

The Keys Of The Kingdom

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If you would like to be a guest writer for TKOK you may contact me at jfmiller61@gmail.com.

To announce up coming events like Gospel Meetings, Lectures, Singing events etc..... Just use the email link above to contact me. Please feel free to tell others and have them sign up for their copy today. Use this link to join the mailing list. http://jfmiller.com/keysofthekingdom/?page_id=1316 . May God Bless You. Jim and the Staff

Voices From The Past

The Lord Is My Helper

Billy Boyd
Waukesha, Wisconsin

A little girl, when asked to repeat the 23rd Psalm, said, "The Lord is my shepherd, that's all I want." She may have been a little confused about the actual wording, but she expressed a truth that should be the property of every Christian.

There is no blessing so valuable as the ability to lean upon the sufficiency of God, to find in Him all that we want. The firm basis of such trust was brought to Paul's attention when the Lord said to him, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness." (11 Cor. 11 :9).

Consider the unsearchable riches which one possesses when the Lord is his helper.

1. There is a feeling of security that transcends social and financial security. The child of God can be content in all circumstances of life. "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content." (Phil. 4:11).
2. There is a peace that passeth understanding (Phil. 4:7) and floods the Christian's life with joy that is unspeakable. (I Pet. 1 :8). This peace is greater than all the treasures earth can yield.
3. There is a freedom from fear of all types. "So that with good courage we say, The Lord is my helper; I will not fear: What shall man do unto me?" (Heb. 13:6). Fear of bodily harm and even of death itself is dissipated when we walk with the Lord. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil; for thou art with me:" (Ps. 23:4)
4. There is a crown of life that glitters through eternity. "Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing." (II TIM. 4:8).

In addition to these wonderful blessings, the Lord promises us what we need physically. Surely, when the Lord is our helper, there can be no want.
First Printed January 1958

Noah and Me Pt. 2

Second of a 3 part series

Scott Crawford
Clay, Alabama

God shuts Noah in.

The animals start to show up, the rain starts to fall, and once the ark is full – God shuts Noah in. A man that I heard in a meeting said that that verse is one of those verses that made him shudder deep down, and I agree. “O.K.,” you say, “I can see how we are like Noah and have found grace in the eyes of God. I can even see how we are like Noah and can hear the voice of God speaking to us, but how are we like Noah and shut in?”

Do you remember the story of the first Pentecost, after the death of Jesus, told to us in the second chapter of Acts? Peter and the other apostles stand up in the temple and begin to speak to those assembled from around the known world. Peter tells them of Jesus. Peter tells them what they have done as a people and what they should do to be saved. Then, as told by Luke in Acts 2:41, those that received the Word were “gladly” baptized and added to the church. Not only that, but Acts 2:42 tells us that they (those saved and added to the church) continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and teaching. When we are saved, we become a part of the church of the living God, part of the Way, part of the church of Christ; and through this group that has been called out of the world, we are shut in. Truly, we should want to be shut in with God, to be a part of the church, because within the church we have salvation, as a part of the bride of Christ.

Apart from the church we do not have salvation. Look at Acts 10:2 where the Bible speaks about a man named Cornelius. Cornelius was a devout man and feared God. He gave money to the poor, and He prayed to God always, but he still lacked his salvation. I Peter 2:4, 5 tells us that when we come to God and obtain our salvation, when we are added to the church, we become as living stones in the walls of God’s temple. We become a part of a holy priesthood. When God is speaking through Paul to the Colossians, He says that they had died to this life, and now their life is hidden with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3). We, just like them, are added to the church through our acceptance of the salvation of God, and we die to the world and become hidden with Christ in God.

As part of the church, we are shut in with God and receive the blessings that come from that special communion, which Jesus died to establish for us with

God. What does Paul say in Romans 7: 24, 25 – “O wretched man that I am, who will save me from this body of death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Jesus is the doorway into the church where there is safety, if we allow ourselves to be shut in.

Some people look at life and see a storm here and a sunny patch there, but I see one continuous storm – sometimes just a drizzle, and other times a full blown thunderstorm with hail and tornado’s. I have seen the church marquee that said God did not ensure us a smooth passage but only a safe landing. While we live on this earth, the storm will rage around us, and other times the winds will only push us about, but the only true safety is when we are shut in with God. The church is an ark that will carry us through the storms of this life.

God will shut us into His church, just like Noah in the ark.

God gives us a place of security, just like Noah in the ark.

God provides a way through the storm, just like Noah in the ark.

God remembers Noah.

So, there’s old Noah; floating around with a barn full of animals. That floating barn is full of growls, barks, and yelps. The weather is always hot and humid. The ark is constantly tossing from side to side. Getting up every day to the same old routine; feed the animals, shovel the stalls, eat lunch, feed the animals, shovel the stalls, eat dinner, milk something and hope it doesn’t kick you, and then take a break and look at water. What do you think Mrs. Noah was saying? “I told you it was going to smell.” “Have you fed the camels? I’m not going to feed the camels – they hate me.” “Put on a shirt!” Not only that, but you know what the kids were saying, “Are we there yet?” “I want something to eat.” “He touched me.” Then, at the end of the day, when old Noah is about to go the bed, you can hear the prayer he was saying, “Please God, just help me make it one...more...day.” Every day, day in and day out, and on the 150th day, the Bible says that God remembers Noah.

No matter how much we think we are alone in the world; no friends, no family, sitting around with no one to lean upon – God still remembers us, too. The writer of Hebrews in the 13th chapter, verses 5, 6, says that God Himself has said to us that “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” That way we can boldly say that the Lord is our Helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me? What can life do to me? The fact of the matter is that we feel alone at times, maybe all the time, but we never are.

Jesus is speaking in John 14: 16 – 19 and says, that even when He knew He

was going to face death on the cross, that although He was going to be leaving us, He would send another to be with us – the Holy Spirit. Today the Holy Spirit lives within us and is the Comforter for us in times of trouble and distress. We are able to look inside ourselves and touch the presence of God, in the person of the Holy Spirit, and find comfort there.

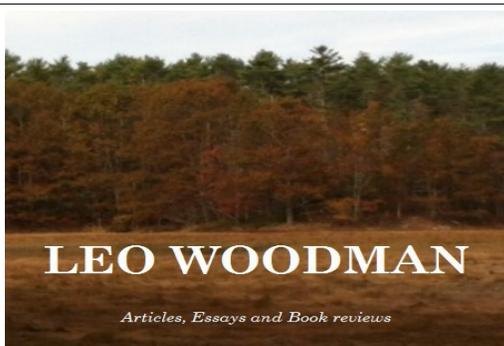
No only do we have God remembering us, Jesus being our mediator, the Holy Spirit giving us comfort, but we also have each other in the form of the Church. Just like in the previous section, God prepared us a place of security in the form of the Church, of which Jesus is the head (Ephesians 5:23). Sometimes, even within the confines of the Church, people can feel alone and outcast. Do you sit there in your pew Sunday after Sunday, Wednesday after Wednesday; coming in quietly, going out quietly, and with only a handful of people, or maybe no people, even considering you or making you feel welcome? The body of the Church, and by that I mean the individual congregations that make up the whole, where you attend church, is still made up of mere humans, and that means imperfect – way, way imperfect. There is only One in the church that will never let you down and that is the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. A quick word of advice, if you want more fellowship with others in your church, don't wait for them, put your hand out in fellowship to them. Jesus is called the great Physician because He came to heal the sick and not just those physically but even more so the spiritually sick. If you think your church has nothing but hypocrites and sinners in it, be happy, because it is someplace that everyone can fit in (sorry, was that a soapbox I just tripped over?).

