

# Falls Fellowship



## How the Bible Came Together — Part 2

**A**round AD 150, Justin Martyr described worship this way:

On the day called the Day of the Sun all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then all rise together and pray.

By this early date, “the memoirs of the apostles” were considered as important to the teaching of the church as the writings of the prophets.

Marcion and Montanus. About ten years earlier, a wealthy ship owner named Marcion sailed from his home near the Black Sea to the capital city of Rome. Marcion believed the God of the Old Testament was different than the God of the New Testament. The former was distant and loved justice, while the latter was loving and emphasized grace.

Marcion rejected the Old Testament, along with any writings which might reinforce views other than his own. He developed a list of books he considered acceptable: portions of the Gospel of Luke, ten

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## The Price of Freedom

**S**ome of us remember the Berlin Wall, the ninety-six miles wall that separated East and West Germany. It became the symbol of the oppressiveness of the Soviet Union. East Germans referred to it as “the wall in the head” for it separated them from the freedom they desired. The wall came down in November 1989 and for the first time in twenty-eight years East and West Berliners could spend Christmas together.



A month after the wall came down Leonard Bernstein led a choir and orchestra in Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony at the site of the old wall. Bernstein made one artistic change in the presentation. Fredrich Schiller’s *Ode to Joy*, written in 1785, was used in the final movement of Beethoven’s Ninth Sym-

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## Freedom cont' ...

phony, composed in 1824. Bernstein substituted the word “freedom” for “joy”. Rather than “Joy, beautiful spark of Divinity” the chorus sang, “Freedom, beautiful spark of Divinity.” The youth assembled for the concert went wild. The freedom they had longed for to travel unimpeded from West to East in Berlin was finally realized. Indeed, Bernstein got it right: freedom is a spark of God.

I thought about that historical moment over the past weekend as we celebrated the Fourth of July. Hundreds of millions of Americans celebrated with picnics, family gatherings, parades, fireworks, concerts, and services of remembrance for those brave Americans who fought for our freedom. Almost 250 years ago a 39-year-old lawyer named Patrick Henry stood before a gathering in Virginia to speak about the inevitable war between the Colonies and King George of England. His words became the slogan of the revolution, “Give me liberty or give me death.” The soil of America and Omaha Beach and the Argon Forest and Mekong Delta was soaked with the blood of our soldiers who died to preserve our freedoms. Never take our freedom as a nation for granted. It came with a price: the shed blood of some of your brothers and sister.

Today we spend too much time fighting each other. Our foes today are defined by ideological and political lines: Democrats against Republicans, Liberals against Conservatives, the “Know Nothings” against the “Know Everything.” People bind together around divisive issues rather than common interests. In attempting to become friends with a man I met at City Market in Raleigh one Friday night the first question he asked me was, “Who did you vote for in the last election?” I knew he had an interest in photography, like me. I knew he favored Nikon cameras, like me. Probably we



shared similar experiences growing up since we are about the same age. But what did he want to know? “Who did you vote for in the last election.”

That kind of thinking seems out of place, at least to me, on July fourth when we should be sharing our common history as Americans. All our ancestors came from somewhere else to make this country. Many of them fought to preserve the freedoms inaugurated through the American Revolution. We should celebrate our commonalities and not our differences. “Freedom, beautiful spark of Divinity” so the chorus sang directed by Bernstein. He could have gone further and used Paul’s words in Galatians 5:1, “For freedom Christ has set us free.” And how did he do that? How did he set us free? Through his death on the cross. You see, freedom always has a price and for our eternal freedom Christ paid the ultimate price; he gave his life on the cross. Something so precious that Christ died to give it to us must never be distorted by partisan politics and divisive ideologies. Christ died that we can all have ultimate freedom.

— Tom Jenkins

## Event Calendar

July 3 — Independence Day Celebration 6:00 PM

July 11 — Deacons Meeting 3:00 PM

July 18 — Quarterly Church Conference 12 PM

## July Birthdays

5	Herman Choplin
6	Johnny Ray
12	David Young
21	Alan Watkins



## Nominating Committee meeting

Our nominating committee is meeting during the month of July and soon will be calling members to see if they are willing to serve on various committees during our upcoming 2021-2022 fiscal year.

