



The Voice of Truth



September 13, 2009

Never Compromise!

By Jimmy Pettigrew

Is it right for a member of the church to attend the regular meetings of the denominational church that their spouse, brother, sister, etc., is a member of? We must not let our human feelings or thoughts be our guide to answer this question. None of us are wise enough to answer this question without going to the Bible (**Jer.10:23; Isa. 55:8-9**). God's Word is the only place to find the answer. Our attitude must be one of accepting what God says in His Word, even if it means we must give up our own ideas.

The Bible is clear concerning those with whom we may not have fellowship: the Christian who does not walk after the apostolic traditions (**2 Thess. 3:6**), the Christian who causes division (**Rom. 16:17**), the bad, evil, corrupt Christian (**1 Cor. 5**). We may not have fellowship with unbelievers (**2 Cor. 6:14-17**), any unfruitful works of darkness (**Eph. 5:11**).

God has always required His people to be separate (**Lev. 20:24-26**). God expected His people to be separated from the religious practices of other nations. He told them not to intermarry, realizing that to intermarry with idolaters would be to take the chance of being led away from the one true God unto false worship. (Solomon is a good example). This is one of many reasons why a Christian should marry a Christian. If it could happen to them, would it not be possible for it to happen to us?

God wanted His people separate, to have no part with idol worship. Idol worship would be a false worship and false doctrine. But, wouldn't that be true of any other false religious belief or system? Denominationalism is a false religious system. A religious denomination comes into existence only when a group originates by the preaching, believing, and obedience of some doctrine other than the true gospel of Christ. It teaches and practices error. What is said in the Bible con-

cerning idolatry, and the fact that God's people should have no part in it, must also be said of denominationalism. Paul said, *"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple,"* (**Rom. 16:17-18**). They cannot be a part of our fellowship (**2 Jno. 9-11**).

However, there are some who will say, "If you attend our meeting, we will attend yours." The Bible says, *"stand fast in the faith ...be strong,"* (**1 Cor. 16:13**); *"be strong in the Lord...,"* (**Eph. 6:10**); *"earnestly contend for the faith ...,"* (**Jude 3**). You simply cannot compromise and contend at the same time. In every case when the Bible talks about false religious systems, the Christian responsibility is to *have no fellowship* with it, to *earnestly contend for the faith* and reprove the false religion. If someone attends our meeting and obeys the gospel, what has happened? Was it because you compromised and attended with them so that they would attend with you? **NO!** It was God's power, His Word, the gospel that converted the soul (**Psa. 19:17; Rom. 1:16-17; Jas. 1:21**). Never compromise; always be faithful to Christ.

The Whole About Being Saved!

By Jimmy Pettigrew

There are both divine and human factors that enter into the salvation of man. God does not save independently of the will of man, and man cannot save himself without God's aid. Not any one factor should be rejected or minimized. You can't go to **"ONE"** scripture in the Bible and say, "This saves me." All of God's Word is Truth (**Psa.**

119:160), and you need the whole Truth to know what saves you. Here is God's chain of salvation:

1. God is our **Saviour (Tit. 3:4)**.
2. Jesus Christ also saves us (**1 Tim. 1:15**).
3. We are saved by the Holy Spirit. He accompanied the Word of God, and delivered it to inspired **men (1 Cor. 6:11; 2 Pet. 1:20-21)**. The Holy Spirit gave the Word of God to the apostles for our salvation. Since the Holy Spirit brought the terms of salvation, we are saved by Him.
4. We are saved by grace (**Eph. 2:8-9**).
5. The blood of Christ saves (**Rom. 5:9; Eph. 1:7; 1 Jn. 1:7**).
6. We are saved by the Truth, the power of God (**Jas. 1:21; Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 15:1-2**).
7. Preaching saves us (**1 Cor. 1:21**).
8. Hope saves us (**Rom. 8:24**).
9. We are saved by the "NAME" (**Jn. 20:30-31; Acts 4:12**).
10. We are saved by faith (**Jn. 3:16; 1 Cor. 1:21**).
11. We are saved by repentance (**Acts 11:18**).
12. We are saved by confession (**Rom. 10:9-10**).
13. Baptism saves us (**1 Pet. 3:21**).

"For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." **Acts 20:27**.

"But If Not ..."

By Jarrod Jacobs

This was the courageous cry of the three friends of Daniel as they stood before an angered king (**Dan. 3**). Remember, this chapter records the occasion when Nebuchadnezzar had a great idol of gold built and commanded all people bow down to it (**Dan. 3:1-5**). The consequence for refusal was being burned up in a furnace (**v. 6**). When it was revealed that Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego) refused to bow, the king gave them one more chance to bow down or be killed (**Dan. 3:11-15**). Yet, when given this "second chance," and knowing their lives were in jeopardy if they refused, these men said, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the

burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (**Dan. 3:16-18**).

The three-word phrase in **verse 18** is very powerful. "But if not" shows the extent to which they not only trusted in God, but it also shows us their willingness to sacrifice their lives in order to do what God said. When we talk about people standing against the laws of men when they conflict with the laws of God, we often cite **Acts 5:29** where Peter said, "We ought to obey God rather than men." This is a good verse to use. In addition to **Acts 5**, may we also use **Daniel 5:16-18** in such a discussion. Here, these three men made it clear that it didn't matter what law men made, they would not obey it if it meant breaking God's law (**Ex. 20:1-5**).