God remembers us in the good times and bad, just like Noah.

God remembers us even when we feel lost and tossed about, just like Noah.

God remembers us when our life is tedious and the dark waters of this world surround us, just like Noah.

Part 3 and the final article on our topic will be published next month.



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[Visit Leo's Site](#)

THE ANCHOR OF OUR HOPE

Cougan Collins
Lone Grove, Oklahoma

I think we all understand the importance of an anchor, especially when it comes to fishing on a boat. If you go out on the lake and you find the perfect fishing spot, you put down your anchor so you will stay in that spot. If you do not, you will drift away from where all the fish are. Now, not any anchor will do because it has to be big enough to hold whatever size boat you are in. With this in mind, let's look at what the writer of Hebrews has to say.

Hebrews 6:13 For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, ¹⁴ saying, "Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you." ¹⁵ And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. ¹⁶ For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. ¹⁷ Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, ¹⁸ that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. ¹⁹ This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, ²⁰ where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

There is a lot going on in these few verses that we could take a close look at, but for this lesson, I want to focus on the fact that God is the anchor of our souls. We are given the example of Abraham and the great promise God made to him after he was willing to sacrifice his only son, which God stopped from happening. Notice what Abraham was told in:

Genesis 22:15 Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, ¹⁶ and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son -- ¹⁷ "blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. ¹⁸ "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

Just as God promised, Abraham's descendants did multiply and all the nations of the earth were blessed. Of course, this was ultimately fulfilled through Jesus and His church. Notice what Paul writes:

Galatians 3:26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

The reason God is the anchor of our souls in which we can put our hope in is because: He is our Creator and no one is greater than Him; He cannot lie; He always keeps His promises. God is our rock and nothing can move Him. No matter how big the storms may become in our lives, when we use God as an anchor, we will stay right where we need to be. Jesus said:

John 10:27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. ²⁸ "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

The world also offers you an anchor, but it is the wrong kind of anchor. It offers you no stability, and the only thing it really does is drag you down and keeps you from having hope, and it keeps you from getting closer to God. It makes about as much sense for a big cruise ship to use an anchor designed for a row boat as it does for a person to use the world as his anchor instead of using God.

If you are using the world as your anchor right now, I suggest you drop it and get the only anchor that will bring stability and hope to your life. God is the only anchor that can give you the assurance of eternal life in heaven. So, why not make God the anchor of your soul starting today? I hope you will take the following words from Paul to heart.

Romans 8:38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Abiding In The Doctrine

By: Chuck Verkist
Ellensburg, Washington

(II John 1-13) As a Christian we have a clear path we must follow in order to have life eternal, that is the doctrine of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

As a Christian we are claiming to have Christ, we have fellowship means partnership. We have a communion, blessed relationship with God. (1 John 3: 1-2). We have such a broken world today. If the Christian will not show the way to Christ who will? Did not Jesus say " If you love Me, keep My commandments." 'For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome" (John 14:15 I John 5:3).

If we profess to be a Christian then we are obligated to live, to walk, to talk, to stand and be counted as a Christian in all that we do. The greatest tests of our love for our Lord is our willingness to obey His commandments with joy!

The Father and Son gave us every reason to have such joyful love in our hearts. Indeed, "We love Him Because He first loved us" (I John 4:19). His Son died for each one despite the fact that we were neither righteous nor good (John 3:16; Rom 5:9-11). Instead, we were ungodly sinners. We must consider "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen. (Matt 28:19-20). When one abides in the teaching of Christ, they have God. But when one leaves the teaching of Christ they leave God. We as his children cannot serve two masters. We will love one and hate the other or hate the one and love the other.

God's love is perfected in those who keep His word. (1 Jo 2:4-5). We must keep this very clear in our minds to have God we must keep the teaching of Christ we must not add to or take from His word. In other words for each one to have the hope of heaven we must abide in the Son, in His teachings. If we abide in Christ then we have satisfaction for our sins. (1 John 1:5-2:5). For us to have hope of eternal life we must have the Son of God (1John 5:9-13). We must be in the one body, the church that was bought with His blood, the church of Christ. Yes, to have salvation we must abide in the Doctrine, the teaching of Christ and be faithful unto death (Rev 2:10). So many times in our younger years we never give thought to the teaching of Christ.

But we must consider these things or else we will be lost. Consider what Solomon spoke about youth (Ecc 11:9) Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; walk in the ways of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes; but know that for all these God will bring you into judgment. (We may hide our actions from others, But not from the eyes of God).

God's word helps keep us from sinning but we must continue in the teaching of the word. As we read through first John. It is quite clear that John was concerned about keeping sin out of the lives of His little children. His aim was to lead to perfect holiness and the perfect likeness of God.

Keeping the Doctrine. "Keep" expresses the idea of watchful, observant obedience. It is habitually our aim to please God. Our aim is not just to stand for the Doctrine of Christ. But we must be aware of False teachers about us, we are to continue to stand for the truth and stand against the false teacher.

(1 John 4:1) Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. What do we learn from the Roman letter. (Rom 16:17-18) Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple. (2 Tim 4:2-4) Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

If we do not test the Spirits we may fall into Apostasy and be lost. (2John 8) Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward. It is so easy to be lead away. So many never return. Sin leads us from Christ and takes us where we do not want to go and keeps us longer than we thought we'd stay. Therefore we must be Vigilant (watchful) in our walk, our stand for the TRUTH.

1. Lest we fall into the snare of the devil (1Tim 3:7).
2. We need to Hide the Word in our hearts in order to keep the devil from putting wicked purposes into our hearts (Psa 119:11; John 13:2; Acts 5:3).
3. He (the devil) He takes the Word of God out of the hearts of men (Matt 13:19;

Mark 4:15; Luke 8:12).

4. He (devil) and his children pervert the right way of our Lord and savior (Acts 13;10).

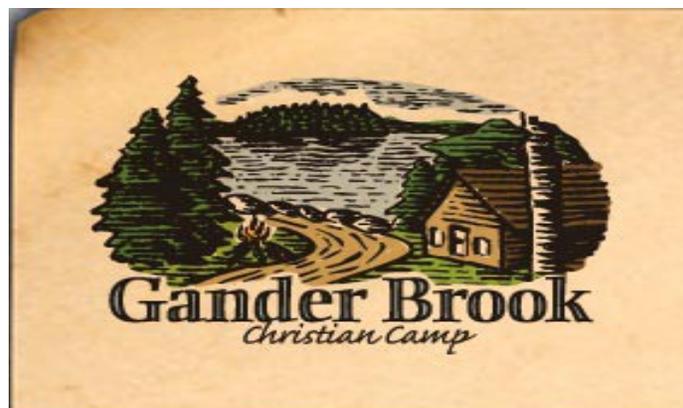
5. Not only he perverts the Lord's way He also seeks to devour the ones following Christ (1 pet 5:8-9; Rev 12:4).

6. O how we must be "wise as serpents and harmless as doves." We must be ever watching our Adversary because he is lurking about to see who he may devour.

7. Let us all stay strong in the Doctrine of our Lord and follow his example. For that will lead us to Eternal life.

Our challenge is before us. To walk in the light of the savior. To set the world last and Christ first as we Sojourn through this life. Christ's word is important; obedience to that word is necessary!

(Ecc 12:13) Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For by it we will see eternal life with Him. If you have not as of yet put Christ on in baptism you may. Or if you have returned to the world now is the time to make it right and come back to Christ..



