

Prayer List



Of Our Number

- ◆ Janice Carnley—Shoal Creek
- ◆ Florene Howze—health problems
- ◆ Glenn Howze—Covid-19
- ◆ Brenda Ray—dental surg. recovery
- ◆ Jim Ward—health problems

Others in Need

- ◆ Janet Andrews—chemotherapy
- ◆ Elise Davis—surgery recovery
- ◆ Briana Howze—Covid-19
- ◆ Beatrice Luke—Covid-19
- ◆ Patsy Luke—now at home
- ◆ Jeff Mashburn—kidney problems
- ◆ Taylor Mashburn—pregnant
- ◆ Brenda Mateer—cancer
- ◆ Chery Mathew—stuck in Malaysia
- ◆ Thad McCall—health problems
- ◆ Mary Milsted—lung cancer
- ◆ Don Nagle—stage 4, not doing well
- ◆ Gordon Porter—shoulder replacement recovery
- ◆ Patty Ryan—immunotherapy
- ◆ Melvin Sapp—lungs transplant

Continued in next column...

- ◆ Don Ward—Covid-19
- ◆ Sheila White—upcoming tests
- ◆ Johnny Wilkinson—Covid-19
- ◆ Brenda Wooten—stage 4 cancer
- ◆ Pray for our nation
- ◆ Pray for others who are sick, mourning, public servants, gov. leaders, military, those traveling, those lost in sin, our enemies, and the church worldwide.

Events



November 25
4th Wednesday Singing

To Our Visitors



We are happy and honored that you are here! Please fill out a visitor's card and give us a chance to get to know you. If you have any questions about anything said or done in Bible class or worship, please ask. We seek to give a Bible answer for everything we do (Colossians 3:17; 1 Peter 3:15; 4:11).

Privileged to Serve



Announcements—Mark Howze
Song Leading—Sunday—David Howze; Wednesday—Leo Derrick
Serving the Lord's Supper
 Head: Glenn Howze; Helpers: Caleb Howze, Josh Lawson, Johnny Moss
Lord's Supper PM
 Head: Ethan Howze
 Helper: Caleb Howze
Scripture Reading—Glenn Howze

Faithful Worship — **1) Praying** to God the Father in the name of Jesus Christ (Luke 11:1-2; John 16:23; Eph. 5:20; Phil. 4:6); **2) Singing** without mechanical instruments (Matt. 26:30; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16-17; Heb. 2:12); **3) Preaching** God's Word (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:42; 20:7); **4) Giving** weekly as prospered, cheerfully (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:7); **5) The Lord's Supper** on the first day of every week (Matt. 26:26-28; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:20-34; 16:2; Heb. 10:23-31).

THE BAKER BULLETIN

The weekly bulletin of

The church of Christ in Baker, FL

November 22, 2020

Meeting Times

Sundays:

10AM Bible Class
 11AM Worship
 6PM Worship

Wednesdays:

7PM Bible Class

Other Information

5761 Hwy. 4
 P.O. Box 285
 Baker, FL 32531 USA
 850-669-9117

Website:

churchofChristatBaker.com

Radio Program:

104.7FM Sundays 8:30AM
 WAAZ1047.com livestream

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Handling Snakes and Mishandling Scriptures (Part 1)

By Jason Patrick Hilburn

Gregory James Coots (November 17, 1971 – February 15, 2014) was a Pentecostal pastor in Kentucky who was featured in the National Geographic Channel reality television show *Snake Salvation*, which documented the lives of people who practice snake handling. Coots died from a rattlesnake bite during a service (Wikipedia).

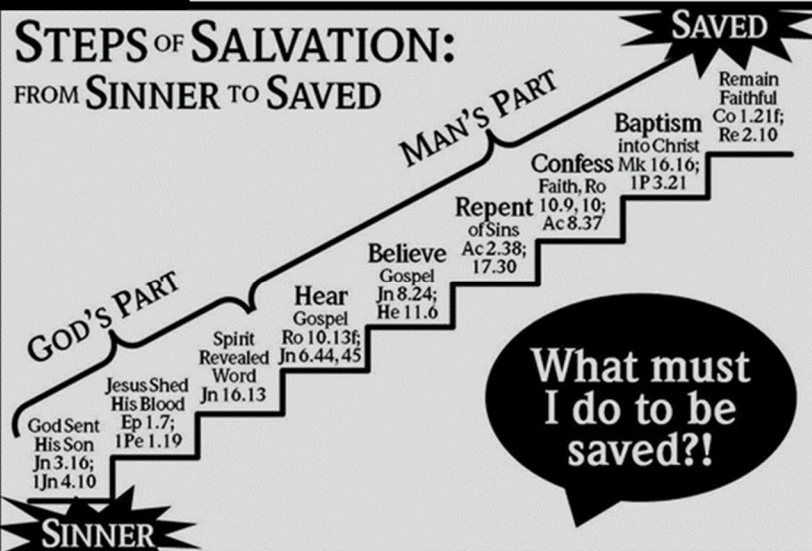
Jamie called himself the pastor of Full Gospel Tabernacle in Jesus Name in Middlesboro, KY.

Coots was bitten by snakes eight times prior to his fatal snake bite. One bite in 1993 nearly killed him, according to Cody Coots. Jamie Coots lost part of a finger from a bite in 1998. A 28-year-old Tennessee woman in his congregation was bitten by a snake in 1995 during a church service Coots led. She died from the bite in his home. Coots was charged in connection with the death but a judge decided not to pursue the case. Coots was fined in 2008 for keeping 74 snakes in his home. He was sentenced to one year of probation in 2013 for illegal wildlife possession after he entered Tennessee with five venomous snakes (Wikipedia).

