

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

THE LENEXA EDIFIER

John 8:32

“And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free”

JULY 27, 2014

“FAITH APART FROM WORKS IS DEAD”

Jim Stauffer

When James spoke these words in verse 26 of chapter 2 he was concluding his argument for brethren to actually help a brother in need.

It is interesting to see how many of the principles Jesus taught are illustrated in the book of James. This particular discussion is reminiscent of Christ's story of the Samaritan who helped the man who had been robbed and beaten and left on the side of the road. (Lk. 10:25-37)

James tells his readers it is of no profit to one in need if you acknowledge his need but fail to do anything about it. (James 2:14-17) He further illustrates this by saying Abraham was “justified by works” when he placed Isaac on an altar on Mt. Moriah as God commanded him to do. Gen. 22:18 says it this way, *and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.* This is the point where we learn the works James speaks of are not what some call meritorious works, but are indeed acts of obedience to the voice of God as heard in His recorded will.

Some will see a dilemma between the text in James 2 and that of Romans 4. But when the passage in Romans speaks against salvation by works it speaks of the works of the Law of Moses. The argument proffered by Paul on that occasion is that Abraham's faith was reckoned unto him for righteousness before the covenant of circumcision between God and him. (Rom. 4:9-14) Therefore, Paul says, the eternal principle God has established is that man receives the promise of God (salvation from sin), when he has faith in God. James merely explains to us that one who fails to obey the voice of God is without faith. His faith is dead. Therefore, when we read Eph. 2:8 *for by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not of works, that no man should glory.*, we understand the message of Paul. He is saying those who obey the voice of God (that is have faith in Him) will be saved by grace.

No one I have encountered has taken the position that a man can actually earn his salvation by merit. It took the death of Christ to atone for our sins and remove the sentence of death for every man. 2 Cor. 5:14 *For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died; 15*

and he died for all, that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again. Jesus was the only One Who could be offered as a sacrifice without spot or blemish.

1 Pet. 1:18 *knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb without spot, even the blood of Christ: He has redeemed us from our iniquity but His grace is only extended to the faithful, those who obey the voice of God as Moses spoke of Abraham. This is exactly what the writer of Hebrews says of salvation. Heb. 5:8 *though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; 9 and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation;**

Let us try one more example to illustrate faith in God. God told Joshua, Josh. 6:2 *And Jehovah said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thy hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor.* This was spoken in past tense indicating God had already decided to give them the city. According to those who stand on the “faith only” concept of salvation, all Joshua and the people of Israel needed to do was wait for Him to deliver it. But when we read on we learn there was work (obedience to the voice of God) to be done. Joshua was told to have the men of war march around the city once each day for six days. Seven priests were to carry seven trumpets before the ark. On the seventh day the men of war were to march around the city seven times. Then the priests were to blow the trumpets and the people to give a mighty shout and the walls would then fall and allow them to take the city. (Josh. 6:3-5) The walls fell because their faith led them to obey the voice of God. The same could be said for numerous incidents involving man obeying the voice of God. David was able to slay Goliath. Gideon was able to conquer the mighty Midianite army with 300 men. On and on the examples go of men of faith who followed the instructions of God out of reverence for His word.

Is it any different today? Jesus indicates the proper response to the gospel, Mark 16:16 *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.* Will you obey the voice of the Lord? It is not difficult to understand.

HOW WE LEARN FROM THE BIBLE

Part Two *by Dudley Ross Spears*

In this issue and subsequent editions we will present a Five part series of articles on How We Learn From The Bible by bro. Spears.

Under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit, the apostles of Christ were to make disciples of all nations - **Matt. 28:19**. They were the teachers of the world, instructing all to deny ungodliness, worldly lusts and live soberly, righteously and godly in the world looking for the soon return of Jesus - **Titus 2:12-13**. By the time Peter was guided to write 2 Peter he claimed that all things pertaining to life and godliness had been given by the grace of God - **2 Pet. 1:3**.

With the special divine grant these men were told, **"Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven"** - Matt. 18:18 (NASBU). Paul, the last addition to this select group, wrote: **"Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me. For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church** - 1 Cor. 4:16-17. Apostolic instructions are the standard for every church that claims to belong to the Lord.

Apostolic instruction comes not only through their direct teaching; it comes by observing the precedents set by apostolic authority. They set divine precedents the Lord intends his church to follow. Thus Paul could write, **"Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample"** - Phil. 3:17. (Note also Phil. 4:9). Following Paul means to imitate his model, to copy and duplicate the actions of the apostles.