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Is Proximity Unity?

Archie R. Green
Glenn Heights, Texas

Growing up denominational in a small south central Texas town, I was not aware of the importance of unity. Of course I had heard a denominational preacher clearly teach *“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”* Matthew 18:20 They had repeatedly told me that this is Biblical proof of the togetherness that all of us could achieve with our Heavenly Father at the center. I am thankful for kind hearted and studied Brethren who later in life directed me towards the proper use and context of this and other scriptures. Over the course of time I have extracted more remarkable lessons from the scriptures which have affected me deeply and in very profound manners. For example, one of those marvelous lessons comes from Brother Eddie Jones in his reminder of Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians 1. Eddie states that sometimes ***“We are so busy hammering to the lost and those outside of the church using these and other verses that we forget that they were written first to the Church”***. What a needful repetition for the Body of Christ. An amazing reminder of how often we make things way more difficult than they need be in Christianity. 2 Corinthians 11:3 Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 1 that there were already some being contentious and unruly within the Brotherhood. *“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”* 1 Corinthians 1:10 Paul had stated as a reminder in the previous two verses that we are called unto fellowship with Jesus and we are to be mindful of this so that we would be found blameless in that day. vs. 8-9 And in Ephesians 4:1, Paul argues again similarly for unity by stating that it can only be achieved if we walk worthily according to which we are called. The Apostle calls himself a “prisoner of the Lord” giving us the impression that he no longer walked rendering to the freedoms given himself, but now as in bonds to God. This caused him to have fellowship with the Father and the Son thru humility. I hope that we strive to do the same. 1 Corinthians 11:1 Paul realized that having a proper communion with God afforded him a better relationship than with any other thing offered in this world. James 4:4

Where am I going with you might ask? Well if Brother Jones is true in his thinking, and in my opinion he is correct, we may be losing and/or have lost one of the most essential factors of Christianity...and that is our unity. Dear friend, I

am not speaking about proximity, but real inseparableness for the cause of Christ. Not because He died for you and not because He died for me, but because He died for US all. How often do we forget that this same Savior that hung on Calvary's cross so that the middle wall of partition would come crumbling down will not stand for us building up other unnecessary and needless barriers today? Galatians 1:6-9 This time not being in reference to the Jew and his consternation of the Gentile, but along the other lines that tend to segregate. The old verses the young, the rich verses the poor and many times the Black verses the White. Have you ever gone to a worship assembly and felt left out? All alone? Maybe even lost in a crowd? There can be no unison when I or anyone else decides that any person, as a baptized penitent believer, should not be afforded this same luxury of love and respect that has been given to all that believe. II Timothy 4:8

The bottom line is this, just because many of us “come together” to the same building on the day of worship does not mean that we “are together”. How can we be assured that we are not just simply in the presence of each other, but are actually in true union? We must ask ourselves “Am I being kindhearted, open and hospitable to ALL or just to those who look, act and sound mostly like me?” God teaches us that we can only walk together if we be agreed. Amos 3:3 For us to be agreed, we must deny ourselves the freedom to live selfishly. 1 Corinthians 10:23 To cast off gender bias, being a respecter of persons based on affluence or position and to utterly defeat racial biases that hinder and destroy. This is what Our Father desires. It is imperative that we honor God in the manner of which we think, speak and act as Paul recorded in Philippians 2:13-15, *“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;”* True unity comes with a cost. And that loss is me. When those that have come in from the world and are obedient to the Gospel, do we “encourage them” to find some other place of worship because they might “feel better over there” or are we mindful of the fact that we are all one in Christ. Galatians 3:26-29 Can we live our earthly lives like Paul records in Colossians 3:12-15, *“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.”* It is my prayer that we find the strength and the courage to do so. God Bless.

Understanding What Is Expedient?(1)

Jim Miller
Gray, Maine

συμφέρω; 1 aorist participle συνενέγκαντες (Acts 19:19); from (Homer (in middle)), Aeschylus, Herodotus down; to bear or bring together (Latin confero), i. e.

1. with a reference to the object, to bring together: τί, Acts 19:19.

•with a reference to the subject, "to bear together or at the same time; to carry with others; to collect or contribute in order to help, hence, to help, be profitable, be expedient"

Now for those of you like me a simpler definition to clear things up..... An expediency, within the framework of Scripture, is the way, means or method of doing that required by law and within the law. It is styled an expediency because it facilitates or expedites the accomplishment of a given task or the performance of a divine commandment.

An example of this would be: *Mar 16:15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.* We are told to "GO" but not how to "GO". So an expedient of this command would be walking, riding a horse, a bicycle, a car etc. These things expedite going and preaching.

For something to be expedient however it must be Lawful. If a thing does not fall within the bounds of what God has authorized, then we have no right to practice it. If there is no inference, command or example, found in the Bible to justify a practice, it can not be done. Paul explains it this way *1Co 6:12 All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.*

There are two categories for Biblical authority:

One is general and the other is specific. We should be familiar with both. They are easily distinguished from one another. As an example, Lets say you a Dad/Father tells his son to pick up a few groceries on his way home from school. This would be a general command. The son stops at the store and buys ice cream, candy, cookies, steak and potato's. He has then obeyed the command because all these things fall under the scope of groceries.

Now lets say the son was told to buy bread, milk, steak, beans and potato's, this would be a specific command. So the son comes home with bread, milk, steak, beans and potato's, and also cookies, chips and soda, the son has not faithfully obeyed because he has gone beyond what was commanded. So we can see that general authority includes all that is necessary to the carrying out of a command. Specific authority excludes everything except that which is precisely stated. We can also say that the car, bus, bicycle etc. used to go to the store was an expedient (the means by which to get there. As long as no Law was broken such as the son driving the car and being under age.)

So understanding the two types of authority we can now get to the heart of this article. These rules must be applied to determine Scriptural Authority, without authority from scripture an expedient is unauthorized also. An expedient does not violate any scriptural principle.

To show that an expediency can not be used with out authority let us look at some examples. Let us take the Lords Super for instance, there might be some who would say it is more expedient for them to partake of it on Wednesday instead of Sunday. However, the command is to partake of it on Sunday the first day of the week. Therefore having it on Wednesday is unauthorized and the expedient is void. We must remember true expedients are always within the purview of example, statement, command.

We all know the story of Uzzah in (*2 Sam. 6:6*). And what happened when the oxen shook the cart upon which the ark was placed. Though it might have been expedient Uzzah discovered his act was not lawful because God had prohibited anyone from touching the ark of the covenant. The real blame belongs to David though because he did not follow Gods instructions as to how the ark was to be moved. Though the cart pulled by oxen may have been an expedient it was not lawful. The law specified that it was to be carried by the Levites.

Expedients never cause others to sin. Sometimes a practice might be lawful, and still not be expedient (*1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23*). The eating of meats sacrificed to idols was lawful. However, it was a stumbling block to weaker brethren as it led them to violate their conscience.

This is a good place to leave off till next month when we will look closer at this subject. Till then I would urge you to go back over this to be sure you are getting a clear understanding of expedients. Look for part 2 in May.

End Notes: All Scripture quotations are from the King James Version unless otherwise indicated.

Obedient In All Things

Robert Alexander
DeFuniak Springs, FL

There are many Biblical doctrines that are despised by men and right at the top of that list is that of obedience.

Obedience is viewed by many in a variety of ways: 1) As being unnecessary (which is the logical conclusion of false doctrines such as 'salvation by faith only' or 'grace only'), 2) as 'legalism' (which is the erroneous view of some who say that following 'rules' is trusting in one's own righteousness rather than God's grace), and 3) as something one can 'pick and choose' at (i.e. 'selective' obedience) or a 'salad bar' approach to doing what is required of one.

