

Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

“... Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body.” - Ephesians 5:23

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ARE YOU BEING TAUGHT THE TRUTH?

By Ted J. Clarke

INTRODUCTION

God has placed a responsibility upon speakers and hearers to hold to the truth. God told the reluctant Jonah, “preach . . . the preaching that I bid thee” (Jonah 3:2). To another of His prophets we read, “thus saith the LORD; Stand in the court of the LORD’s house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the LORD’s house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word” (Jeremiah 26:2).

Jesus told His audiences, “take heed **what** ye hear” (Mark 4:24) and “Take heed therefore **how** ye hear (Luke 8:18). “What” one hears has to do with the content of the message. One who constantly listens to those who claim to be speaking God’s word, when such speakers do not use (or they misuse) the Bible, will be led astray from the truth. The Scriptures are the standard of truth for all religious teaching and practice (2 Timothy 3:16-17). “How” one hears indicates the open and receptive heart to accept all that God says about any matter, and then to incorporate that teaching into one’s life. This article deals with the preaching of truth. Next month’s article will cover, “Are You Hearing The Truth?”

SOME DIFFERENCE IN PREACHERS

Among God’s preaching servants there exists a wide variety of talents. Some preachers may excel at public speaking, being able to vividly illustrate with words the message they wish to emphasize. Others may fare better with visual aids such as overheads, charts or “power point” lessons. Still others are more talented at personal evangelism in one on one

situations; while some are talented at writing articles, tracts or books. Some men have the mental discipline and temperament for teaching and defending the truth in public discussions (debates), and others have the capacity to obtain advanced educational degrees to defend the truth against the onslaughts of worldly wisdom from the scientists and philosophers of the day. No preacher should be rebuked or considered inadequate as a preacher because he cannot do all of these things well. Each of us has “talents” to use to God’s glory, while striving to develop others to the best of our abilities (Matthew 25:15, 26-19).

A DIFFERENCE THAT MATTERS

While abilities differ between men who preach, one difference matters above all. That is, whatever a man’s various abilities, **every man has the obligation to know the truth and to preach only the truth!** Those who do not must not be allowed an audience! God is “the God of truth” (Isaiah 65:15); Jesus is “the truth” incarnate (John 14:6); the Holy Spirit is “the Spirit of truth” (John 16:13); and God’s “word is truth” (John 17:17; 8:31-32). Nothing can benefit mankind so much as a knowledge of and obedience to God’s truth (Luke 6:46; Matthew 7:21-28; 1 Peter 1:22-23).

Yet some preachers have taken the line that human interest stories, anecdotes, and humor can actually replace God’s word in meeting the needs of mankind. God has a difficult time “getting a word in” when some men preach. There are others who contend that we cannot teach the world by quoting Scriptures, because the world doesn’t accept them. However, in addition to the creation as proof of God’s

existence, the Scriptures stand as a further evidence of His Divine Being. The truth is, you cannot begin to teach men what God expects from them without turning them to the Scriptures. You cannot even teach them about sin, salvation and the Savior without teaching them from the Bible. If we cannot use the Bible to teach the world about God’s will for mankind, including about Jesus and morality, these so-called preachers have talked themselves right out of a job. **God’s word is the only resource material that explains God’s will!**

A SUBTLE BUT FATAL DIFFERENCE

There is another type of preacher that has been around for a long time; one who is dangerous in a somewhat subtle sort of way. Many preachers are not so foolish to suggest we cannot quote the Bible to those who need to hear it. However, many of those who would never openly advocate error, simply will not preach **the whole truth**. These men will not preach on crucial moral issues and teach that God has a pattern on matters such as salvation, worship, organization of the church and such like. In seeking to be liked by everyone and to not cause any trouble, they alienate themselves from God and cause great trouble among brethren striving to maintain God’s exclusive standard of right and wrong. Such preachers are more concerned about what men think than what God thinks (cf. John 5:44; 12:42-43). Jesus said, “Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! For so did their fathers to the **false** prophets” (Luke 6:26). Any one man who is more concerned about what people think, or one who fears losing his job if he preaches all the truth, is not a preacher worth listening to.

Multitudes of preachers may not be “liberal,” in the sense that

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they are preaching false doctrines, but they refuse to preach the truth on what may be styled as sensitive issues. Unlike Paul they are not "set for the defense of the gospel" (Philippians 1:17); nor will they "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3, ASV). Perhaps the word "liberal" doesn't sting the conscience enough to prod these men into preaching the whole truth. It would be more fitting to style them as what they are: **fearful**, or even **cowards**.