Furthermore, that phrase "but if not" shows just how much faith these men had. They were confident that if God willed, He could deliver them from the fiery furnace. However, they had no guarantee that God would do anything to save them. If He chose to allow them to be burned up, they were ready to make that sacrifice. Being right with God meant more to them than pleasing man! We know how the account turns out, but at that point in time, they did not know what was going to happen! The only thing they were sure of was that they were not going to compromise their principles, nor their faith for any reason, even if this meant death. Their faith reminds me of the faith of the many Old Testament worthies mentioned in **Hebrews 11:35-38**. There it says, "Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." In addition to this statement, don't forget the words of **II Timothy 3:12** and **Reve-**

lition 2:10 and 13 which remind us that persecutions continue. We may not face a fiery furnace, but we may face other trials and tribulations because we are Christians. What will we do? Will we follow the examples of these men (**Rom. 15:4**)?

How much faith do we have in God and in His word? It would have been easy for those men to give in, and agree among themselves to bow to the idol, and perhaps say under their breath, "We don't mean it, we still love the Lord, but need to go along or be killed." Such spineless behavior reminds me of the news report of about some men who were captured by the Muslims a few years back. It is reported that they were told to "convert to Islam or die." They renounced Christ as Savior, and were released back to America. Then during a press conference a few days later, they said in effect, "We didn't mean it when we renounced Christ. We wanted to live so we said what was necessary to live." Those men in Daniel 3 are not our examples because they tried such spineless behavior. They are our heroes because they stood and chose to be faithful when it was extremely hard to do!

Yes, God chose to spare them. In fact, upon being thrown into the furnace that had been heated "seven times hotter" than normal (**Dan. 3:19**), the men throwing them in burned up while Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were not (**Dan. 3:22**)! These men survived the fiery furnace, and in fact, it is written, "*Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spoke, and said unto his counselors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spoke, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, came forth of the midst of the fire. And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counselors,*

being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was a hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them" (Dan. 3:24-25, 27). What might have been the outcome had they not said, "But if not"? Perhaps they would have escaped the king's wrath, but might have later been thrown into a fire for which there is no escape? (**Rev. 21:8**) A fire "*where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mk. 9:44, 46, 48)?*

The phrase, "But if not" shows us just how faithful and brave these men were when facing certain death. They knew God had the power to deliver them. They just did not know whether or not He *would* deliver them! It is true we do not face certain death each day for our convictions. Very few people in America fear for their lives when they make the decision to become a Christian (**Mk. 16:16**). Therefore it begs the question, why are we Christians so quick to discard our convictions? It happens, or we would not read about corrective discipline in the Bible (**II Thess. 3:6**)! It happens, or there would not be such passages as **Galatians 6:1** and **James 5:19-20** in the Bible. It happens, or there would not be the account of Simon's sin (**Acts 8:18-24**).

When we realize we serve a loving, powerful, merciful, just, kind, holy, and righteous God who simply wants us to be His children and go to Heaven one day, why are we so quick to toss this all aside? Let us take some time to reevaluate our lives (**II Cor. 13:5**) and make sure we are truly living as God wants us to live. Accounts like **Daniel 3** ought to humble us and make us realize that even today there are people who endure much worse than we do in these United States, and they remain loyal to the God of Heaven. That being said, let us do the same. Let us have the same attitude of the three Hebrews who said, "But if not"!

Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com

By What Authority? By Jonathan L. Perz

“By what authority are you doing these things?” While this question was originally asked of Jesus by the chief priests and scribes, the question, as well as the answer, has as much relevance today as it did then.

Whoever said you cannot answer a question with a question is sadly mistaken, for this is exactly what Jesus did. In reply to their question, Jesus asked the question, “The baptism of John—was it from heaven or men?” (**Luke 20:1-8**). By answering the Lord’s question, the chief priests and scribes would have the answer to their question. They were caught in their own snare.

They knew the correct answer to the Lord’s question, but their reasoning made them realize that if they answered accurately by saying “of God,” they would be exposing their error. If they answered “of men,” they would face the wrath of the people who were persuaded that John the Baptist was a prophet. Finding neither choice acceptable, they chose not to answer. Hence Jesus did not directly answer their question.

Did Jesus ever reject their question as an unimportant one? It was indeed important

and he answered it on several other occasions (**John 7:17; John 12:49; John 14:10**), even those among them knew the answer (**John 3:1-2; John 9:33**). Nevertheless, many today reject it as an unimportant question.

Take any “religious” practice today, whether engaged in by a church or an individual professing Christianity, and test it with the question, “By what authority?” You will have folks in the same dilemma in which Jesus put the chief priests and scribes. To answer accurately and truthfully, they may have to either openly expose their rejection of God’s teaching in light of their practice or they will have to incur the wrath of the people. Therefore, unless one has God’s authority for what he says and does (**Colossians 3:17**), it is easier for him not to answer or to belittle those who challenge his practices.

By what authority do you do what you do for Christ? If it is not authorized in God’s word, you are not acting by the faith that saves (**Romans 10:17**). Therefore, take care how you answer, for it will most definitely have eternal implications.

Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3

Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24

Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30

Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21

Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27

Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17

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Schedule of Assembly

Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

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