

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

John 8:32 And
ye shall know
the truth and
the truth shall
make you free.

THE LENEXA EDIFIER

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BASIC PRINCIPLES OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

Jim Stauffer

There is no question religious division results from a difference in how we view the word of God. Do we believe He has provided us with sufficient specific guidance to ensure we can all have the unity Paul called for in **1 Cor. 1:10**? If we follow His word only, can we be of the same mind and judgment?

God has always authorized the activities of His people relative to worship and service of Him. Consider his specific instructions regarding:

The Passover – **Ex. 12**

Design of the tabernacle – **Ex. 35,36,37,38**

Design of Priestly Garments – **Ex. 39**

In the New Testament Jesus commands His disciples:

To go into all the world and preach the gospel
Mk. 16:16

To observe the Lord's Supper – **Mt. 26:26-29;**
1 Cor. 11:23-26

Baptize people in order to enter the kingdom
Joh. 3:3-5; Gal. 3:27

There are many other examples but these should demonstrate that God has given through His Word ample instruction to guide our lives in His service. (2 Tim. 3:16,17)

We look for *direct statements, approved examples and necessary inferences* which provide for both generic and specific instruction in order to lead us to the truth of His Will for us. Within the scope of generic and specific authority expedients which aid us in our obedience can and are used.

Let us view some examples of these three types of communication:

Direct Statements – **Mat. 28:19,20; Mark 16:15,16**

– We are directly told to preach to the world, baptize them into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, an action that is predicated on their belief in Christ and leads to salvation.

Approved Examples – When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, He said, *as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup..... (1 Cor. 11:26)*. We see in **Acts 20:7** the disciples observed this Supper upon the first day of the week. We follow this example.

Necessary Inference – In **Acts 20:7** we learn of

brethren observing the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week. Which week did they do this on the first day? Since no week was specified, we must infer it was to be done the first day of **every week**. One cannot accurately infer anything else from this practice.

Look at some examples of generic commands and specific commands.

Generic – Let's look at **Matthew 28:19,20**, again – When Christ told His disciples to **go**, the command is generic. He did not specify how they should go. They could walk, ride an animal, go by boat; these specific choices were all left up to them. Yet when he told them to *baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit*, He was very specific. He further specified they were to, *teach them to observe all that I commanded you*. Determining general instructions and specific instructions is something we do in everyday life at our jobs and in our homes. We should not see this as something strange at all. It is how mankind communicates.

When a person in authority gives us instructions they nearly always carry both generic and specific instructions. When my mother sent me to the grocery store, she gave me a list of the things I was to obtain. I was not authorized to purchase anything beyond her list. If I added a candy bar to the list, I had violated her authority and would face the music for it. Her list was specific. When I went, she left it up to me whether I rode my bicycle or walked. This was generic. God has also communicated to us in this way so we can understand (**Eph. 3:1-5**).

With these thoughts as a backdrop to guide our understanding let us look at a few ideas that are prevalent in religion and see if they pass the test of Biblical Authority.

SOME TEACH TRADITIONS AS EQUALLY AUTHORITATIVE AS SCRIPTURE

Faith of our Fathers page 111 - James Gibbons says, "Now the Scriptures alone do not contain all the truths which a Christian is bound to believe, nor do they explicitly enjoin all the duties which he is obligated to practice." **2 Thess 2:15** is sometimes used as a proof text for this position. But these

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traditions are those approved Apostolic examples that came about through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (**John 16:13; 1 Cor. 2:9-13; Gal. 1:8,9**). Paul further clarifies the all sufficiency of Scripture in **2 Tim. 3:16,17**. The apostle John forbids going beyond Christ's revealed doctrine, **2 John 9-11**.

NEXT, WE ARE TOLD THERE ARE MANY AND NEW REVELATIONS

Such as the Quran, The Book of Mormon, Ellen G. White (Seventh Day Adventist) Mary Baker Eddy (Christian Science)

Now we understand that God has provided all we need and no other revelations are necessary (**2 Pet. 1:3; 2 Tim. 3:16,17**). We further understand we are not to believe in any man who claims to have received a revelation (**2 Pet. 1:20,21; Gal. 1:8,9**).

These revelations are based on such things as emotions. Emotions do not necessarily rely on truth – **Gen. 37:31-36; 45:25-28**. In these texts Jacob endured the genuine sorrow of a lost son because of the report his brothers gave him. Yet later, he enjoyed the joy of learning that was not true and his son still lived. His feelings on both occasions were genuine, but what they were based on was not true in the first incident. We can believe error as wholeheartedly as we can truth. It then becomes our responsibility to verify it comes from God and not from men. He has revealed His will to us. Let us study our Bibles and trust in them and not in men.

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

*"Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, I need to be baptized by you, and are you coming to me? But Jesus answered and said to him, Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he allowed Him. When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, this is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (**Matthew 3:13-17**).*

John was not a Baptist; John was a baptizer. That is, he baptized people with a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Did the baptism of John accomplish something—anything? There is no doubt about Jesus coming with intent to be baptized; he traveled over sixty miles to find John; Jesus was not the only person that was baptized; Jesus joined with a multitude in submitting to John's baptism. What was the difference, though, between the many others who came to John and were baptized and the baptism of Jesus?

Matthew is the only gospel to record John's reticence about baptizing Jesus. Rather than finding

fault with John, wouldn't we feel the same way? John said he needed to be baptized *by* Jesus; we would say the same thing. We would not say that Jesus was baptized because of any sin. Jesus lived a sinless life (**Hebrews 4:15**). Consider two things: the righteousness of God and the anointing of the Spirit.