Although Martin Luther did not come to a full understanding of the truth of God's word, when he was locked into combat with the apostate Roman church, he wisely said:

"If I profess with the loudest voice and the clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God, except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christ. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier

is proved, and to be steady on the battlefield besides is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point."

CONCLUSION

The apostle Paul told the Ephesian elders, "I kept nothing that was profitable to you . . . I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20: 20,27). To his son in the faith, the young evangelist Timothy, he said: **"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry"** (2 Timothy 4:1-5). If you are truly being taught the truth, it will be from a man who practices what Paul said to the Ephesian elders and one that takes this charge to Timothy as a serious matter with eternal consequences.

Preachers of God's word, please preach the whole counsel of God and live it to the best of your ability. Elders (and deacons and members), hold your preacher accountable to preach all the truth. Warn him to do so. If he doesn't, he needs to be removed from the pulpit and classroom. Duty demands that you keep nothing back that is profitable from the congregation you oversee. If you realize your preacher is not preaching the whole truth, after you have made every reasonable effort to get him to do so, you might want to take yourself and your family to a congregation where you know all the truth is being preached. Neither you nor your children will be properly nourished in the word of God if the preacher will not preach it all and the elders or church leaders do not care enough to make him do so.

AN UNKNOWN OLD TESTAMENT SOURCE

By Jerry Moffitt

Sometimes in the New Testament a writer draws attention to a fulfillment of scripture, but when the Old Testament is searched, the Old Testament prophecy cannot be found. Yet the New Testament writer plainly says the event was to fulfill an Old Testament prophecy. There are four clear instances of this Bible phenomena. Let's glance at all four:

"And came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophets, that he should be called a Nazarene" (Mat. 2:23).

"Now on the last day, the day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. 38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:37,38).

"Wherefore he saith, awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee" (Eph. 5:14).

"Or think ye that the scripture speaketh in vain? Doth the Spirit which he made to dwell in us long unto envying?" (Jas. 4:5).

The above four passages are the most clear examples of an "unknown source" as we can put forth. But that is not to say there is no Old Testament source. For example, the Old Testament source or prophecy fulfilled in Matthew 2:23 is Isaiah 11:1 in the minds of some scholars. Some suggest that James 4:5 is a fulfillment of Jeremiah 3:14 and Hosea 2:19,20. However, we want to take a different tack. Let's **suppose** we cannot find a direct, clear Old Testament source for each of the four scriptures. What does it prove? We would say it proves nothing for the following reasons.

1. These New Testament writers may not intend these fulfillments to be fulfillments of specific Old Testament passages. These New Testament fulfillments may simply be **quotations of substance** or **concise**

summaries of teachings found throughout the Old Testament. They refer not back to specific predictions but to **broad prophetic themes**. They are the fulfillment of Old Testament **sentiment** found in many passages. This is so obvious that it may be overlooked. Someone solely looking for a specific prediction might not allow his mind to focus on this other common alternative.

2. Some written sources may not have been deemed necessary by God to survive in writing. There are many such books which God providentially let pass away: The History of Nathan the Prophet, The Prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and the Visions of Iddo the Seer. They are lost to us but mentioned in 2 Chronicles 9:29. God felt it not necessary to preserve them. See also 1 Corinthians 5:9; Number 21:14; and Joshua 10:13. [This does not mean that any information needed for our salvation has been lost. See Romans 15:4, 2 Timothy 3:16-17. - Editor]
3. Some prophecies were fulfilled in type-antitype fulfillments. For example, Jesus being raised from the dead the third day is the antitype or fulfillment of Jonah being in the belly of the whale three days (Matthew 12:39-40).
4. Some prophecies and events which New Testament writers refer to were only "spoken." They were never written down in the Old Testament but were handed down in oral tradition. Paul said Jesus remarked that it was better to give than to receive (Acts 20:35), but the exact saying was not written down in the gospels.
5. Then sometimes the fulfillment of prophecy was not intended to be predictive proof. The Holy Spirit, only, could see correlation, and He said so through a New Testament writer. The points of resemblance are so faint that we truly would never notice them if the Spirit in the New Testament writer had not pointed them out.

CONCLUSION

So, it is very difficult for a skeptic to go against all this and

make a good case against the Bible by using these four passages of alleged unknown sources. So, again let Jesus say, "the scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35).

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FREQUENCY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

By Tracy Dugger

A common question asked by friends who visit with us at our worship services is: "Why do you partake communion every Sunday? We only observe it on special occasions or once every quarter."

