

**Schedule of Meeting Times:**

WKAC 1080 AM Sunday 7:30 AM  
 Study Sunday 10:00 AM  
 Worship Sunday Morn 11:00 AM  
 Worship Sunday Eve 5:00 PM  
*Singing every 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday evening*  
 Study Wednesday 7:00 PM

**Preacher / bulletin editor:**

Kris Vilander, (256) 472-1065

**E-mail:** kris@haysmillchurchofchrist.org

**Website:** www.haysmillchurchofchrist.org

“...He has now reconciled you  
**in His fleshly body through  
 death**, in order to present you  
 before Him holy and  
 blameless and beyond  
 reproach—if indeed you  
**continue in the faith**  
 firmly established  
 and steadfast...”



—Colossians 1:22,23a

**Servants during December:**

**Songleader:** Larry (3), Dwight (10),  
 Stanley (17), Larry (24), Dwight (31)

**Reading:** Stanley

**Announcements:** Larry

**Table:** Marty, Stanley, Mike M, Larry

**Wednesday Lesson:** Kris (6), Larry (13),  
 Stanley (20), Kris (27)

**Lawn Mowing (week starting):** on leave  
 for the winter!

**Area Meetings:**

**Hays Mill church of Christ**

21705 Hays Mill Road

Elkmont, AL 35620

# The Bible . Examiner

“Examine everything carefully...” —1 Thessalonians 5:21 NASB

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## Unread Letters

by Matt Hennecke

A childhood accident resulted in the poet Elizabeth Barrett becoming an invalid and recluse. Despite her isolation her early poetry drew the attention of Robert Browning who began courting her. He eventually asked for her hand in marriage in 1846.

But there’s more to the story.

In her youth, Elizabeth had been watched closely by her tyrannical father. He was strict beyond reason and attempted to prevent suitors from courting her. In fact, he did not want any of his children to marry. As a result Elizabeth and Robert eloped, their wedding held in secret because of her father’s disapproval.

After the wedding Elizabeth and her new husband sailed for Italy, where they lived for the rest of their lives—exiled from her parents. Even though her parents had disowned her, Elizabeth never gave up on the

relationship. Almost weekly she wrote them letters. Some were fairly lengthy, others short and poetical in form.

Not once did they reply.

After ten years, Elizabeth received a large box in the mail. Inside she found all of her letters. Not a single one had been opened. Elizabeth’s years of writing, her letters pleading for reconciliation—were for naught.

Today those letters are among the most beautiful in classical English literature. Had her parents only read a few of them, their relationship with Elizabeth might have been restored.

What makes the story of Elizabeth Barrett Browning so compelling is that it is so similar to another story. The story that is repeated over and over again—

generation after generation.

You see, I am aware of other letters which have been written but not read. Beautiful letters; letters of reconciliation; letters of hope. We know them better as epistles. These letters, written by men, but authored by God through the Holy Spirit have been written for our reconciliation, for our salvation. Sadly, they often go unnoticed, unread, unheeded. Indeed, the entire Bible, God's Word, is a book pleading for reconciliation.

What is amazing is that God is pleading with us for reconciliation, but He has done nothing wrong. We are the ones who have gone astray, 2 Pet 2:15, and yet God stoops to

beg for our reconciliation.

In Colossians 1:19-23, Paul speaking of Christ says, "It was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him and through Him to reconcile all to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross." Why? Why would God give His only begotten Son for all of us who have gone astray? Paul tells us in verse 22: "in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach." Paul's letter speaks of reconciliation and of hope. Are you listening? What a beautiful letter. It would be a shame if it were never read, or if read, ignored.

—via **Think On These Things**, Cortland, Illinois 

# The People of God

by *Bill Robinson, Jr.*

On four different occasions in the book of Deuteronomy, Moses summoned the people to receive instruction from the Lord by saying, "Hear, O Israel..." 5:1; 6:4; 9:1; 20:3. Someone has stated that it ought to be a matter of encouragement to every sane person that God has spoken to us.

Just prior to fording the Jordan River into the Promised Land, "Moses and the priests spoke to all Israel, saying, 'Take heed and listen, O Israel;

This day you have become the people of God. Therefore you shall obey the voice of the Lord your God, and observe His commandments and His statutes which I command you today,'" Deut 27:9,10. There is something significant about being called the people of God. While I write that I know none would dispute it though some by their teaching and practice make it void.

What it meant to be the people of God is that they were to "take heed"

to what God says. It is not merely acknowledging that God has spoken. It is not some mere exercise in the reading and recitation of some facts. It is to give one's self over to what God says for the sole purpose of obeying. One is not taking heed who argues, complains and becomes disgruntled with the message of God. A chief characteristic of the people of God is that they respond to God's word without questioning, rationalizing otherwise discounting the word to mean anything more or less than what it says. Furthermore, they do not allow circumstances, whether convenient or not, to determine whether or not they heed God's commands.

It is interesting to note Moses tells Israel to "Take heed and listen." Why this order of "Take heed and listen"? Moses had reminded Israel earlier that they were a special people to God, Deut 26:16-19, and with that comes not only privileges but solemn responsibilities which should be carried out with all their heart and

soul. To listen then, is another mark of the people of God, it indicates their readiness and willingness to hear God whenever and wherever He speaks. Again someone has well noted that listening is the beginning of all understanding, Jas 1:19,20. Thus, to listen is an expression of dependence on God; as obedience (from the heart and soul) is an expression of gratitude toward God by those who are called the people of God.

God speaks today through His Son Jesus Christ and it is contained in the New Testament, Heb 1:1-3; Jn 12:48-50. Can we do any less today, with respect to God's instructions through His Son, than "Take heed and listen" if we truly desire to be the people of God? While Israel, the people of God, under the Old Testament received the earthly promised land, the Hebrew writer reminds those today under the New Covenant "There remains therefore a rest for the people of God," Heb 4:9. Let us, "Take heed and listen."

—via **Power Talk**, Lexington, Kentucky 

## Remember in Prayer

**Billy** had three teeth pulled to accommodate a partial. **Stanley's brother Steve** has a particularly difficult UTI. **Pam** has been having ongoing difficulties getting back into her house with repair issues. **Donise's younger brother, Sonny Hargrove**, passed away early last week; they were very close.

We thank God that **Larry and Shane's grandson Walker** had a medical procedure Wednesday that should help overcome nursing difficulties!

Let's not forget others with chronic issues—such as **Mike B; Pam and Julie; Carolyn; Betty; John, Sylvia, and Paige Pollard; and Joyce.**

