

Galatians 6:10 *“Therefore as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those of the household of faith.”*

**June 18, 2011**

**Remember in your prayers:**

- **Marguerite Thompson** is recovering at home. **Billy Norris'** (Bunny Richardson's father) condition is the same. **Rhonda Knowles** continues to need our prayers. **Laura Andrews** will have surgery on her hip in July. She will be in a body casts for several weeks.
- **Tacoda Goshee, Bessie Sides, Xabien Hall, Paul Odom, Conard Rice, Barbara Addington** (is not doing well), **Lea Cooper**, and **Marvin Dryer's mother**, as they battle cancer.
- **Heather Flowers**, and **Laura Russo** who are away at college. **Robert Langley, Jeremiah Hughes** & all of **our servicemen** who are defending freedom. **Our nation** and its leaders. **Those that preach and teach the gospel**; especially those who labor under hardships. Those who have **lost loved ones and belongings** due to the tornado in our area.

**BLACK CREEK UPCOMING EVENTS:**

- **Planning Meeting** today @ 4:15 for Summer Bible School
- **Summer Bible School** Monday- Friday 9:30-11:00 AM; July 18-22, 2011

**Area Gospel Meetings:**

Elliotsville church of Christ.....Wes Brown.....June 20-22.....M-W @ 7:00 P.M.  
Pea Ridge church of Christ.....Roger Lindsey.....June 20-24.....M-F @ 7:00 P.M.  
Edward's Lake Rd. church of Christ.....VBS.....June 20-24.....M-F @ 10:00 A.M.



**A GODLY MAN IN WICKED SURROUNDINGS**

Elijah was a man who reached true greatness in the Lord's service. He was always ready to go where God would send him (I Kings 18:1; 19:15); to pray whenever prayer was needed (I Kings 17:20, 21; 18:36, 37), and to confront evil whenever confrontation was necessary (I Kings 18:17-24; 21:17-19). He was translated without seeing death, and he, along with Moses, was chosen to appear with the Lord on the mount of transfiguration.

The remarkable thing about Elijah is that he attained this greatness while living in a wicked and hostile environment. Had he lived in Judah during the righteous reign of Hezekiah or Josiah, we might not be surprised at Elijah's attainments. But he lived instead in Israel during the wicked reign of Ahab. He was subjected to the cruel intents of Jezebel. He was under constant harassment and threat of death. He became so discouraged at one point that he asked to die, but he never denied his God.

In this wicked environment Elijah was able to influence others. The widow of Zarephath was blessed through Elijah (I Kings 17:8-24). The multitudes on Mount Carmel were led to cry, "The Lord, He is God!" through his courageous efforts (I Kings 18:39). Elisha, his successor, must have been greatly influenced by him. And even Ahab was brought to humility on one occasion, clothing himself in sackcloth as a result of Elijah's rebuke (I Kings 21:27-29). The message of Elijah is clear. You can live a godly life and influence others for good in a wicked and hostile environment.

When one hears the excuses people make today, it is obvious that Elijah's message is badly needed in this generation. People excuse their failure to teach others the gospel with, "People are so prejudiced around here they just won't listen"; when the truth is, little effort has been made. If they are approached about their ungodly conduct, they explain that "You just don't know how terrible the people are that I have to work around every day". If their children go astray their explanation is, "Our children are faced with pressures that we didn't have growing up". Such statements, repeated often enough, become to many a "license" to do wrong and a salve to soothe their troubled consciences.

We must throw aside our excuses and make up our minds to do right. Elijah could serve God in wicked surroundings. And so can we. - **by Bill Hall**

# The Banner of Truth

Black Creek church of Christ  
1235 Alliance Rd; Alliance, Alabama  
436-4477

*“You have given a BANNER to those who fear you, that it may be displayed because of the TRUTH. “ Psalms 60:4*

Editor:

Van Cooper

**Schedule of Services**

**Lord's Day**

**10:25 A.M. Worship**

**5:00 P.M. Worship**

**Elders**

436-3055 Philip Jacks  
483-7016 Truman Wallace  
491-9695 Van Cooper

**Evangelist**

497-9800 Sammy Bynum

**Wednesday**

**7:00 P.M.**

**Deacons**

491-1596 Keith Chaney  
491-3723 Roger Key

**Who We Are:** The Black Creek Church of Christ is simply a group of Christians dedicated to serving God. We believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God and it is to be our sole guide. We are committed to preaching the gospel of Christ, which is man's only hope for eternal life.

We are interested in helping anyone who is searching for the way to God. We welcome the opportunity to privately study the Bible with you. If you would contact us, we would be happy to meet with you. In addition, you are invited to visit one of our public assemblies (information is above). At our public Bible studies, we have classes for adults and children of all ages. If we can help you in knowing more about God and His Word, then please visit, call, or write us.

