

# THE LEXIA EDIFIER

**ROMANS 14:19 ...Let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.**

**SEPTEMBER 1, 2013**

## **COMMON SENSE APPROACH**

### **Jim Stauffer**

Jesus says, **Matt. 7:13** *Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. 14 For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it.*

Men continue to defend denominational doctrines and creeds, even when they have been shown to be contradictory to Scripture.

One can use simple logic to answer the question of all the issues that divide men over the belief in God and His word. Bear with me patiently as we go through this exercise.

Let's use a series of **what if** questions to illustrate the point.

First, let's discuss skepticism. What does he do about the word of God? There are respected intellectuals who are skeptics and several Bible believers who are renowned intellectuals. Which should he believe? Ask yourself, "**What if** the skeptic is wrong and the believer is right?" The skeptic goes away into eternal punishment and the believer to

eternal life with God. (**Matt. 25:46**) Then ask yourself, "**What if** the skeptic is right and the believer is wrong? Both live lives with equal opportunity for success and happiness. Believing is a reasoned position of safety.

What about the doctrine of Calvinism? Many reputable theologians teach Calvinism. Many Bible Scholars deny its verity. Take the position on the eternal decree of God for the elect. Calvinism claims God decreed the number of saved and lost so definitively the number cannot be changed. **What if** the Calvinist is wrong and the Bible believer is right? The Calvinist is condemned for teaching error. (**Matt. 7:15-23**) The believer is saved eternally with God. (**Matt. 25:46**) **What if** the Calvinist is right and the Bible believer is wrong? They obviously would find out who was saved and lost in the judgment, but the ability to exercise control over it would not exist and therefore nothing would be lost in due to believing in the Bible. Again, the safest position from a common sense point of view would be to accept the Bible story.

What about those who insist salvation

is by faith only and that baptism has no bearing on a man's salvation? Is baptism commanded in the Scripture? The answer is yes. (**Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38**) And it certainly is true that God demands obedience to His word. (**John 14:15; Heb. 5:8,9**) *What if* those who believe in faith only are wrong and the Bible believer is right? The Scriptures we have cited tell us the believer who was baptized would be saved while the one who rejected baptism would be condemned. *What if* the faith only position was accepted by God at the judgment? Both would be in a saved condition and therefore the safest decision to make would be to accept what the Bible teaches on baptism.

What about those who believe in creeds such as the Westminster Confession of Faith, The Book of Discipline for Methodist Churches or the Hiscox Manual for Baptist Churches? Is there anything God demands of us that is not in the Bible? The answer must be no! (**see 2 Tim. 3:16,17; Rev. 22:18,19**) Isn't it always right to do exactly what is authorized in the Bible? Of course it is! *What if* we ignore the creed book and obey the Bible? The premises above cause us to conclude we would be pleasing God. *What if* we followed the creed book rather than the Bible? Since all of the creed books demand some things not in the Bible and leave out some things the Bible demands, we would find ourselves in violation of the Biblical teaching the creed book was supposed to support. (**2 John 9**) We would then be unacceptable before Christ in judgment. So, we must again conclude the most reasonable thing to do is choose the teaching of the Bible to guide our lives.

What we learn from this little exercise is exactly what God would have us to do. Just as Samuel chastised King Saul for failing to follow God's instruction rather than listen to the people. **1 Sam. 15:22** *And Samuel said, Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim. Because thou hast rejected the word of Jehovah, he hath also rejected thee from being king.*

We do not make these points to suggest the Bible truths are suspect or debatable. We

use this exercise to show that common sense alone should teach us we are better off obeying God than any other option.

## IS WORSHIP ABOUT ME?

It is rather amazing that the evangelical Protestant world should presently be locked in controversy about the proper focus of worship. Actually this conflict is but a narrower expression of a broader conflict over the proper focus of religion. Is religion about the Will of God or the desires of man? Albert Mohler, president of the Southern Baptist Seminary, recently quoted with approval these words of A.W. Tozer: "It is scarcely possible in most places to get anyone to attend the meeting where the only attraction is God. One can only conclude that God's professed children are bored with Him for they must be wooed to meeting with a stick of striped candy in the form of religious movies, games and refreshments." To this Mohler added: "This has influenced the whole pattern of church life and even brought into being a new type of church architecture designed to house the golden calf... The striped candy technique has so fully integrated into our present religious thinking that it is simply taken for granted. Its victims never dream that it is not a part of the teachings of Christ and His apostles."

The question simply put is: Is worship about God or about me? This would seem to be a question with an answer so evident as to be beyond controversy. Who should be at the center of religion, the Creator or the creature? Whose will should be honored most, the One who knows all things in perfection or the one who knows little and that imperfectly? Who should be exalted in awe-struck reverence, the One who gives life to all or the one who is absolutely dependent on the Life-giver? Who should be praised and loved, the One who has in incredible grace redeemed a wicked and rebellious race or those who have been mercifully forgiven?

