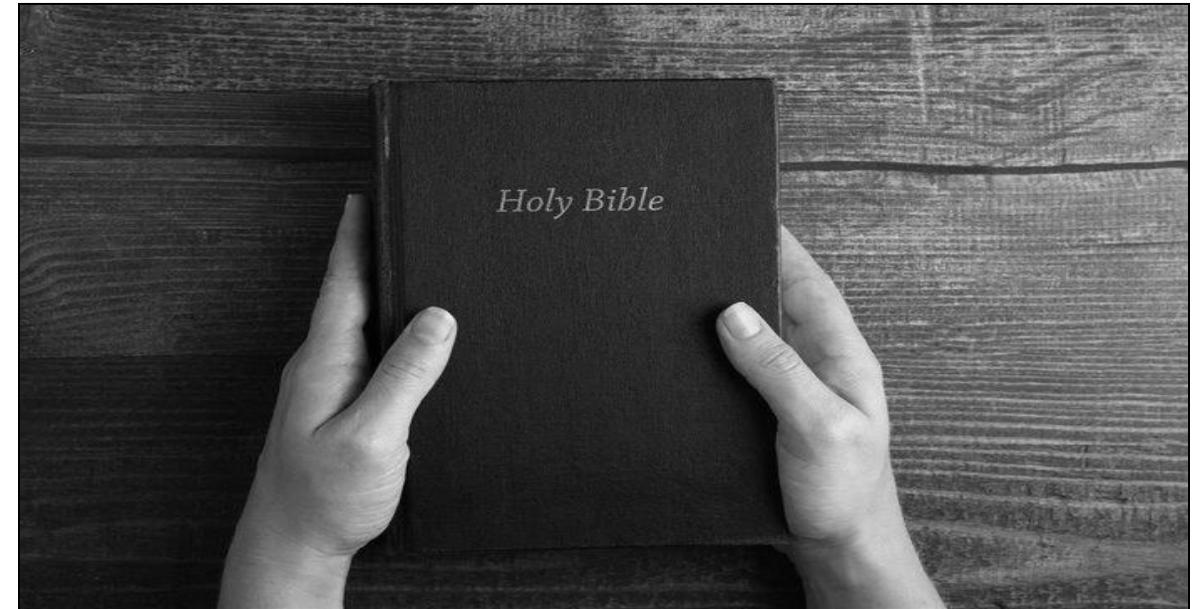
Deacons: Al Corkren / Josh Berryhill

Minister: Greg Lowery

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Brilliant, AL 35548

# Focus On The Family of God



*The  
Brilliant  
Beacon*



**Stranger? Or Family and Friend?**

By Wayne Jackson

“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God” (Ephesians 2:19).

The foregoing are words that Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus, a congregation with which he worked for three years (Acts 20:31).

Some nineteen centuries before the birth of Jesus, Jehovah selected Abraham to be the founder of a new nation, the nation of Israel. The relationship was formalized even more with the giving of the law of Moses, which stood as a middle wall of partition, separating the Jews from other nations (Ephesians 2:14).

The purpose of this special relationship between God and Israel was redemptive, i.e., through these people the Messiah would come, and the Jews would play a role in preparing the world for this wonderful event. Jesus emphasized this truth to the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well near Sychar when he declared: “[F]or salvation is from the Jews” (John 4:22).

In view of this unfolding plan, there are many Old Testament references to, and provisions for, “strangers” (Exodus 22:21-24; Deuteronomy 16:11ff). While it is clear that the Lord cared for these “strangers,” they were alien to a formal relationship with God.

That day changed, however, as a result of the mission of Christ and the provisions of his new covenant for “all nations” (Matthew 28:19), a reality that had been foretold by the prophets of Israel (cf. Isaiah 2:2-4).

Hence, Paul could declare to the saints in Ephesus (mostly Gentiles by background; cf. Acts 19:8-10) that as a result of the conciliatory work of Christ (Ephesians 2:11ff), they were no more strangers and aliens, but “fellow-citizens” in the “household of God.” Note the phrase that depicts family!

What a thrilling concept it is to transition from being a stranger to becoming a citizen, indeed, a family member and a “friend.” Our Lord once said: “You are my friends if you do the things which I command you” (John 15:14).

**THOSE WHO NEED OUR PRAYERS**

Mary Rainey: has bone cancer throughout her body, please be praying for her and her family

Jimmie Ann Hardy {Carolyn’s Sister} is in the nursing home in Guin, pray for her she has some ongoing health issues

Joey Colburn: is taking treatments for cancer, please pray that the treatments will be successful in defeating his cancer

April Tidwell Dawson: she has recently been diagnosed with stomach cancer; please be praying that this cancer will be defeated with successful treatments

Angie Ganey Gardner: fighting against breast cancer, please pray that this cancer will be defeated

Shauna Silas: diagnosed with thyroid cancer, please be praying that with treatments this cancer will be defeated

Mary Box: some ongoing other health problems, please keep her in your prayers

Glynda Long: she is fighting stage 4 colon cancer, please pray that this cancer will be defeated

Don Lawrence: is still recovering from a stroke, please continue to keep him in your prayers

Celia Grace Hamlett, daughter of Gary and Kassie Hamlett, was diagnosed with MLD(Metachromatic Leukodystrophy); planning on gene replacement treatment; please pray that these treatments will be successful.