Obviously, man's view of obedience and God's view in many cases are not compatible. God views obedience to His will as essential if man is to enjoy fellowship with God. This was true in Patriarchy (Gen. 12:1), true in the Mosaical economy (Deut. 5:32), and is still true today in the Christian dispensation (Matt. 7:21; Lk. 6:46; Jas. 1:22,23).

Having briefly established the essentiality of obedience, the question becomes "how far is man's obedience to go? What is the scope of that obedience?" The apostle Paul answered in his second letter to the church at Corinth by penning these words: "*For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be OBEДИENT IN ALL THINGS*" (2:9). Time and space will not permit for a full examination of the background of this verse, but sufficient to say is the fact that God expected obedience from the Corinthians in ALL things then and He expects obedience from us in all things today. To stress the importance and essentiality of being obedient in ALL things God requires, let us examine the actions and consequences of a man anointed king of Israel by God who rejected God's will in 1 Samuel 15. Let us take a look at the terrible decision made by that man Saul and the consequences that resulted from his failure to be obedient in all things.

The Responsibility (v1)

Saul had the responsibility to HEARKEN to the words of God according to this verse, God had anointed him as king over His people and thus he (Saul) had the responsibility to lead the people in the ways of God by hearing and doing as God

required. The same principle holds true today in that we are to HEAR Christ, who has all authority (Matt. 28:18), through His NT (Matt. 7:15; Heb. 1:2; 9:15).

The Requirement (v3)

Always involved with hearing God's will is the receiving of what God requires of man: what to do and/or what not to do. It is up to man to comply with God's requirements. In the text, God required Saul (and the armies of Israel) to go and smite the Amalekites and utterly (completely) destroy them. To emphasize the completeness of this judgment upon Amalek God was carrying out, Saul is also told to 'spare not' woman, children, ox and sheep, camel and donkeys. Men today are required to utterly (completely) obey the will of God from the heart. To leave any one thing out from what God requires (i.e. obeying the Gospel—which includes hearing and believing (Rom. 10:17), repentance (Lk. 13:3,5), confession (Rom. 10:9,10) and baptism (Acts 2:38; Mk. 16:16; Rom. 6:3,4), worship in spirit and in truth, Christian living, church discipline, etc.) is to disobey God. It is complete obedience or not at all.

The Refusal (v9)

Saul and Israel did indeed go up to a city of Amalek and did smite MANY of the Amalekites, yet Saul and the armies of Israel REFUSED to completely destroy Amalek in taking Agag, the king, alive and the best of their herds and all that was good, instead choosing to keep these for themselves perhaps all the while destroying those things which were vile and refuse. In refusing to utterly destroy the Amalekite and all they had, Saul (and Israel) refused to obey God. As sad as this was then, it is sadder still today when men claim to love Christ and yet refuse to do what He says: "*Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?*" (Lk. 6:46).

The Rejection (by God)

Because Saul refused to obey God fully, God rejected him as being king of Israel. God told Samuel that because Saul had turned back from following Him as a result of not performing (obeying) His commands that it repented Him for having set Saul up as king (v11). Samuel then proceeds to speak to Saul uttering words from God of his rejection of Saul for disobeying reminding Saul (who attempted to appease God by offering up an unauthorized sacrifice) that obedience is better than sacrifice (v22). Saul's disobedience (and we might well say man's today) is described as rebellion which is as the sin of witchcraft (v23a) and this rebellion stems from a stubbornness of men to do their own thing which is nothing more than lawlessness and self-idolatry (v23b). God rejects all who reject His will for their lives (cf. Matt. 7:21-23).

The Reason (for the Rejection)

Saul was rejected by God because he rejected God's commands in his refusal to do as God had said. As a result, God rejected him as king.

God rejects those today who: a) Do not obey the Gospel (2 Thess. 1:7-9), b) Do not worship in spirit and in truth (Jn. 4:24; Matt. 15:9), c) Do not live as a child of God ought to live (Rom. 8:1; 12:2), d) Do not practice corrective church discipline (1 Cor. 5; Rom. 16:17; 2 Thess. 3:6), e) Do not carry out entirely the work of the church (evangelism, edification and benevolence), f) Do not uphold the truth and reprove error (Jude 3; Eph. 5:11), etc...God rejects all who refuse to obey Him in all things.

The Reminder (for Us)

Many powerful and pertinent applications of reminder can be gleaned from 1 Samuel 15. May each of us be reminded that: 1) It is foolish and arrogant to think we can only partially obey God and still be pleasing to Him, 2) Excuses do not cut it with God (as Saul found out in verses 15-ff), 3) Obedience in all things is the only way to receive and to maintain God's blessings (v23), and 4) Partial obedience is non-obedience, that is, it is disobedience. The question each of us needs to consider is: will we learn from the mistakes of Saul and will we be obedient to God in all things unlike King Saul?

***Church of Christ Downtown Cedar Hill
332 W. Cedar St. Cedar Hill TX 75104
Invite All To Attend***

"God Still Cares"

1 Peter 5:6-8

June 4-Richard Stevens ***God still cares that He is known as the Creator...Gen 1:1***
June 11-Marvin Weir ***God still cares about mankind...2 Peter 3:9***
June 18-Ivie Powell ***God still cares that we obey (only) Him...1 John 5:3***
June 25-David Rectin ***God still cares that many teach false doctrine...Titus 1:9-11***
July 2-Robert Dodson ***God still cares WHEN we sin against Him...Isaiah 59:1-2***
July 9-Jim Laws ***God still cares about repentance...Acts 17:30***
July 16-David McElwain ***God still cares about forgiveness...Colossians 3:13***
July 23-Mike Bonner ***God still cares that we love one another...Ephesians 5:30-32***
July 30-Hubert Smith ***God still cares about marriage...1 Corinthians 7:1-2***
August 6-Mike Crosby ***God still cares that we worship Him AS HE DESIRES...John 4:21-24***
August 13-Willie Alvarenga ***God still cares about the Lord's church...Matthew 16:18***
August 20-Bob Moss ***God still cares about baptism...1 Peter 3:21***
August 27-Bill Burke ***God still cares about our salvation...Romans 5:8***

Some “Hard” Questions from Leviticus (1)

Devin Dean
Corner, Alabama

And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. (2 Pet. 3:15-16)¹

God makes clear to us that we can expect to find things that are hard to understand within the Scriptures. Beyond the fact that there will be things that are hard to understand we must realize that man continues to compound the confusion with his own precepts. The following list of ten items is a partial list of issues man makes to compound the difficult passages of the Bible:

- Presuming the Bible guilty until proven innocent.
- Failing to understand the context of a passage.
- Assuming the unexplained is not explainable.
- Denying that the Bible uses non-technical, everyday language.
- Neglecting to note that the Bible uses different literary devices.
- Confusing our fallible interpretations/translations with God’s infallible revelation.
- Confusing general statements with universal statements.
- Forgetting that later revelation supersedes previous revelation.
- Forgetting that only the original text, not every copy of Scripture, is without error.
- Assuming that divergent accounts are false accounts.

The book of Leviticus was addressed to God’s people, all of Israel, for the purpose of instructing them in how to come into fellowship and maintain that fellowship with God. The central theme of Leviticus can be summed up by, “And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine” (Lev. 20:26). As we look at these questions we should concentrate on the answers as making us more holy and acceptable to God, which is the purpose of this great book for all time.