This is a good question and one we should be able to answer. (1 Peter 3:15). In a study of the church you read about in the Bible, we clearly observe that it practiced a weekly observance of communion (Lord's Supper). We reason that since the early church observed the Lord's Supper every first day of the week, we want to follow their example.

Paul tells us in Colossians 3:17, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." Thus, we learn that we must have Bible authority for all we do in religion. But how does the Word of God authorize? How do we know what principles we should obey or emulate? For instance, are we to wash feet as per John 13? Are we to offer animal sacrifices as did the Jews under the Old Testament?

The Bible authorizes in at least three ways:

1. Explicit Statement or Command:

- a) "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:48).
- b) "For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if [there be] any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Romans 13:9).

2. **Necessary Inference** (Deductive Reasoning). Did Saul of Tarsus repent of his sins? No passage explicitly states this. However, we **infer** from requirements of forgiveness in other passages (Acts 2:38) and what Paul himself taught on the matter (Acts 17:30-31) that he did indeed repent of his sins.

3. **Approved Example**. Some examples are not approved (Judas' example of betraying Jesus Christ). Some examples are not bound upon us (Upper Room in Acts 20:7; Riding in a ship to take the gospel to other lands - we could fly). However, many Biblical occurrences are approved for us to follow:

- a) "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1).
- b) "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come" (1 Corinthians 16:1-2).

This is where a weekly observance of the Lord's Supper is enjoined upon us. The example of the early church is authority enough. It is an approved example.

We are commanded to partake of the Lord's Supper in Matthew 26. In this chapter, Jesus instituted this memorial. Another instance of the Lord's Supper command is found in 1 Corinthians 11. But *when* were the Corinthians to partake? The context shows that they were to partake at their regular assembly. When was regular assembly time for the church at Corinth? Chapter 16: 1-2 reveals the answer - the first day of the week!

On the birthday of the church (Day of Pentecost - Acts 2), the apostles taught the audience that they should repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38). Following this they were taught to continue "steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and breaking of bread (Lord's Supper), and in prayers (Acts 2:42). Since

the observance of the Lord's Supper had its beginning upon the first day of the week, it should continue to be taken "steadfastly" on this day. Did the early Christians follow this order? Yes! Perhaps the best instance of an example of this is found in Acts 20:7, "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight." According to this passage, the church observed the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week. But someone objects, "It doesn't say that they did so every first day of the week." We would respond to his objection in two ways: (1) We would ask, "What authority is there for a contribution every first day of the week?" Most would give 1 Corinthians 16:1-2. We would agree and point out that the same language used in this passage is used in Acts 20:7. (2) When the Israelites were given the command to observe the Sabbath in Exodus 20:8, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy," did they understand this to mean that every Sabbath was to be observed in this fashion? Absolutely!! Enough said!

The following useful information on this subject by Gary Colley can be found in the Firm Foundation Lectureship Book on Luke (p.639):

1. New Testament Christians were commanded to eat the Lord's Supper (Matthew 2: 2-28; 1 Corinthians 11: 17-29, 33-34).
2. They were also commanded to assemble (Hebrews 10:25).
3. They ate the Lord's Supper when they assembled (1 Corinthians 11: 17-21, 28, 33).
4. They assembled to eat the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:33).
5. They assembled on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16: 1-2).
6. The assembled to break bread (Acts 20:7).
7. They obeyed the commandment of the Lord in assembling on the first day of the week to partake of the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:2; 14:37; 16:1-2).

Some will object to a weekly observance of the Lord's Supper because it can become meaningless and trivial. Of course the same argument could be given for weekly worship (Hebrews 10:25; John 4:24), daily Christian living (Acts 5:42; Romans 12:1-2, etc . . .) But are we ready to give up these things? God knew best regarding the frequency of the Lord's Supper. I believe the reason God wants us to observe this memorial so often is because of our tendency to forget. A frequent theme in the Old Testament is the ease of God's people in forgetting. Backsliding Israel was told, "Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? yet my people have forgotten me days without number" (Jeremiah 2:32). Israel had remembered many things, but the most important was forgotten - God - who gave them all things! No doubt, the frequency of the Lord's Supper is due to the ease of our forgetfulness.

After all these things can we deny heaven's word on the frequency and time of partaking of the Lord's Supper? Let us not refuse Him that speaks to us (Hebrews 12:25-26).

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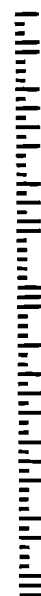
1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (I Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; I Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2, 3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 12:13).

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