(Visit us on-line at ( [WWW.blackcreekchurch.com](http://WWW.blackcreekchurch.com) )

## WHEN THE KINGDOM OF GOD APPEARS TO FAIL

How often has a child of God despaired thinking that the kingdom of God was going to end with his generation? Elijah had concluded that he “alone was left” of the people of God and because of that God should take his life and end this lost cause **(1 Kings 19:4, 10)**. God quickly reminded him that he had 7,000 who were faithful to him and then put Elijah back to work. **(1 Kings 19:18)**.

Asaph, after looking at the prosperity of the wicked and the hard plight of the few that were righteous, was ready to conclude that serving God was not worth it. He said, “Surely I have cleansed my heart *in vain*, and washed my hands in innocence” **(Psalm 73:13)**. Fortunately, when he entered the sanctuary of God to worship, he saw the world as God did. Because of this eternal view he was now very thankful to be part of the faithful few. He writes, “When I thought *how* to understand this, It was too painful for me—Until I went into the sanctuary of God; *Then* I understood their end” **(Psalm 73:16-17)**.

### God’s Promises an Eternal Kingdom

When we look to the scriptures, we find strong promises concerning God’s kingdom. Concerning the church Jesus would build, He plainly stated that “the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” **(Matt 16:18)**. When Isaiah prophesied of the coming Messiah and His reign, he plainly stated that this kingdom would never end. He writes, “And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty

God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end” **(Isa 9:6-7)**.

### Gloom and Doom—Cases in Point

Over the years I have heard brethren lament the dwindling of a local church, or the departure of a new generation into apostasy, or even the general worldliness of the professed Christians they have observed. I have heard some say that “churches of Christ are going to become extinct!” In another case I heard a man who had left the Lord’s church quoting growth statistics to convince others that a return to the Bible alone would not work. He boldly proclaimed that “these churches are dying on the vine because of their legalism.” Should we become discouraged by our own impressions of the church around us? Should we surrender to the spin of men with self-serving agendas?

### “Whittling” on God’s End of the Stick

We need to remember what burden God has placed upon us and what burden He has not. The Lord wants me to walk by faith and to spread God’s word to all who will hear **(1 Cor 3:5-7)**. It is not my job to determine the numbers who are faithful or to be responsible for the welfare of God’s people everywhere. God is the one who knows who are His, and He can well take care of them! Is it not written, “Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: ‘The Lord knows those who are His’” **(2 Tim 2:19)?**

The Lord has given us His word and through it we can determine those who have “the spirit of truth and the spirit of error” **(1 John 4:1, 6)**. It is with these people we should stand and it with these

people that we should build. Do we really understand what it means to be a child of God?

### Our Confusion Over Names

We tend to take shortcuts in determining who men really are and where they actually stand. Rather than interact, discuss and apply the scriptures, men would rather place labels on people and churches and end further struggle. While I believe that “churches of Christ” **(Romans 16:16)** are a Biblical designation for local assemblies of God’s people, I must never assume that wearing the right name makes one a child of God.

A true stand for the Lord is something that each individual must do themselves. No one can do it for them, including their parents. As you look at God’s people in the Bible or in church history, you will find that departure comes when a new generation arises that “did not know the Lord” **(Judges 1:10)**. What happened in the time of the Judges has repeated itself in various times in history and will also be found in our times.

What should I do when “churches of Christ” begin to change the plan of salvation, compromise the scriptures, and bow to the denominational Baal’s of our day? What I need to do is serve God with confidence and work with others who also are walking by faith.

### Do Not Transfer the Failures of Men to God

Why should I quit serving God over the failures of men? If God has placed me in a time of apostasy and worldliness, then I can be a Daniel rather than a Demas **(2**

**Tim 4:10)**! God used Daniel to rebuild after a great apostasy where God Himself described the remaining faithful as a “remnant” **(Isa 10:22-23)**. When men fail to serve God, I need to have a faith that will stand with God. I can have a great confidence in spite of the pull and ridicule of men. The apostle Paul reminds us, “Let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written: ‘That you may be justified in your words, and may overcome when you are judged’” **(Romans 3:4)**.

### Know Your Limitations

We must constantly remind ourselves of our limited sight. My view of the world and of the church can change drastically when I depend on my own reality. Problems will inevitably arise with some that are close to me in this life. Yet, it does not necessarily follow that brethren everywhere are going bad. I need to understand that God looks at the whole world! Conditions in the United States, or in any particular part of the country, do not represent what is happening in other places.

### What Has God Given You to Do?

When we learn to trust God day by day, we will find that the “yoke” He has lays upon us bearable and doable **(Matt 11:28-30)**. There are many things out of my control that I should leave to God, trusting that He alone can handle them. Let each of us always look to our God, for He has given us His promises and they will never fail. By **Larry Rouse**