Here are two questions with which many will charge the Bible with scientific error. The purpose of the charge is to find the Bible errant (when it claims inerrancy) and ineffective as a guide for man. There are many who will do this and will not accept any plausible explanations. It must be remembered that the Bible is not a scientific text book (though it is scientifically accurate), but a revelation from God to lead man to salvation. In the Old Testament (and even within the New Testament – see Acts 15:20) those things that man consumed as food were linked to salvation.

Is the Bat a Bird or Mammal (Lev. 11:19)?

While in today's terms the bat is classified a mammal, we must in addition to allowing the use of the descriptive language, also remember that the system we use for classification did not come into widespread use until the publication of *Systema Naturae* by Carolus Linnaeus in 1758. We should then look back in the context and meaning of the original language to understand its usage in this passage. If we look at the most obvious “grouping” question, “does the bat fly?,” we see that it is rhetorical in nature. In the broadest sense there is no issue with classifying the bat with birds as it is a winged creature that does fly. It is not uncommon nor untenable for us to accept this supposed contradiction as a **practical**, rather than the scientific, grouping in order to identify to the Israelites that it was unclean.

Does the Rabbit Chew the Cud (Lev. 11:5-6)?

As with the previous question, God is **describing** that which is unclean by its **appearance** rather than the true scientific methods. God brings forth animals now that under the modern taxonomy are not ruminants (cud-chewers) – the “coney” and “hare.” We should not look at the modern usage of these terms as they, and the term “rabbit” are used interchangeably. Barnes gives us a good description of the coney:

The coney - The Old English name for a rabbit. The animal meant is the Hyrax Syriacus. It bears some resemblance to the guinea-pig or the marmot, and in its general appearance and habits Pro. 30:26; Psa. 104:18, it might easily be taken for a rodent. But Cuvier discovered that it is, in its anatomy, a true pachyderm, allied to the rhinoceros and the tapir, inferior to them as it is in size.¹

The hare found in verse 6 is actually a rabbit.

Neither the coney nor the hare are ruminants (cud-chewers), which is where those that are determined to find error in the Scriptures find their fill. The

key again is in the **appearance** these animals have. It must again be pointed out that the modern taxonomies did not come to use until 1758 – as such, to which taxonomy would Moses have referred under inspiration? While it would have been easy for God to have given Moses our modern scientific classification, even in English to save translation, God was not concerned with the modern needs, but rather the immediate need to **describe** to His chosen people the **identifying characteristics** of clean and unclean animals. How is it then that God classified these animals through Moses? It was natural and easily understood to **classify the animals by appearance**. We do the same with whale and dolphin by calling them “fish” because they swim. The animals in question here have the habit “of moving its jaws when it is at rest as if it were masticating.”¹

The appearance of this chewing motion, to the ordinary observer speaking simply and understandably, would lead us to assume they were chewers of the cud as sure as the cow. Arndt makes a good closing observation on these passages:

We must remember that Moses is here giving to the children of Israel some practical rules which are to guide them in their choice of food. For that reason their own terms and their own descriptions are employed in designating clean and unclean animals. When all this is considered, the difficulty which people have found in these verses must vanish.¹

Conclusion

The benefits to us of studying these hard passages are worth the effort and time it takes to complete the study. Applying sound reasoning and proper study techniques allows us to fulfill the commands we find within the Scriptures: “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). We should be as the Bereans were, receiving “...the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11). May we all find the time and willingness to study God’s Word.

End Notes:

1: All Scripture quotations are from the King James Version unless otherwise indicated.

2: Albert Barnes, *Albert Barnes’ Notes on the Bible*, Taken from e-Sword computer program.

3: Ibid.

4: W. Arndt, *Bible Difficulties* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, rep. 1962), p. 120.

Legalism: The Current Debate

Tim Bench
Abilene, TX

One of the increasingly common accusations (towards both church members as well as entire congregations, at times) is that people are behaving in a “legalistic” manner (as if attempting to follow the commands, doctrines, and laws of the New Testament is somehow optional, or even immoral). Such accusations are often accompanied by comparisons to the infamous Pharisees, often followed by dialogues of how “We live under GRACE *now*”...keeping the commands of Jesus Christ himself has somehow become archaic. In short, “We are not saved by works” and/or “we do not have to do ANYTHING”, since “the grace of Jesus Christ covers us”.

Since this “anti-legalistic” viewpoint seems to be more and more prevalent in today’s churches, it would behoove each of us to have a thorough understanding of what legalism actually IS and what it is NOT. Perhaps most importantly, is “legalism” (attempting to obey Biblical commands) somehow a sin by undermining “grace”? This is indeed the argument some make, and I cannot help but wonder what Church of Christ luminaries such as David Lipscomb, Alexander Campbell, Barton Stone, and others would think of a society where attempting to follow the commands of the New Testament *and of Jesus Christ himself* has become somehow “sinful”. More importantly, I cannot fathom what Jesus would think of those who claim to follow Him, but insist that actually OBEYING Him is mere “legalistic thinking”.

First, it is important to note that “legalism” is a word which does NOT appear in scripture. The definition of legalism, as per Webster’s, is “strict, literal, or excessive conformity to the law or to a religious or moral code”. My former preacher opined that legalism would be “an attempt to garner or acquire salvation through a perfect and flawless keeping of the law”in other words, gaining salvation via *perfect keeping of Biblical “laws”*.

From Daniel Denham of the Truth Bible Institute....”The term “legalism” is often misused as a broad brush against even strict obedience to commands... Liberalism, which advocates liberating people from the necessity of obedience virtually to any standard or rule of conduct (the basic definition of law), uses the term...as an ad homonym against those who teach the necessity of obedience. Because of the wide misuse of the term (as well as the misapplied references to the Pharisees regarding the same) it has come to be accepted that obedience = being legalistic, which is simply false.”

I wish to make one point abundantly clear as we commence this

discussion....None of us will EVER be perfect, and none of us will ever “earn” our salvation”, and none of us will ever be “good enough” to merit heaven based solely upon our own good actions, inaction’s, deeds, etc. “All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God” is a verse all serious-minded Christians are familiar with, and it proves the inherent sinful nature of man. Thus, by definition, if I am a sinful and flawed being, any application of Biblical study should enable me to learn quickly that my salvation is NOT predicated on my own deeds. “Grace”, or mercy from God Almighty, thus is an absolute and complete requirement for my salvation. I know of no one (even those who are or have been accused of “legalism”) who would argue this point.....thus, the absurdity of the argument that legalists try to “earn” their way into heaven is revealed.

Let’s look at several relevant facts and statements directly from the Bible....

Jesus Christ laid out numerous “commands”, both explicit and inferred, throughout the New Testament (we are to “observe all things Jesus commanded” as per Matthew 28:18-20). Am I thus being “legalistic” in trying to do precisely what this scripture says for me to do? Am I being “legalistic” in trying to follow the commands of Jesus Christ himself?

Jesus himself might well be accused of “legalism” by some nowadays.....after all, Jesus repeatedly emphasized and taught the importance of absolute trust in what God has said (see Matthew 4:4; 5:17-18; John 5:46). Jesus also stressed our need to OBEY the Holy Scriptures (see John 14:15; Matthew 7:13-14; 24-27). If adherence and obedience to the words of Jesus were NOT to be followed, or followed closely, why do such verses suggest otherwise? Was Jesus simply speaking in hyperbole, as some would nowadays suggest? How can Jesus issue commands for us to follow if following said commands is pointless and negates grace?

