

Back to the Bible

It is truly our desire to have Bible authority for all we teach and practice. We express this desire in various ways. We sometimes say, "We speak where the Bible speaks and we are silent where the Bible is silent." At other times we may say, "We must have book, chapter and verse for all we do."

Though neither of these statements is found in the Bible the thought expressed by these statements is. Paul said, *"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."* (Colossians 3:17). John said, *"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."* (2 John 9). Peter wrote, *"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God"* (1 Peter 4:11). Jesus, Himself, said, *"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed"* (John 8:31).

All of these statements emphasize the necessity and importance of having divine authority for all we teach and practice, however, as we examine the situation in the religious world today we find very few who appeal to the scriptures for their authority. The appeal is usually to the whims and desires of the people. In fact, many even ridicule the idea of following the teaching of the scriptures.

For example, many religious groups now have women preachers. When you call to their attention Paul's statement to Timothy, *"But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence"* (1 Timothy 2:12), they will either ignore it or will accuse Paul of being a male chauvinist who had something against women.

Others claim the scriptures are out dated and should only be "followed in principle." They contend that the scriptures were never intended to be a pattern for us today. As one writer, several years ago, put it, "Why should the church of the 20th century want to be like the church of the 1st century?" Through time we have seen many changes in many areas. However, the scriptures are as relevant today as they were in the first century. The scriptures have to do with man and his relationship to God. They inform us of man's need of reconciliation to God. The scriptures are the mind of God revealed (1 Corinthians 2:9-11; Ephesians 3:3-6). The only way we can know how to be accepted and approved of God is through His word.

Man's need for salvation is the same today as it was 2,000 years ago and the source of that salvation is the same as it was nearly 2,000 years ago. Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me"* (John 14:6).

Some are telling us that this statement is too offensive to so many in our society. They say it is offensive to the Jew who does not believe that Jesus is the promised Messiah or to the Muslim who does not believe in Jesus or to many other religions of the world.

Some who claim to believe in Jesus have bought into this thinking and say they believe in Jesus as their Savior but they are not going to speak against others who, according to them, have "other saviors." Friends, you can not have it both ways. If you believe in Jesus you must believe what He said and He said, *"no man cometh unto the Father, but by me"* (John 14:6). He also said, *"if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins"* (John 8:24).

Jesus said, *"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day"* (John 12:48). This is why we must "get back to the Bible." We will all stand before Him in judgment (2 Corinthians 5:10) and the

standard of judgment will not be what men may think or feel, but will be the word that Jesus spoke, the word of God.

Jesus told His disciples, *"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"* (Mark 16:15,16). Do you desire to be saved? If so, you must believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (John 8:24; 20:31) and then demonstrate that faith by doing what He said to do to be saved. Jesus said one must believe and be baptized to be saved (Mark 16:16). He also said, *"And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"* (Luke 6:46).

Peter, in obedience to Christ's command, preached the gospel to those Jews assembled in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). Upon being convinced that they had crucified the very One God had raised to be both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36) they asked Peter and the other apostles, *"What shall we do?"* (Acts 2:37). *"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins"* (Acts 2:38). This is exactly the same that Jesus taught in Mark 16:16. Luke tells us that those who received his word (believed) were baptized (Acts 2:41). He later identifies these as those who were being saved (Acts 2:47).

Yes, we need to get back to the Bible. We need to be telling men and women the same thing that Jesus and Peter told them to do to be saved. We need to lay aside the creed books and confessions of faith of men and give a "thus saith the Lord" for all we teach.

✍ James Hahn