How does one learn when apostolic precedents are to be imitated? There are a couple of maxims about biblical interpretation that determine this.

The Bible is a book of harmony. Interpreting one biblical teaching to contradict another is fundamentally wrong. Since the New Testament teaches us through precedents set by the apostles, no precedent is binding if it contradicts plain teaching found elsewhere in the Bible.

The New Testament is applicable to all men in this dispensation of time. Nothing the Lord requires of man to be saved and stay saved is beyond man's ability. Paul wrote the Corinthians about their giving and said, **"it is accepted according to that a man hath, and**

not according to that he hath not" - 2 Cor. 8:12. Apostolic precedents that are in harmony with the sum of New Testament teaching and are possible in this present dispensation are binding precedents to be duplicated by the church.

It is evident that apostolic authority did not bind some things on the church. Paul required Titus to submit to circumcision **"because of the Jews"** - Acts 16:3. Paul also loosed this in his letter to the churches of Galatia - Gal. 5:6. Anything tied to custom or culture, not wrong in itself, is not necessarily bound on the church.

Only the apostles have the right to bind. When they set a precedent for the church to follow only they could loose it. We have a precedent that applies to the first day of the week -- Sunday. The fact that Acts 2:42 relates what was done on the first day of the week; the fact that at Troas the disciples met to break bread - Acts 20:7; and the fact that the Corinthians were to contribute of their material means on the first day of the week - 1 Cor. 16:2, sets a precedent for that day. A New Testament church must duplicate this today.

In the absence of any information that these activities were done on any other day, the fact that nothing in this precedent contradicts any New Testament teaching, and the fact that it is possible in any age for the church to duplicate these activities on the first day of the week, makes this a precedent for us to duplicate.

The conclusion to which all this brings us is that we have precedent for meeting together on the first day of the week to observe the sacred memorial feast in memory of the suffering of Jesus. We also have the precedent of meeting on the first day of the week to contribute of our material means in order for the Lord's church to carry out its divinely assigned mission. The apostles bound the first day of the week. Where is there any evidence they ever loosed it?

Sin and Its Punishment

As a basis of this subject I cite your attention to **1 Jno. 3:4**, which reads, *"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth the law, for sin is the transgression of the law."* If there is a definition of sin in the Bible, we have it in the last clause of this verse: *"Sin is the transgression of the law."* Of course, it means the transgression of God's law. God's law may be transgressed by thought; by feeling, by words, or by actions, for as we learn from other portions of the Word of God, there are
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there are wicked thoughts, wicked feelings, wicked words, and wicked actions. This definition is not exhaustive, but it is sufficient for our present purpose.

While all of us sin, we obviously fail to recognize the enormity of sin. I believe I would esteem above every other gift that could be bestowed upon me as a preacher, the power adequately to conceive what sin is, and adequately to set it before the people. It is impossible for us to relate the enormity of sin for two reasons: First, a failure on our own part to realize the greatness of it and second, our inability to gather up such words and such figures of speech, as would with any sufficiency, set it forth to our hearers. The pleasures of sin have blinded our eyes to its enormity.

After considerable reflection on the matter, I am persuaded that the only accurate gauge which we have with which to measure the enormity and heinousness of sin, is the punishment that God has decreed against it. God is infinite, unlimited, in all His attributes; infinite in love, in mercy, in compassion, but when we find the terrible punishment which the likewise infinite justice of God necessitated that He metes out to man because of sin, then we can have some concept of God's reaction and feeling toward the greatness of sin. Paul said in a discussion of the Law of Moses, that the Law was given *"That through the commandment sin might become exceeding sinful"* (**Rom. 7:13**).

Many are the unpleasant things which befall man in this life which come as a consequence of man's sin and disrespect of God's law. From its earliest history, the world has been laden with a vast burden of woe and pain and death. The journey of human life is strewn with tears; the whole earth on which we live has become dotted with cemeteries. Death, preceded by incalculable pains of the body, the whole period of the life filled with interchanging smiles and tears, anguish of hearts relieved by times of joy and happiness, have been our history.

"Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin" (**Rom. 5:12**). All of this pain and woe, Paul said is caused by sin. It is a punishment the infinite God laid upon man -- because of his sin.

While we experience these discomfitures here because of sin, without the aid of revelation, the nature, extent, duration, and the severity of any punishment that might be suffered hereafter would be the subject of simple conjecture. All the details would be left in the dark. We must depend upon revelation for the answer to our questions concerning the matter. To it then we turn, and the question set before us divides itself into some four points. First, "Is there any punishment for the wicked after death?" Second, "Is there a future, final and universal judgment, such as we have heard of?" Third, "What is to follow in the way of punishment, if anything, after that universal judgment?" Fourth, "How long, if there is such punishment after the judgment day, will it continue?"