Jesus was obviously fully aware of God’s infinite, all-encompassing, awe-inspiring mercy....but yet, Jesus Christ, YOUR Lord and YOUR Savior DIRECTLY LINKED salvation with OBEYING THE WORD OF GOD...John 8:31-32, 'If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free'; John 8:51 '.if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death'; 12:48). If Jesus Christ stressed that obeying the Gospels was an indispensable facet of my salvation, how could I possibly argue or suggest otherwise?

The NT does not condemn the strict keeping of the commandments of God...observing and obeying NT commands is, in fact, commended. Even the infamous Pharisees, in the example upon whom accusations of “legalism” are usually based, were not condemned for keeping God's commandments too well...

They were condemned for keeping SOME requirements while leaving off OTHER ones, probably obeying the less strenuous or difficult ones, as many people seem to do today, as well.

Jesus told them that they should have kept both. "These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone" (Matthew 23:23). The Pharisees certainly had their flaws and shortcomings, but their specific "sin" in this specific context and example was NOT what the "anti-legalists" argue today.

If "legalism" means strict adherence to God's law, then Jesus and his apostles were also legalists. Jesus' apostles commanded obedience; Peter stated "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29)... "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be condemned (Mark 16:16). Note that we are to "obey" God, directly inferring action and the necessity of baptism (certainly worthy of a study on its own) would, by definition, require physical action on the part of the person wanting to become a "Christian". The act of baptism is again emphasized when the men in Acts 2:38 asked Peter and the other apostles "What shall we do?"... Peter replied with not one but TWO commands, "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins". In short, we ought to take note of "...in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ", from 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8.... simply stated, there are commands that we as Christians are required to obey. Period.

Anti-legalists often say "We do not live under the old law" or "There is no law now but grace instead". Should Paul have thus never threatened the vengeance of God for those who disobey the gospel of Christ? (see Romans 12:19). Should he have rather preached simply God's grace and love and ignored the "unpleasant" parts? Was Paul in error? In today's PC, touchy-feely, "offend no one" type world, there are those who would say Paul WAS in error, for a host of reasons, "legalism" certainly being one.

The NT doctrine of Christ taught Christians to engage in a plethora of actions/activities.... Examples might include meeting every first day of the week (Acts 20:7, Hebrews 10:25), remembering the Lord's death (1 Corinthians 11:24-26), to reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine (2 Timothy 4:2-6), to sing to the Lord (Ephesians 5:19, Matthew 26:30, Mark 14:26, etc.), and to remain faithful unto death to the commandments of the Lord (Revelation 2:10). The examples are lengthy. 2 John 9 reads "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son." All of the above are "actions" that NT Christians are commanded and expected to participate in and follow. *If the anti-legalists are correct, then Christians no longer have to follow the above "laws" and could thus live precisely as the rest of the world lives, and*

depend on “grace” and grace alone to save him.

According to some, the apostles were legalists, and not to be followed (see 1 Corinthians 11:1). Were Christ and his apostles thus mistaken for forbidding anyone to commit adultery, fornication or homosexuality (see Matthew 19:9, 1 Corinthians 6:10, Galatians 5:19-21). After all, physical actions, either positive or negative, are “works”, the argument goes, so by definition become “legalistic” efforts. “We cannot be saved, or lost, by what we do or do NOT do”, so much of the New Testament was, by definition, idle words and worthless letters.

If Christ was a legalist, should we not strive to be?? Christ is our perfect example to emulate, right? Consider the following...

“Greater love has no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends, and you are my friends if you do whatsoever I command you.” John 15:13,14.

“If you love me, keep my commandments” John 14:15.

“This is love, that we walk according to His commandments.” 2 John 6.

“If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.” John 15:10

“Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.” 1 John 2:3

“He that keeps not his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” 1 John 2:4

“If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” John 8:31-32.....words of Jesus himself.

Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth and the life, no man comes to the Father but by me.” John 14:6....words of Jesus himself.

“You know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus.” (1 Thessalonians 4:2).

"For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3).

"Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him...Whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him."(1 John 2:3-5).

Readers should note the frequency with which the word “command” or “commandment” appears regarding the words of Jesus. The Greek word for “commandment” in the NT is ἐντολή, or 'entole' (from Strong’s Concordance, 1785), and is defined as “an order, command, charge, precept, injunction” (www.biblegateway.com).

Living your life while attempting to obey the laws and commands of the New Testament is NOT sin, despite what a growing number of opponents would say. James 2:17 tells us that "Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead"....works, and actions, and obedience to the commands of both the apostles as well as Jesus Christ himself are NOT optional, or old-fashioned, or archaic, or to be ignored. Espousing charges of "legalism" vs. those striving with all their might to live as Jesus instructed is, in essence, a denial of Jesus as our Messiah and Savior, and is in direct conflict with numerous passages from the New Testament.

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Something To Think About

What has your past life been? With many, youth is a mistake, middle age a losing struggle, and old age spent in regret. Quite frankly, if most of us could live our lives over we would make some drastic changes. However, our past is compared to "water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again . . ." (2 Sam. 14:14).

Since it is impossible to recall the past and live it over, let us be "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before . . ." (Phil. 3:13).

CREATIONISM

William W. Hayes
Taylor, Michigan

In the beginning, time (past, present, future), God created the Heaven, space (height, width, depth) and the earth, matter (solid, liquid, gas). There is a trinity of trinity's in the first sentence of the bible. It is stated in the bible that God is the creator of all things, visible and invisible. By his word, he spoke everything pertaining to life into existence. Genesis chapters 1 and 2 describe the creation account in detail. The majority of Americans still believe that God created everything, but more churches are stating that the creation account is a myth, and not to be taken literally. Genesis chapters 1-11 are the foundation of the entire Bible. If you destroy the foundations of the Bible, then a Christian has trouble in giving an answer to questions regarding God and the Bible in general.

Creation according to Genesis:

Genesis chapters 1 and 2 contain two successive accounts of creation, the first taking the form as the "creation week", and the second as the Eden narrative. Some view this as two creation accounts, independent in origin, but creationist, fundamentalists, and most evangelicals see it as a continuation and expansion of the first. The argument of creation from a textual view is the word "Day" or "YOM" in the Hebrew. Some Christians view the word "day" as a 24 hour period, others say it's ages, in other words, Young Earth Creationist and Old Earth Creationist. OECs lean towards an creation/evolution creation by God.

First account-Creation week:

First Day; God creates the Light, divides it from Darkness, and Day and Night are named.

Second Day; God creates the firmament, to divide the waters above the waters below, some say that their was a water canopy above in our atmosphere surrounding the earth in the beginning.

Third Day; God commands that the waters be gathered together into one place and dry land to appear. Earth and Sea are named, commands the earth to bring forth grass, plants and fruit bearing trees.

Fourth Day; God creates the lights in the firmament, to separate the light from the darkness, the Sun and the Moon, to mark days, seasons and years, he also creates the stars.

Fifth Day; God commands the sea to "teem with living creatures" and birds to fly across the heavens, tells them to be fruitful and multiply.

Sixth Day; God commands that the land to bring forth living creatures, wild beast, livestock and reptiles, he also creates Man out of the dust of the earth and woman from his rib. He commands them to fill the earth and places them in the garden of Eden.

Seventh Day; God rest's from creation and sanctifies it and command the Jewish nation to observe it as a day of rest. God is still upholding all things by his power.

Bridge:

"These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created" are between the creation week and the Eden account. Some Christian churches view this as a long period of time and stated that God used age's in the days of creations. This view is the overview account of the creation week.