Jesus said that His baptism would fulfill all righteousness. Jesus did not need to be made righteous or just in the Father's sight. He did not need to be justified because of any sin. But when Jesus was baptized, He was doing what was *right*; that is, He was doing or fulfilling the Father's will. Jesus had no sin; still, He had to obey the Father's will. Jesus learned "**obedience**" (**Hebrews 5:8-9**); His pattern of following the Father's was consistent, from beginning to end of His earthly ministry.

Then, consider the fact that John probably didn't know who Jesus was; that is, he could not identify Jesus as the Messiah. This account is the only place in the NT where we find Jesus and John together (except the time when both were in their mother's womb). **John 1:31-34** says: *"I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water. And John bore witness, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."*

Now the ministry of both Jesus and John were joined. John is the Elijah that Malachi spoke of; Jesus is the Messiah; now John knows who Jesus is. The Spirit descending on Jesus in a form similar to a dove marked the advent of the Spirit; John had already spoken about this to those who came to his baptism. Peter said that God *"anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power"* (**Acts 10:38**). This fulfills Isaiah's prophesy; the Spirit of the Lord was on the Messiah (**Isaiah 61:1-2**). The Father's approval of His Son is clear. And now, Jesus begins His public ministry having submitted to His Father's will. As Jesus submitted to His Father's will, let us follow our Savior's example of obedience and join with Him in the kingdom of heaven.

Randy Harshbarger

Worship – The Emotional Component

*"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth," (**John 4:24**).*

Every element of true worship involves some emotional component. The emotional component is not driven by a direct operation of the Holy Spirit (as in Calvinism) or "getting the Holy Spirit" (as in Charismatic practice). The emotional component of true worship is the result of

one's informed relationship with Deity.

The faithful disciple will go into every assembly with the emotion of joy, reverence for Deity and the anticipated interests in praising Deity and being edified. The true worshipper will leave the assembly with the emotional satisfaction of participating in all that God has directed, unto His glory. The proper emotional component is not contrived and forced or coerced. It is the result of one's informed relationship with God.

One should not perform some emotional display, because it is perceived it is expected by others. One should not imitate the emotional display of another. The faithful one's emotional response (seen or unseen by men) is the result of one's informed relationship with God.

When the Word is faithfully preached, there should be a range of emotions in the hearts of faithfully listeners (remorse, assurance, joy, the satisfaction of knowledge gained). In partaking of the Lord's Supper, remembering His death, the emotions of both sorrow and gratitude should combine in our reflection. Singing has a strong emotional component. But this emotional result is directly tied to lyrical content. What do the lyrics mean to the worshipper? Some love music and are moved by what they believe is good music, but without any self-examination or thought to lyrical content. The emotional connection derives from content (the words in the songs), not form (harmony, meter, structure). Likewise, praying is not simply a formal, mechanical exercise. It has great emotional potential, but not due to voice or poetic structure, but content and direction (praying to Deity). Giving should also have an emotional component (**a cheerful giver, II Corinthians 9:7**).

In a lecture about this in 2005 I told the audience: Ignorance of what the Bible says about the Holy Spirit, combined with the popularly promoted Charismatic concepts can combine with the passion for the contemporary, and reduce our worship to events designed toward the pleasure of men instead of God! In this process (that may extend slowly into another generation), biblical knowledge can be set aside to pursue the emotional needs perceived by humans in their cultural context. True worship is not about competing with the modern marketplace. Our focus cannot be on drawing crowds or showing our affinity with the modern Charismatic style of worship. God is the object of worship, not the changing emotional needs of man. We must, from baptism until death, listen to the call of the gospel, not the call of the culture or religious world. Regarding the influence of the Charismatic movement on worship, I want to recommend that we carefully consider the danger of engineering assemblies and meetings for emotional outcome. What's at stake here is the very definition of worship! In the New Testament, worship is not presented to us as something humans set up, so that other humans can find some "spiritual high" or emotional fix. The object is to respond to God with reverence and

obedience: **"God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be held in reverence by all those around Him," (Psalm 89:7).**

Worship is not depicted as a resurrection; conversion is! When people who are terminally unspiritual, willfully ignorant of the Scriptures and religious only in some systematic or institutional way, come to the building to be raised from the dead – we cannot cater to their wants. What these people need is conversion, not "worship" designed to meet their felt needs. When we engineer worship to answer the emotional needs of people who are not concerned with the Scriptures, we fail to serve the Lord; we give people something that can never be ultimately satisfying, and we set ourselves on the road of apostasy. Worship is the avenue God has given for converted people to show their respect for Him and honor His Son. These purposes cannot be served in any sense until we decide to follow His instructions. The Charismatic format is motivated primarily by the aim to hit a human emotional target. God's people cannot go there!

by Warren E. Berkley via the Beacon; 5/24/2011

Our Sins Are Washed Away At Baptism

by Pat Donahue

Acts 22:16 reads **"... Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."**

The sentence structure of **Acts 22:16** is similar to the following examples where the word "and" connects and shows dependence (the second upon the first):

everyday example - Cut my yard, and receive your five dollars pay

James 4:7 **Resist the devil, and he will flee from you**

Matthew 7:7 **Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you**

Luke 10:28 **... this do, and thou shalt live**

Matthew 13:15b **lest ... they ... should be converted, and I should heal them**

So **Acts 22:16** is saying the washing away of Saul's sins was dependent upon his water baptism. As a matter of fact, the verse shows the following three things happened at the same time:

1. **"be baptized"**
2. **"wash away thy sins"**
3. **"calling on the name of the Lord"** (which all admit is necessary to salvation)

Acts 22:16 therefore proves Paul's sins were **not** forgiven at the point of his faith on the road to Damascus. Instead he was **forgiven at the time of his baptism.**

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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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