

NT:OA

NUMBER 164

SEPTEMBER 2021

NT:OA. The New Testament: Only and All of it. “**Speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent**” has been a motto of Churches of Christ for a long time and is a very good statement. However, it is dated, long, and technically incorrect. Whereas the Old Testament is correct, is God’s word, and a great source of history, we no longer follow that part of the Bible (Gal. 3:24-25). The Old Testament gives us the history which brings us to Jesus, but does not give us the rules to live by today. Today, all of our religious instructions from God are in the New Testament.

The more recently used motto “**Just the Bible**” is not dated and is short, but still has the technical problem of implying we are following the instructions of the whole Bible.

Continued on page 2

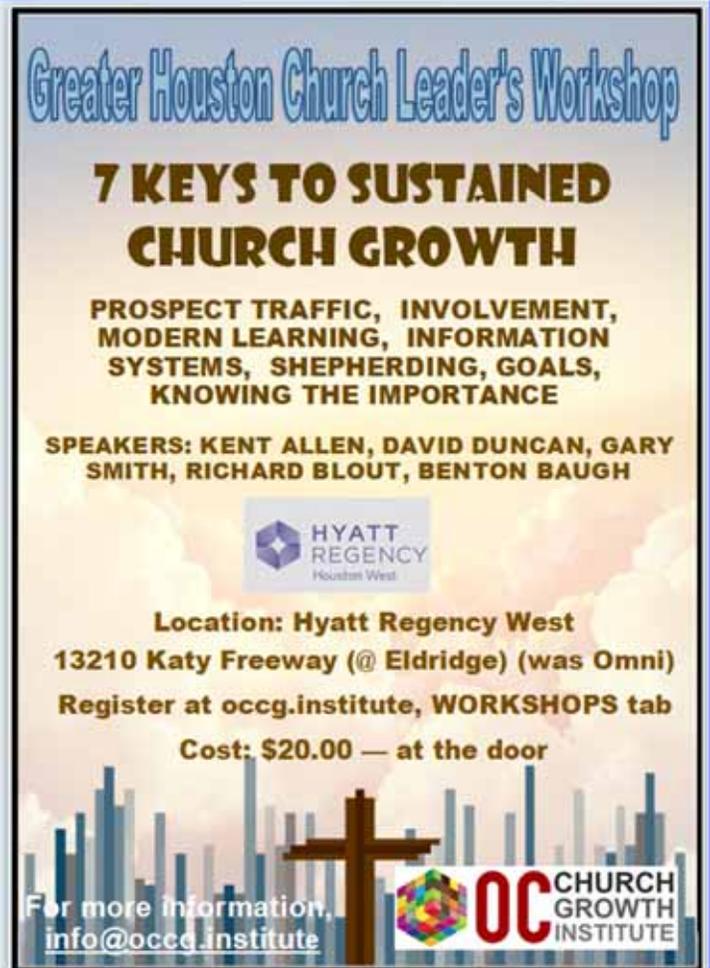
THERE IS NO SECRET WHAT GOD CAN DO

You, O Lord, keep my lamp burning;
My God turns my darkness into light.

Psalm 18:28

“No one lights a lamp and hide it in a jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, he puts it on a stand, so that those who come in can see the light.

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 **HOUSTON & SURROUNDING AREA CHURCHES OF CHRIST CAMPAIGN FOR CHRIST**
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THE OCTOBER 24 CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN DELAYED DUE TO THE CURRENT COVID FLARE-UP. WATCH HERE FOR RESCHEDULING.

NT:OA P. 2

On the front of our book THE CHRISTIAN ARRAY, we have identified the methodology as “**aggregate, contextual, strict constructionist**”. That is probably technically correct if you let Galatians 3 cancel your following the Old Testament. It certainly does not give anyone a warm fuzzy feeling.

In our lessons we have sometimes tried to say that the methodology for developing the lessons was by the “**Church of Christ**” philosophy, but it always felt awkward. Is the “Church of Christ” philosophy our creed? In the past our “Church of Christ” philosophy have led us to teaching some things not supported in the scriptures, e.g. it is a sin to drink wine. We do not strive toward a “Church of Christ” philosophy, we need to focus on the New Testament.

Judy Haley of the Houston Memorial congregation has suggested **NT:OA** as an acronym for what we should be doing. The NT part obviously signifies the New Testament, which is the source of our current religious teachings from God. It is our only source. It is not supplemented by the Old Testament, updated by our preferences, modified by church councils, conventions, papacies or compromised by the latest fad. It is what it is.

The colon is used as they are punctuation marks used to signal when what comes next is directly related to the previous. Additionally, it looks sort of neat in the middle of an acronym.