Second account (Eden narrative):

The Eden story addresses the creation of the first man and woman. In Genesis 2:4, the second half of the bridge formed by the "generations" formula, and the beginning of the Eden narrative-"in the day when YHWH Elohim made the earth and the heavens. Before any plant has appeared, before any rain, a mist watered the earth and God forms man from the dust of the earth, and breathes the breath of life into his nostrils, and man became a living being. God forms woman out of Adams rib and brings her to Adam and they become man and wife, he places them in the Garden and gives them fruits of the trees and plants for food, and tells them not to eat of the tree of Good and Evil and the tree of Life, but the serpent deceives Eve and Adam eats also, and they sin and fall from God. God passes judgment upon our first parents, the earth and the serpent, but tells them that one day, he will put enmity between the woman's seed and the serpents seed. We read that Jesus, the Son of God was born and provided salvation for mankind.

The name of God:

There are two names of God used in Genesis chapters 1 and 2. The name "Elohim" is used in the first account and "Yahweh Elohim" is used in the Eden narrative.

Man and the image of God:

The words "image of God" has been debated over the years. Biblically, God is three, "Father, Son and Holy Spirit", man is three, "Body, Soul and Spirit". This also parallels with the trinity's in the first sentence of Genesis 1:1. Mankind is God's crowning event in the whole Bible, he created us with a free will to choose Good or Evil, of course, Adam and Eve chooses evil and rebels against God's command and brings death and sin into the world.

Biblical literalism:

Biblical literalists believe that the seven days of Genesis 1 correspond to normal 24 hour days of history in which God created the world in eight divine acts or "fiats creation". Young Earth creationism hold that the creation week occurred a mere six to ten thousand years ago. Old Earth creationist hold the view of that there is a "GAP" between Genesis 1;1 and 1;2, or some hold that the "days" in the creation week are thousand to million or billions of years. They are trying to use the current geology regarding the age of the earth and fit it in the creation account. This is called "Theistic Evolution", where God uses some Evolution theory with God's creation account. One of the key verse's used is " a day is like a 1000 years and a 1000 years is like a day unto the Lord". This verse has nothing to do with the creation account, but it shows that God is not confined to our time, he is eternal and outside of time, or he would not be God.

In conclusion, If any person reads the Genesis account of creation, he or she would see that God is the creator of all things, he created the universe out of nothing and fashioned man in his own image. If you read Genesis chapters 1-11, you will find the foundation of the doctrines of the rest of the bible. If Genesis is a myth, then the rest of the bible and Christ is non effect to us at all.

“Why Do You Hate Science?”

Cloyd B. Frock, Jr.
Parsons, Kansas

It's 2014, and that means it's time for another round of politics as we edge closer and closer to November. It also means that we will begin to hear some old familiar rhetoric in popular media; one question that seems to be gaining in popularity with each election cycle is this: “*Since you don't believe the theory of evolution, why do you hate science?*”

The purpose of this question, of course, is to stoke the flames of the decades old debate between those who accept God's word concerning the creation of the heavens and the earth, and everything on the earth (Genesis 1-2), and those who accept man's word that the heavens and the earth, and everything on the earth, was merely the product of energy/matter coming together, in just the right way, by stupid chance. Their hope in asking this question is to publicly discredit any candidate who agrees with the apostle Paul's statement in First Thessalonians 2:13 “*...when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God...*”¹

Interestingly, both Christianity and science agree that someone, or something, **must** have existed eternally, because it's universally acknowledged that if ever there were *nothing*, then *nothing* could now exist; and so, if something **now exists**, then something **must have existed** before!

In order to “get around” an eternally existent God, atheists needed an alternative theory to God, and “*the law of conservation of energy*” was developed.

Either God or Energy/Matter.

The law of conservation of energy is said to be a *fundamental concept* of physics, and states that the total amount of energy in an isolated system (such as our universe) remains constant, implying that energy can neither be created nor destroyed; only changed from one form to another (i.e., pure energy to matter, and matter back to pure energy). According to the California Energy Commission, “*Energy can be transformed into another sort of energy. But it cannot be created AND it cannot be destroyed. Energy has always existed in*

¹All Bible quotations are taken from the NKJV, unless otherwise stated.

one form or another.”² Yet, the apostle Paul wrote in Colossians 1:16-17, “For by [Jesus Christ] all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.”

This leaves us with a strong disjunction: either “*all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible...by [Jesus Christ]*” (Col. 1:16), or “*...energy was not created...energy has always existed.*” Both possibilities cannot be true! And, these two possibilities exhaust all possibilities for consideration!

Recognizing the choice before us, let’s revisit that argument we are likely to begin hearing in a few months, which states that “*If one does not believe the theory of evolution, then he or she must hate science.*” I’ll give you a moment to think about it. That’s all it should take you – just one moment – because it should quickly impress any rational thinker that one need NOT agree with EVERY scientific “theory” in order to agree with SOME scientific “theory.” Indeed, in his own scientific pursuits, Albert Einstein rejected portions of Isaac Newton’s theory of gravity; did Albert Einstein, therefore, hate science?

Christianity is NOT Opposed to Science.

The question then arises, “*May a Christian reject some scientific theory (such as the false theory of evolution), while continuing to believe other scientific theories and observations?*”

Paul wrote in Romans 1:20, “*...since the creation of the world [God’s] invisible attributes are **clearly seen**, being understood **by the things that are made**, even **His eternal power and Godhead...***” We also read in First Thessalonians 5:21 that Christians are to “**test** (prove, KJV) **all things; hold[ing] fast what is good.**”

In other words, our Christian faith is based *not* on that which we *cannot* see and prove, but rather on that which we *can* see and prove. What our atheist friends fail to recognize is that Christianity is a “thinking man’s” religion! Our faith in what cannot be seen is founded upon the evidence of that which we can see and analyze (science).

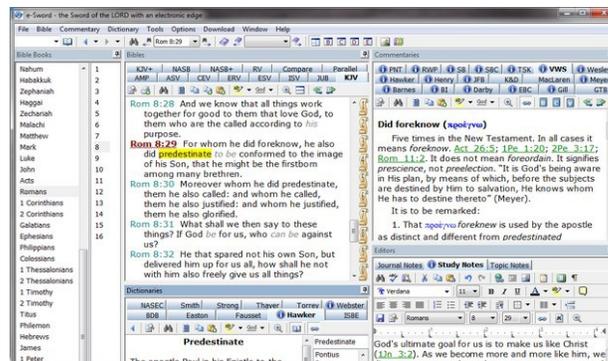
²California Energy Commission. (1994). <http://www.energyquest.ca.gov/story/chapter01.html>.

God has given us a mind with which to properly reason, and then make conclusions that are warranted by the evidence; by far, there is more than sufficient evidence that the God of our Bible IS the creator of all things in the universe.

Conclusion.

If there is adequate evidence that God created all things in the heavens and on the earth, then why are so many people determined to continue arguing to the contrary? The answer is simple. If energy/matter is the author of all life, including mankind, then who cares how one lives? Live anyway you like, because there is no objective standard of morality that originates from rocks and dirt. If, on the other hand, the God of our Bible is the author of everything (and He is), and if He has revealed to mankind an objective standard of morality by which to operate within the universe, transcending every standard of morality that man, or a society of men, might devise (and He has), then all mankind, everywhere, is subject to the authority of God, and to His objective standard of morality.

The only real question remaining is this one: Can we prove that it is God, and NOT energy/matter? You better believe it! And, I intend to do just that over the next few months in this space for “Keys of the Kingdom.”