Pam Braden: she is dealing with some ongoing health problems, please pray that those working with her can help her

**THOSE WHO NEED OUR PRAYERS**

Guy Weeks: is undergoing cancer treatments, please pray that this cancer will be defeated

Sandy Markham: is recovering from knee surgery, please pray that she makes a complete recovery

Maddie Bishop (young girl South Haleyville) diagnosed with stage 4 Ewing sarcoma, please pray for her and her family and that treatments can defeat this cancer

Billy Lee {Carolyn’s Brother} he is in renal failure, is back at the nursing home in Guin, please be praying for him and the staff caring for him

Timmy Weeks: he is having some ongoing health problems, please pray that he will receive treatments that can restore his health

Kristen Eddy: she is recovering from knee surgery, please pray that she will have a successful recovery

Hagen Dickinson: he is recovering from jaw surgery, please pray that it heals properly and that he has no complications

Danny Berryhill: diagnosed with thickness of the heart, please be praying that doctors can successfully help him with this problem

Bill Berryhill: recently underwent surgery to remove cancer from his jaw, please be praying that his battle with cancer can be controlled and won

Mason Estes: he is need of a liver transplant; please be keeping him and his family in your prayers

It is a most unfortunate thing that many, who have the impression that they are friends of Christ, within his family even, actually are not. This is not because the Lord does not want them as such, but due to the fact that they either do not know, or ignore, the conditions for this relationship.

Some, such as the Universalists, contend there are no conditions. Others, like hardcore Calvinists, believe God chose them unconditionally before the foundation of the world, in conflict with Hebrews 5:8-9, which affirms that Christ is the Author of salvation to those who obey him. Not a few entertain the unfounded notion that their “morality” (and that is what they judge such to be) will get them by. Others allege that just because they “got converted” their level of dedication is irrelevant.

Happily, within this very book, the method of access into the family relationship is set forth plainly. “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word” (Ephesians 5:25-26). The term “word” is a reference to the teaching of Christ, which constitutes the only source of instruction that can guide people from earth to heaven.

The expression “washing of water” is a clear allusion to the obedience of immersion in water, which culminates the “new-birth” process (John 3:3-5). Scholars virtually are of one voice in acknowledging that the “water” of this text refers to baptism (see the Greek lexicons of Thayer 1958, 634; Danker et al. 2000, 1024). No one prior to the time of Calvin even questioned that the water of the new birth was baptism (Wall n.d., 95-96).

It is very difficult to see why the denominational world so militantly opposes this conclusion, but it has a long history of stubbornness in this matter.

If you are a Christian, rejoice in your sweet relationship with Christ. You are not a stranger, but a family member and a friend.

If such is not your status, why not become a child of God and refresh your soul as a true kinsman and friend of the Savior? (Galatians 3:26-27).

Obtained at: [www.christiancourier.com](http://www.christiancourier.com)

**A Stranger Among Us**

By Patrick Morrison

The Almighty created everything around us, from the world in which we live to the air we breathe (Gen.1:1). He is our Creator, though many in the world refuse to acknowledge Him as such. God has given to all life and breath, even our very being (Acts 17:25). Not only has He created us, but He also sustains our very existence. He upholds all things by the word of His power (Heb.1:2). Jehovah gives to us our daily needs (Matt.6:11), and daily loads us with benefits (Psa.68:19). While there are those who may deny His existence or who refuse to acknowledge Him, the evidences for His eternal power and Godhead are so obvious that man is without excuse for denying such (Rom.1:20)! It is sad that so many who owe their being to God will not even allow Him into their lives or even their thoughts!

It is sadder, still, when those who claim to love and honor God forget Him. Jeremiah lamented, "O the hope of Israel, the saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night (Jer.14:8)? God's own people were treating Him like a poor, wayfaring stranger! They had invited Jehovah in for the night, only to send Him on His way the next day. God had become a stranger to His own people! This seems to be a recurring theme of the weeping prophet. Israel and Judah had forgotten God, and for that reason they were suffering the repercussions. "Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me days without number" (Jer.2:32). With great mercy and compassion, God reached out to His people, pleading with them to return to Him, but they refused: "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein" (Jer.6:16). Oh, how God's heart was breaking because His own children wouldn't even acknowledge Him! In so doing, they had invited misery and trouble upon themselves, having exhausted the longsuffering of Jehovah. "This is your lot, the portion I have measured out to you, declares the Lord, because you have forgotten me and trusted in lies" (Jer.13:25).

Has God become a stranger to His own people today? Have we forgotten Him days without number? It seems in some ways we have done that. When we come together to worship Him, many of His own children will have to reintroduce themselves. They have lived with and like the world to the point that they don't know who God really is! The more time we spend with the Father, the less likely we are to forget Him. Don't allow God to be a stranger in your life. Invite Him in to dwell with you permanently!

*And it shall come to pass, when ye shall say, Wherefore doeth the LORD our God all these things unto us? then shalt thou answer them, Like as ye have forsaken me, and served strange gods in your land, so shall ye serve strangers in a land that is not yours.*

*Jeremiah 5:19*

