



The Voice Of Truth

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The Sin of Substitution <http://www.padfield.com/1994/substitu.html>

By David Padfield

The sin of substitution has always been a problem. Men have invariably tried to substitute their opinions for Divine commands. Two Old Testament priests, Nadab and Abihu, "offered profane fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them" (Leviticus 10:1). God struck them dead because they substituted the fire He had specified for a fire of their own choosing. Instead of offering a bleeding lamb, Cain substituted the fruit of the field (Genesis 4:1-8) and God rejected his offering. At the water of Meribah, Moses the Lord's plan with his own. Instead of speaking to the rock, Moses decided to smite it. God considered his actions to be an act of unbelief (Numbers 20).

Has modern man learned from these events which "were written for our learning" (Romans 15:4)? I don't think so. Even Christians are sometimes guilty of this crime.

As we apply the [Great Commission](#) (Matthew 28:18-20), we are commanded to "teach all nations." This part of the command was not just for the apostles, preachers and elders, but all disciples.

To "teach" you must "give instruction" and "impart

knowledge." In far too many congregations the "teaching" of the lost has been neglected. While feeling guilty about their lack of ability to "instruct" the lost, some brethren have offered a substitute plan: have someone else do the teaching for them. The sin of substitution!

The plan usually works something like this: a few Christians get together and canvas a neighborhood inviting the lost to attend services and there receive instruction from the preacher. I would never discourage anyone from inviting non-Christians to the assembly; I wish more brethren would do this very thing. However, we must remember that even if we personally invite every person in town to our meetinghouse, we have still not fulfilled the Great Commission! We are commanded to teach the lost, not just invite them to services.

Why do brethren attempt to substitute their plan for God's? I suppose it is because most people do not feel competent enough to teach. This is a lame excuse. Anyone who has obeyed the gospel of Christ should be able to tell how they became a Christian and give book, chapter and verse to back it up. They might not be able to answer every quibble raised by

denominational preachers, but they can present the facts of the gospel.

Brethren sometimes ask me to go visit a friend or relative of theirs in the hope of setting up a Bible study. I am always happy to do this. However, I remind them that if they have no influence with their friends and relatives, I doubt that I will have any either. God's plan is for you to first live the gospel and then teach it to your neighbors.

Paul instructed Timothy to "[do the work of an evangelist](#)" (2 Timothy 4:5). This includes study, meditation and preaching of the word. Timothy was to "convince, rebuke (and) exhort with all longsuffering and teaching" (2 Timothy 4:2). Paul also said, "the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2).

Brethren, we all need to sharpen our teaching skills. Let's not deceive ourselves into thinking God will approve of a substitute plan for teaching the lost.

The Evidence and Results of Faith

By Gene Taylor

Many things are accepted and acted upon by faith. Before we were born, the pyramids of [Egypt](#) were built. We were not present at that time so we have no immediate knowledge of it, yet, we believe that intelligent beings erected them because they show evidence of intelligent design and construction. Using that same logic in the spiritual realm brings us to similar conclusions.

Before we were born the universe was created by God. We were not present at that time so we have no immediate knowledge of it, yet, we believe that an intelligent being created it because it shows evidence of intelligent design and construction. That intelligent being is the God who reveals Himself in the Bible. As we come to know Him, His character, power and wisdom, we have faith in Him that He is able to do all He promises. Ephesians 3:20, in

speaking of God, says, "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us." Romans 4:21 says that the great Old Testament patriarch Abraham was "fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform."

The evidence of one's faith in God is obedience to His will. James 2:17 states, "Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (cf. Jas. 2:20, 24). Faith enables one to obey in the absence of understanding the why and how of the thing commanded. Faith is a trust that assures one that he will receive a promise, though the means of fulfillment is not obvious because he has confidence in the one who revealed it. The evidence of faith is seen in the actions of the faithful as seen in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews.

The Results of a Strong, Obedient Faith

The cleansing or purifying of the heart. The apostle Peter, in reference to the Gentiles and how they were acceptable to God without being circumcised, said, "Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:7-9).

Justification before God. "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1; cf. Rom. 3:28).

Salvation. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9).

Great boldness and confidence. Addressing the church at Corinth, the apostle Paul said, "Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy, for by faith you stand" (2 Cor. 1:24).

Life. Romans 1:17, in speaking of the gospel, says, "For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith'" (cf. Gal. 2:20, 3:11).

Protection from the evil one. As part of the "whole armor of God," the believer takes up "the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one" (Eph. 6:16).

Triumph. "And this is the victory that has overcome the world-our faith" (1 John 5:4).

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