[E-Sword Click Here](#)

Christ worthy of Preeminence

Doug Post
Vernon, Connecticut

There was a time when a championship boxing match could be viewed on television for free. In fact, some of the greatest matches in boxing history were viewed on ABC's Wild World of Sports. Throughout the year one might be able to see great boxers such as Muhammad Ali, Joe Frazier, Ken Norton, George Foreman, Sugar Ray Leonard, etc. But that all changed in the late 1980's with the introduction of "Pay for View". But one thing hasn't changed, and that is the way the boxer is introduced, especially if he is a champion. Concerning a particular boxer, the announcer might say something like, "In this corner, wearing white trunks; the undisputed heavy weight champion of the world ...". Yet, when one reads the first chapter of the book of Colossians one gets the distinct impression that the apostle Paul was giving Jesus the same kind of introduction. In Colossians 1:12-18, Paul simply breaks out in praise and exaltation, describing our Lord, Jesus Christ. It's as if he is saying, "*In this corner, the undefeated, undisputed, greatest Champion ever – the most powerful, the most awesome, our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ!*" Paul then provides six reasons why Christ is so great:

1. **Because we have been delivered from the power of darkness and conveyed into the kingdom of God's Son - the church of Christ** (Col.1:13). First, the words "kingdom" and "church" are used synonymously. The Christians at Colosse had been translated or conveyed into the kingdom, the church or body of Christ. Contrary to denominational dogma, Christ is not coming back to set up His kingdom, rather He has already established His kingdom. In fact, when He comes again, Christ will deliver the already existing kingdom back to the Father (1 Cor.15:24; cf. Dan.2:44; Mark 9:1). The kingdom of Christ is already in existence and Christians have been in it since its establishment on the day of Pentecost, which we read of in Acts 2.
2. **Because we have been redeemed by the shed blood of Christ and provided forgiveness for our sins** (Col.1:14). There are two passages in all the Bible which use the word "wash" with reference to the forgiveness of sins in the same sentence: "**To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood**" (Rev.1:5). "**And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins calling on the name of the Lord**" (Acts 22:16). We are washed in His blood,

only when our sins are washed the moment we are immersed in water **“for the forgiveness of sins”** (Acts 2:38; 22:16; cf. Mark 16:16). Therefore, one cannot experience any washing of the blood of Christ until, and unless, they are immersed in water, the design of which is to wash away sins.

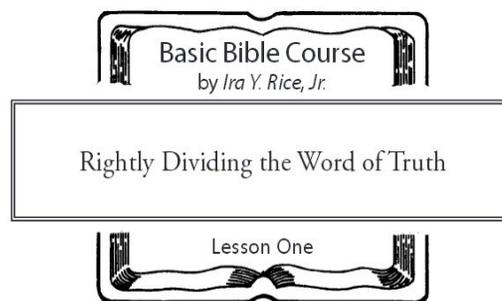
3. **Because God is invisible, yet Christ is the image of the invisible God** (Col.1:15). No one has ever seen God at any time (John 1:18; 1 Tim.6:16). Although God manifested Himself in various ways to certain people, no human could ever see Him and live (Ex.33:20). However, it was the second person of the Godhead who came in the flesh, revealing God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) to mankind. Jesus Christ made the invisible, visible; the inaccessible, accessible; and the unapproachable, approachable.
4. **Because Jesus was the One who created everything** (Col.1:16). **“All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made”** (John1:3). He created sun, the moon, and stars. He created the air we breathe and the water we drink. He created all of the angels and things visible and invisible. **“When I consider You heavens, and the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars which you have ordained, what is man that you are mindful of him ...”** (Psa:8:3-4).
5. **Because He is before all things and in Him all things consist** (Col.1:17). Not only did Jesus create the entire universe and everything in it, He sustains it all together, managing it through His word: **“...through whom also He made the worlds; who being in the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by word of His power”** (Heb.1:2-3).
6. **Because He is the head of the body or church** (Col.1:18). Christ is King of his kingdom and no one else is. There is no such thing as a democracy in the Lord’s church. There is no such thing as an oligarchy in the Lord’s church either. There is only a “Christocracy” where Christ is the only Head of His church. His church belongs to Him, alone. He is the only One who has the right to control it. Church is not so much about us, as it is about Him! This also means that there is only one person we are to please and only one audience to make happy. Unfortunately, many churches have decided to go out of their way to make people the audience and to make the people happy, especially when it comes to worship. Modern church growth proponents often advocate “meeting the needs” of the people, shifting the focus to the non-Christian visitor in order to make them happy. This often comes in the form of compromising doctrinal standards when it comes to worship, such as introducing instrumental music, praise

teams, or some other unauthorized addition. Of course, we love people and it's our heart's desire as Christians to make both God and people happy, but the simple truth is, if it comes down to upsetting people or pleasing God, we will go out of our way to please God, always!

After putting forth six reasons and explaining why Jesus is our Great God and Savior, Paul then adds one more thought, which demands our immediate attention: **“That in all things He might have the preeminence”** (Col.1:18).

The word little word **“all”** is a rather comprehensive term. Although the word is small, its meaning is vast in scope. It suggests an absoluteness or a completeness. It means **“everything”** – the entirety of life or every aspect of life. Therefore, we are to give Christ the preeminence in **“all things”**, **“everything”**, in every aspect of our lives. But what exactly does that mean? It means giving Christ the preeminence in our homes, in our marriages, in the words we use, the thoughts we maintain, and in all our actions. It means that if I am out with my buddies, I make sure to give Christ the preeminence He so richly deserves. It means when I am at work, I make sure to give Christ the preeminence He so richly deserves. It means when I am assembled with Christians on the Lord's Day for worship, I make sure to give Christ the preeminence He so richly deserves. Brethren, if all of us took this verse to heart, routinely applying it to every aspect of our lives, we would all have happier homes, happier marriages, and happier churches. Let's challenge ourselves to give Jesus the preeminence in everything!

End Notes: All Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version unless otherwise indicated.



Basic Bible Course

Basic Bible Course – Ira Y. Rice, Jr. Each lesson has been reformatted. This reformatting will allow students to complete the course via the Internet or to download the files to a computer and use them as study guides. [**Click Here To Take The Course**](#)

Of Interest

Searching For Truth was produced with the thought in mind of the great filmstrips of the past that did so much good in teaching the Gospel. This new program is designed to teach the viewer what one needs to know to become a Christian. Written and hosted by John Moore.

Please view the first program which is 15-minutes in length, then you will be able to decide whether to watch the additional 5 programs that are designed to help you find the answers to these questions.

Lesson 1



[Click Here View The Videos](#)

Preachers For Pulpits



Cloyd Frock

Cloyd's Facebook Page offers a great resource for preachers seeking churches and churches needing preachers. Use the link below to visit his page.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/466657760042906/>

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A screenshot of the Churches of Christ.com website. The header is dark blue with the text "Churches of Christ.com" in white. Below the header is a navigation menu with links: Home, Work of the Spring Congregation, Recommended Links, and Contact Us. Underneath the navigation menu are several smaller links: Sermons, Articles, Debates, Spring CTF Lectures, and World Wide Gospel Preaching. The main content area features the logo for "Contending FOR THE Faith" in red and white. Below the logo, it says "2014 Spring Contending For The Faith Lectures" and "WHAT MUST A CHRISTIAN DO TO REMAIN FAITHFUL TO CHRIST?". At the bottom, it lists the dates "February 19—February 23, 2014" and the name "David P. Brown, Lectureship Director".

[Click Here Watch The Lectures](#)