First, "Is there then any punishment after death?" Notice particularly **Luke 12:4**, where Jesus addressing his disciples, said, *"My friends, be not afraid of them who kill the body, but after that have nothing more they can do."* They can take your body and burn it and dismember it, but that does not hurt your soul. They have no more that they can do which inflicts any pain upon you. *"But,"* He continued, *"I will forewarn you whom to fear. Fear Him who after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell."* Furthermore, in **Luke 16**, the rich man died (verse 22), and in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment in the flame, so there definitely is punishment after death for the alien, and unfaithful.

Secondly, "Is there, according to the Word of God, and beyond all uncertainties of interpretation, and all questions

about the meaning of words, such a final judgment as we have been taught to believe?" The word "judgment" is used and applied many times to judgments that occur here on earth. Many imagine that this is the only use of the term. But the Apostle told us in **Heb. 9:27**, *"that it is appointed unto man once to die, and after that the judgment."* In addition then to all the judgments on earth, there is a final judgment that comes after death. This judgment will be universal in its nature. *"So then each one of us shall give account of himself unto God"* (**Rom. 14:12**). *"When the Son of Man shall come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him, then shall he sit upon the throne of His glory and all nations shall be gathered before him"* (**Matt. 25:31; Jno. 5:28,29**). *"And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne"* (**Rev. 20:12**). So the judgment following death will be final and universal in its nature.

Thirdly, What is to follow in the way of punishment, if anything? Rationally speaking, were there no punishment provided there would be no point in having a judgment. God's infinite justice necessitates punishment to those who have violated His infinite holiness by disobeying His righteous commands. Do you remember how this punishment is set forth in the Bible? *"Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels"* (**Matt. 25:41**). Everlasting Fire! A lake that burns with fire and brimstone. The most excruciating torture, I believe, that human flesh can experience, is to be burned with fire, and that represents this suffering after the judgment. Furthermore he said, *"There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth"* (**Matt. 25:30**). Men gnash their teeth only, when they are enraged against themselves, when they are tormented with anguish and self-reproach. Such then, is the answer to our third question. "Will there be any punishment after the final judgment?"

Now finally, how long will that punishment which comes after the judgment, and which is described in these horrid terms, endure? How long shall the punishment last? Christ stamped the word "eternal" upon the duration of the sinner's punishment. *"And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life"* (**Matt. 25:46**). Eternal punishment for some and eternal reward for others. There are people who would tell you that the reward for the righteous will last forever, but the reward of the wicked will be completed at death. In other words, death is the final and complete punishment. Annihilation is the punishment for the sinner; but remember, the Lord said "eternal punishment" and "eternal life." If "eternal" life means forever, then "eternal" punishment means for the same duration. We know from their meanings that there is no end for either.

We see then God's infinite hatred of sin by the fact that he is going to punish the sinner with everlasting punishment in the lake of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. How is it, then, that a man or woman, can consent to live in sin day by day and still realize the awful consequence of such a life? Knowing that they shall incur this awful penalty, that if they were to die today, this would be their unending fate, how can they fail to reproach themselves for being sinners, and to fly away from it to the only means of escape found in Christ Jesus our Lord?

But thanks be to His blessed name; however, great the sins committed, however numerous they are, and however just the awful sentence that has been passed against us, there is a way of escape. This is had by obedience to the terms laid down in the gospel of Christ. *"Repent and be baptized, everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins"* (**Acts 2:38**). There is salvation through no other means, so we must be saved by obedience to the gospel.

By Cecil Willis -- Via Truth Magazine

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;

1Pet. 2:9 But ye are an elect race, a 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:

Psa. 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 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 the 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.

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Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

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NEWS AND NOTES:

SICK IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

J.R. DANIEL AND PAT CLOTHIER CONTINUE TO RECUPERATE AT HOME. LILLIE KEECH HAS RECOVERED SUFFICIENTLY TO TRAVEL AND VISIT RELATIVES. JAN PATRICK AND IRENE HURD CONTINUE TO SUFFER POOR HEALTH. PLEASE REMEMBER OUR BELOVED FRIEND, LORETTA TAPP IN YOUR PRAYERS.

WE ARE NOW STUDYING THE CHURCH (GIVING ANSWERS) ON SUNDAY AND THE PROPHET JEREMIAH ON WEDNESDAYS.

SUNDAY'S SERMON: THE CHURCH AND ITS MONEY



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins

Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10