When, not if, you are called, please give serious consideration to serving our church. We have ambitious plans to grow and spread God's word through our areas and we need everyone to help!



7. Boxes to receive tithes and offerings are placed at the doors so we do not have to handle offering plates.

Some members fall into the category of having underlying conditions which make them uncomfortable to be in groups. We understand they may not be willing to attend now. Hopefully, this pandemic will soon pass and we can truly get back to normal worship services. During the month of July Wednesday Bible study will be in the Fellowship Hall at 6 PM for supper and continue on Zoom at 7 PM for those who can not attend in person. If you plan attending for supper please sign the sheet each week in the vestibule.

— Linwood Barham

## Worship Precautions During July

The church is taking several precautions to make attendance as safe as possible during this Covid-19 pandemic. Even though we are not aware of anyone in our congregation who has the virus, we are aware you could have the virus and be without symptoms. Therefore, we are requesting that all follow these guidelines:

1. If you are ill, please do not attend until all your symptoms have disappeared.
2. Maintain six-foot social distance except for family members living in the same household.
3. Use furnished hand sanitizer or wipes as you enter the church.
4. Pew Bibles and hymnals have been removed. Order of service and hymns will appear in your individual program bulletin.
5. Use your own face mask if you desire or disposal masks will be available for those wishing to use them.
6. Pews will be cleaned before and after each service.



## Newsletter articles needed

We have had a newsletter each month for the past three years.

But, we need news and articles from all of our committees to let everyone know what you are doing and when you are doing it.

Communication is very important, so send your news and articles to Frank at [fbpowell@mac.com](mailto:fbpowell@mac.com)  
Thanks!

## Deacons

Linwood Barham, Chairman	919-418-1162
Frank Powell, Vice Chairman	919-604-1285
Kevin Barham, Secretary	919-618-4214
Hubert Jenks	919-270-8765
Alan Watkins	919-793-5548
Mike Harris	919-746-5697

## *Together cont' ...*

of Paul's letters, plus a letter purportedly from Paul to the Alexandrians. This list is known as the Marcion Canon.

The church had to respond to this. Though nothing had been officially written down, decided or proclaimed, most Christians had a sense of what was Scripture and what wasn't.

Between AD 156 and 172, a second provocateur appeared on the scene. His name was Montanus. Montanus was accompanied by two prophetesses, Prisca and Maximilla. "The Three" spoke in ecstatic visions and encouraged their followers to fast and pray, calling the church to a higher standard of righteousness and zeal. If that was as far as their teaching went, they would have been an asset. But their message included what they called "new prophecy," which pushed Christ and the apostolic message into the background. The age of Jesus was being superseded by the age of the Holy Spirit, and Montanus was its spokesman.

Was Montanus truly bringing a new prophecy with new authority? Prophecy more authoritative than Jesus and the apostles? This question prompted the church to respond a second time.

In AD 144, the church of Rome excommunicated Marcion and continued the sifting process on what was Scripture and what wasn't. The Montanus contro-

very pushed the church to ask further questions of their Scriptures. Specifically, was God bringing further revelation? Could that revelation be true if it contradicted things taught by Jesus and the apostles? Could new truth change or add to the basic teachings the church had been feeding on for the past century? The answer was no. From this, the church concluded that the canon of Scripture was closed.

Spurred by these dilemmas, the church developed its list of canonical books. The following are guidelines for accepting a book into the New Testament:

1. Was the book written by a prophet of God?
2. Was the writer confirmed by acts of God?
3. Does the message tell the truth about God?
4. Did it come with the power of God?
5. Was it accepted by God's people?

These are the marks of canonicity. "Canon" is a Greek word meaning "rule" or "measuring stick." These five questions are used to determine which books "measure up" to being labeled divinely inspired. They exhibit "the marks of canonicity."

*Continued Next Month!*

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