The colon defines, indicates that this is what the New Testament is: **Only** (exclusive) and **All** (comprehensive). The New Testament is the **only source** of our religious instructions for what we are to do to be pleasing to God today.

The **All** means that if you want to understand a topic such as predestination, you must consider all of what the New Testament says. It also means that the New Testament plan is complete; no latter-day “revelations” or edicts or rul-

ings can change this God-given plan.

Ephesians 2:8-9 says “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.” From this you might conclude that all God requires to be saved is belief. In fact if you Google https://www.openbible.info/topics/justification_by_faith_alone you will find about 100 verses which support this idea.

Continued on page 3



How's this for a birthday cake!

NT:OA P. 3

However, in Acts 2:38 Peter said to his listeners, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." James 2:17 says "Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself." And in John 14:15 Jesus said "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." If you take Acts 2:38 you might conclude you don't need faith, you only need obedience. If you take Ephesians 2:8-9 you might conclude you only need faith, not obedience.

This is sort of like starting a car. To start a car you must have the key, unlock the door, open the door, get in, put your foot on the brake pedal, and push the start button. If you don't do any of those steps, you cannot start the car. If someone were to say to start the car you push the start button, it would be a true statement. However, to actually start the car you must follow **all** the instructions.

That is why we would say that you don't take a particular verse you like and interpret it alone. You must consider all the New Testament teaching as a whole and your understanding needs to consider the whole. The interpretation of two verses individually may cause a conflict. Their interpretation together should be harmonious as the New Testament is harmonious.

That being said, you can expect **NT:OA** to be the Biblical interpretation principle we will follow.



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YOU INSPIRE ME!

"We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thes. 1:3)

We love to be inspired. Just that little spiritual lift makes our lives richer. Often we go to great lengths to find inspiration. We may travel miles to hear an inspiring speaker, or maybe to hear great music. From the stars above to the depths of the ocean, we are inspired by God's creative wonders. And nothing could be more awe inspiring than our Lord Jesus Christ living among men and sacrificing himself so we can live in the spirit with him.

What inspires? Inspiration is a byproduct of living for Jesus and walking in the Spirit. Listen carefully. Pay attention. What are the things that inspire you? My spirit is lifted when you are present in spirit and engaged in the lesson, thinking, asking questions and contributing to the discussion. Often it's not something we do consciously, but we can appreciate inspiration when we notice it.

Prayer connects us and inspires us. The faith of our saints from young to old gives us hope and inspiration.

Our labor in the Lord and endurance in trials is inspiring. What an inspiration that people care. Going that second mile, that little extra that says I'm doing this for Jesus.

What inspires you? We can all make a list a yard long. Try noticing every nuance of inspiration in your world this week. Show someone you notice them and thank those who truly inspire you. When we are living in the Spirit we have a profound influence on others. What will you do to live your best life this week?

Elizabeth Brown, Texarkana, TX

THERE IS NO SECRET WHAT GOD CAN DO, P. 2

For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out in the open. Therefore, consider carefully how you listen. Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken from him. Luke 8:16-18

We are the lampstands of Jesus. "Your Word is a lamp to our feet and a light for my path" Psalm 119:105. As we walk in the light we serve as a beacon for others who walk in the dark. We can also serve to be "lamplighters" when we share testimony about how we were brought into Jesus' light, who helped us, how it changed our lives, and why we now burn so brightly with gratitude and desire to help others in the Name of Jesus. Just as the written Word serves as our lamp, so also may our written testimony brighten the path to Jesus for family, friends, neighbors and even strangers whom we meet along our path.

As shepherds to our congregation, let us encourage one-another and each member to become lamplighters by rediscovering the power of our written word to bring hope, comfort and joy into the lives of everyone around us. Even though the world around us seems to be darkening, it is so only because people are choosing to turn away from the light. Let us "brighten the corner where we are" as we remind others that there are no secrets that can be hidden from God and no burden that He cannot lift. We **know** that it is no secret what God can do!

Leroy Grubbs, Harrison, Ohio



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When Grandparents Babysit

Me: How was he?

My mom: Great!

Me: No tantrums?

My mom: None.

Me: Even when you said "no?"

My mom: Well... we
never really said that.

@WittyOtter

This is a prelude to the next article.

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HEALING AMERICA

A timely new book by Richard Blount IV exploring the problems, causes, solutions, and benefits of being an American.



He provides an intentional approach for the country's healing process and aims at healthy relationships and spiritual maturity as the ultimate goal.

This book can be purchased for \$19.95 at: Amazon, Barnes & Nobles, and Westbow Publishing

- 13 - If everything seems to be going well, you have obviously overlooked something.
- 14 - Depression is merely anger without enthusiasm.
- 15 - When everything is coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.