Yet all this notwithstanding the history for humankind has been beset with efforts of the creature to usurp the position of the Creator. It

began in the Garden of Eden where our forefathers were seduced by the thought that they could be as wise as God (**Gen. 3:5,6**) and it hasn't stopped since. It inevitably taints even religion which by definition is supposed to be about the worship of God and His Will but is turned by human cleverness into the exaltation of man and his wishes. It is the human inclination to serve God but according to their own judgments rather than God's.

The question "Is worship about God or about me?" does have another dimension. From God's perspective everything is about us, not about our wisdom or will or way, which are frail and fallible, but about us. We are the objects of His eternal purpose (**Eph. 1:4**). He has poured Himself out on us in order to bring us to glory as His very own children (**Rom. 8: 28-30; Heb. 2:9,10**). The cost has been unspeakably great (**Rom. 5:8-10; 1 Pet. 1:18-21**) and has to do with the "deep things of God" (**1 Cor. 2:9,10**). Even God's call for us to worship Him and Him alone (**Matt. 4:10**) is not about Him but about us. He does not need us to shore up His self-image with our praises. God knows full well who He is. What is essential for our own eternal well-being is that we know who He is and that we acknowledge it, for in knowing who God is we come to know who we are. We are not God but we are made in His image and destined for great blessings if we are willing to accept the grand purpose that He has in mind for us as His creatures.

From our perspective, however, worship must be all about God. It is through the greatness of God's power, wisdom and grace that we are drawn out of ourselves into the splendor of His infinite glory. Jesus taught us that the thing that will cost us our essential lives is to focus on ourselves. His cautionary warning to those who would be His disciples is clear: "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." The crucifixion of self is essential not just to worship but also to the whole of discipleship. We, too, like our Savior, must say and mean it, "Not my will but Yours be done." This being done we

may experience even now the state described from Charles Wesley's hymn, Love Divine.

*Changed from glory into glory,  
Till in heaven we take our place,  
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,  
Lost in wonder, love and praise.*

**By Paul Earnhart**

Many years ago, Thomas K. Beecher once substituted for his famous brother Henry Ward Beecher, at the Plymouth Church in Brooklyn, New York. Many curiosity seekers had come to hear the renowned Henry Beecher speak. Therefore, when Thomas Beecher appeared in the pulpit instead, some people got up and started for the doors. Sensing that they were disappointed because he was substituting for his brother, Thomas raised his hand for silence and announced, "All those who came here this morning to worship Henry Ward Beecher may withdraw from the church, all who came to worship God may remain."

The example of godly leaders is helpful, but only God in heaven is worthy of our worship and devotion.

**John 4:24** *God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth.*

There'll be no flu bugs in heaven  
The atmosphere there will be pure  
For the Great Physician on duty  
Has provided an eternal care

There'll be no income taxes in heaven  
For our dues have already been paid  
By the grace of a dear, loving, Savior  
And the sacrifice He's already made  
**Grant Clothier**

The lives of great men all remind us  
We can make our lives sublime  
And departing, leave behind us  
Footprints on the sands of time  
**Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**

**1 Pet. 2:21** *For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps.*

**Eph. 2:19** So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, **20** being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; **21** in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;

**1 Pet. 2:9** But ye are an elect race, royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

**Psalms 1: 1** Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scoffers; **2** But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. **3** And he shall be like a tree planted by streams of water, that bringeth forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also doth not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. **4** The wicked are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. **5** Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. **6** For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; but the way of the wicked shall perish.

**News and Notes:** Let us remember the instruction of our Lord by visiting in whatever way we can, **Jan Patrick, Terry Czirr and Candiss Cason. Mary Czirr is recovering from minor surgery.**

**Matt. 25:40** *And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me.*

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We recommend to you the following websites:

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thelenexaedifier.com  
lenexachurchofchrist.org***

Our Meeting times are:

Sunday Bible Classes: 9:30 AM  
Worship Services 10:20 AM&5:00 PM  
Wednesday Bible Classes 7:00 PM

The Church at Lenexa is a congregation of brethren who have been "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." **(Romans 3:24)**

As a result of this justification we have been "delivered out of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of his love, in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of sins." **(Colossians 1:13,14)**

We therefore respect the inspired word of God that will completely furnish us unto every good work by speaking only as the oracles of God. **(2 Timothy 3:16,17; 1 Peter 4:11)**

**What must one do to be saved?**

**Hear** the gospel -

Romans 10:17

**Believe** in Christ -

Heb. 11:6

**Repent** of sin - Acts 17:30

**Confess** Christ as Lord -

Romans 10:9,10

**Be baptized** for the remission of sins - Acts 2:38