The Huffington Post said, "In 1995, 28-year-old Melinda Brown, of

STEPS OF SALVATION: FROM SINNER TO SAVED

"...ye were the servants of sin..."
(Romans 6:17).



"...but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:17b-18).

Parrottsville, Tenn., died after being bitten at Coot's church by a 4-foot-long timber rattlesnake" (Sieczkowski). Why did Jamie Coots and Melinda Brown die? One might think they simply died from venomous snake bites, but in truth they died because they did not do what Paul told Timothy to do: *"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"* (2 Timothy 2:15). The purpose of this article is not to mock them or be disrespectful toward them or their families, but to help others learn a lesson that may save their lives and their eternal souls.

Just because one reads something in the Bible, that does not mean it directly applies to people today. One may read, *"make thee an ark of gopher wood"* (Genesis 6:14), but does that mean he should start building an ark like Noah? If Bible passages are not kept in proper context, they will cause one to go off into all kinds of errors. Jesus said, *"Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures..."* (Matthew 22:29). Jamie misunderstood and misapplied Mark 16:17, 18.

Coots said in February 2013 that he needed the snakes for religious reasons, citing a Bible passage in the book of Mark that reads, in part: *"And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover..."* *"We literally believe they want us to take up snakes,"* Coots told The Associated Press at the time (People.com).

So, herein lies the problem—Jamie failed to understand that: 1) Snakes were never meant to be used in worship assemblies; and 2) Miracles have ceased, just as the Bible said they would, when the perfect system of knowledge came (the completed Bible; Micah 7:15; Zechariah 13:1-3; 1 Corinthians 13:8-12; Ephesians 4:7-16). The Apostle Paul was bitten by a viper and was miraculously unharmed, but this was not in a worship assembly, and it was during the temporary age of miracles (Acts 28:3-6). One wonders, the first time Jamie got seriously injured by a snake, should he not have realized that his experience was different from the Bible, which says they would not get hurt at all? (Mark 16:18). After all, Paul had no swelling and *"felt no harm"* (Acts 28:5, 6), but Jamie almost died from a snake bite in 1993 and lost part of a finger in 1998. He had also witnessed Melinda Brown's death from one of his own snakes. These were deadly mistakes, not just for him, but for others he was leading into error. Mark 16:18 also says, *"they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover,"* but nobody could recover Melinda Brown or Jamie Coots.

Perhaps Melinda Brown's mistake was trusting "her pastor" instead of diligently studying for herself (Acts 17:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:21). That is unknown, but putting too much trust in religious leaders has always been a serious problem in the religious world (Matthew 7:15-20; 2 Corinthians 11:3, 13-15; Galatians 1:6-9; 1 John 4:1). They should be questioned and scrutinized, because everlasting souls are at stake.

Jamie had a huge viewing audience and the potential to teach people the Truth, but instead he led people astray (though likely unintentionally). In the end, he caused many to blaspheme the one true God, saying He must not be real, but the reality of God's existence cannot be diminished in the slightest (Psalm 14:1; 19:1-3; Romans 1:20-22), certainly not by a man's failure to study and rightly divide God's Word. The official statement from *National Geographic* after Jamie's death said, *"We were honored to... give context to his method of worship"* (Sieczkowski). That statement is very telling, because it confirms that what Jamie was doing was "his method of worship," but not God's method. God's pattern for New Testament worship is singing, praying to the Father in the name of His divine Son, preaching God's Word, giving a money offering and observing the Lord's Supper on the first day of every week (Matthew 26:26-30; John 16:23; Acts 20:6, 7; 1 Corinthians 11:20-34; Ephesians 5:19, 20; Colossians 3:16, 17).

The worship assembly is not a circus or a concert, and it is not for sensationalism or man's entertainment. The worship assembly of true New Testament Christians is a time of reverent homage to the Lord God Almighty, coming before Him on His terms, with all things done *"decently and orderly"* (1 Corinthians 14:40; John 4:23, 24). There must be authority from the rightly divided Word for everything done in word or deed (Colossians 3:17; 2 Timothy 2:15). Giving Jamie Coots the benefit of the doubt, he may have honestly believed he was honoring God, but the Bible says it is possible for people to think they are honoring God while they are actually in error, just as Saul of Tarsus did (Acts 23:1; 26:9-11; cf. Proverbs 16:25; Matthew 7:21-23; Luke 6:46).

There are churches today who may not be handling snakes, but they claim they can "speak in tongues" and/or do miraculous healing like the early church did. Even though they do not handle snakes, they are making the same mistake Jamie made, applying things to people today which only applied to the church of the first century A.D. When people in Bible times spoke in tongues, they were speaking in earthly languages (Aramaic, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, etc.). On Pentecost, *"...every man heard them speak in his own language,"* and they said, *"...how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?...we do hear them speak in our tongues..."* (Acts 2:4-11).

The apostles were not speaking unintelligible syllables that nobody on earth could understand. What would be the point in doing that? They were preaching the Gospel of Christ to people in their own languages so they could understand and obey for their salvation! Does that not make more sense? They were told to *"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost...save yourselves"* (Acts 2:38, 40). After they were baptized in water to be forgiven (cf. Acts 10:47, 48; 1 Peter 3:20, 21), the apostles could lay hands on them so they could *"receive the Holy Ghost"* (Acts 8:12-18; 19:5, 6; Romans 1:11; 2 Timothy 1:6; cf. Acts 10:45-47). However, there are no apostles to lay hands on people today to give them miraculous power. An apostle was specially chosen by Christ, could do all types of miracles, was an eyewitness of the resurrected Christ, and could lay hands on people to bestow miraculous powers to them. Nobody on earth today fits this description.

To be continued next week, Lord willing...

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