Steven Wright

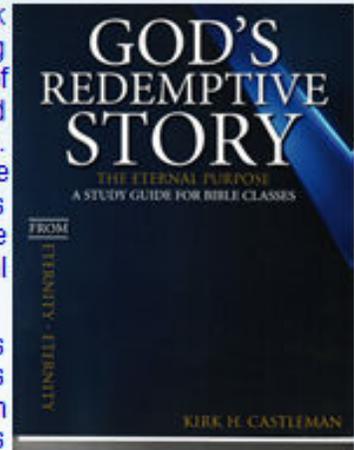
Need a hand with your student ministry? Here to help! Teaching, training, support and care for your ministers and volunteers. Twenty years in the trenches. Been there and done that. Let me know how I can serve and support your congregation.

Dave Blanchard

daveblanchard@fuller.edu

734-516-6008

A 13 lesson book written by a long time Church of Christ minister and servant of Jesus. Intended for Bible Class studies, this book can also be used for personal evangelism.



Most Bible class study books on this subject begin with Genesis 3. This study however, lays

the foundation by beginning with a basic study-outline of Biblical History, which is sorely lacking among many Christians today. Then after laying this foundation, it seeks to present a "Synthesis of Scripture" by asserting that the theme of all the Bible is Jesus, His Death, Burial, and Resurrection! The Eternal Purpose of God for Redemption is then presented with an in-depth study of Ephesians 1, and other New Testament passages which describe God's redemptive plan.

It is not until the fourth lesson that God's Eternal Purpose in Genesis 3 is presented. Then other Promises, Pictures, Prophecy, and Prep-

**"AN EXCITING STUDY OF GOD'S
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HUMAN HISTORY"**

aration, are fully described. This study includes a description of the Davidic Covenant, as well as a helpful approach to Old Testament Prophecy.

This guide is helpful for all Christians, but especially new Christians who need an understanding of God's eternal desire for all the world!

This book can be bought on Amazon for \$10.

IMPOSSIBLE FOR EVOLUTION #120 - PUFFER FISH 1

Tetraodontidae is a family of fish in the order Tetraodontiformes. The family includes many familiar species variously called pufferfish, puffers, balloonfish, blowfish, globefish, swellfish, toadfish, toadies, horney toads, sugar toads, and sea squab.

The puffer's unique and distinctive natural defenses help compensate for its slow locomotion. It moves by using pectoral, dorsal, anal, and caudal fin motions. This makes it highly maneuverable, but very slow, so a comparatively easy predation target. Its tail fin is mainly used as a rudder, but it can be used for a sudden evasive burst of speed. The puffer's excellent eyesight, combined with this speed burst, is the first and most important defense against predators.

The pufferfish's secondary defense mechanism, used if successfully pursued, is to fill its extremely elastic stomach with water (or air when outside the water) until it is much larger and almost spherical in shape. Puffer fish inflate by sucking water into their mouths and then pumping it into their stomach

Even if they are not visible when the puffer is not inflated, all puffers have pointed spines, so a hungry predator may suddenly find itself facing an unpalatable, pointy ball rather than a slow, easy meal. As many predators swallow their prey whole, those that do not heed this warning may die from choking.

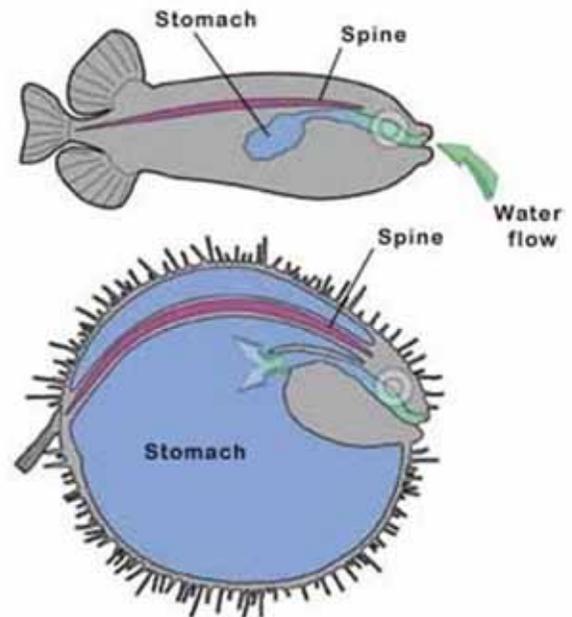
In developing the unique capabilities to inflate themselves and make itself into a pointy ball, the puffer fish did not have a million years to develop the programming necessary to do this. Shortly after a puffer fish saw the

need to have it when a larger fish was about to swallow it, it was swallowed and gone.

It took an Intelligent Designer to give this capability to the puffer fish.

Benton F. Baugh

Information collected from Wikipedia



PICTURE FROM QUORA



Guineafowl puffer – unpuffed and puffed from Wikipedia



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