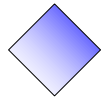


The Voice of Truth



May 12, 2013

“Is There An Excuse For Being Ignorant of God?”

By Jimmy Pettigrew

Does the covenant of God apply to all men? Are alien sinners bound by any commands in the covenant of Christ? Would God punish a man for being ignorant of Him?

There are many in this world and in the body of Christ that would answer "NO" to these vital questions. We need to stop letting our feelings be our guide, and look into God's word for the source to answer these important questions.

Paul declared that the word is to be preached (2 Timothy 4:2). We see that all scripture is profitable (2 Timothy 3:16-17), and that nothing profitable is to be held back. The whole counsel of God is to be proclaimed to men (Acts 20:20, 27).

Does the covenant of God apply to all men? The Biblical answer is "YES". The Lord commissioned His apostles to teach "all nations" (Matthew 28:19-20; Luke 24:47). "Unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). "To preach the word to the whole creation, to every creature" (Mark 16:15-16). Thus, all men, not merely Christians, are accountable to the covenant of Christ. Christ will judge all men by these words (John 5:22, 27; 12:48). Therefore, all men are accountable to the covenant of Christ because all men will be judged by His words.

Are alien sinners bound by any commands in the covenant of Christ? The Biblical answer is "YES". The commands to repent and be baptized are in the covenant of Christ (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:15-16). They are not addressed to Christians, but to alien sinners. Since alien sinners are accountable to Christ, therefore, all men are accountable to the covenant of Christ. If not, why encourage alien sinners to obey the Law of Christ, if they are not answerable to the Gospel of Christ? Why even teach or preach the word?

Would God punish a man for being ignorant of Him?

Again, the scriptural answer is "YES". *"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power?"* (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). Paul writing, guided by the Holy Spirit, gives us two groups upon whom the Lord will take vengeance:

(1) ON THOSE WHO DO NOT KNOW GOD.

(2) ON THOSE WHO DO NOT OBEY THE GOSPEL.

We can see from this passage that there is no excuse for being ignorant of God. God will punish those who know not God, or those disobedient to the Gospel. It is the responsibility of every person to know God. *"That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us"* (Acts 17:27). Paul tells us that it is man's duty to seek God; this is the way we come to know God. *"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near."* *"Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways"* (Isaiah 55:6; 58:2).

"Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation" (Romans 15:20). Paul preached in places that had not heard the Gospel before. Why would Paul do this if all men are not accountable to God? Because it is the responsibility of every person to know God. Paul preached in places that had not heard the good news. Yet, some would say, leave them be, if they never heard the Gospel before, God would put them in a saved state, they are not accountable! God would never punish a man that never heard the Gospel! Paul told us He would in 2 Thessalonians. Who are we going to believe, Paul or our feelings?

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Paul writing to the churches in Galatia says, "*Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods*" (**Galatians 4:8**). A picture is drawn of the condition of the Galatians before they became Christians, "*Ye knew not God*". Why did Paul preach the good news to them if they didn't need to know the Gospel? Before becoming Christians the Galatians had enslaved themselves to serving false gods, "*But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?*" (**Galatians 4:9**).

Observe the contrast between the condition of one who is not a Christian, "*Ye knew not God*," and one who has become a Christian, "*Known of God*." "*Known of God*" is equal to being recognized by God as one of His obedient children (**1 Corinthians 8:3; John 14:15**).

We can see through our study that the covenant of Christ applies to all men and that alien sinners are bound by the commands of Christ and that there is no excuse for being ignorant of God (**Acts 17:30; Romans 1:20; Psalm 19:1**). ♦

"All Things Desirable To Men ..."

By Jarrod Jacobs

All things desirable to men are contained in the Bible." This is one of the many quotes of Abraham Lincoln. Certainly, this man understood something that the majority of people today do not. Anything desirable, anything worthy of imitation, anything pleasing to God will be found in the Bible, the word of God! Peter said that God "*has granted to us all things that pertain unto life and godliness*" (**II Pet. 1:3**). If God has given us "*all things*," then what do we lack? If He has given us "*all things*" then why are men so pressed to find life's "necessities" somewhere else? Truly, "all things desirable to men are contained in the Bible."

Within the pages of Inspiration, we find God's instructions for life. The meaning of life is summed up thusly: "*Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man*" (**Ecc. 12:13**). God's word instructs us to treat men as we would want them to treat us (**Matt. 7:12**). No one has ever improved on this! God declares that it is necessary to live at peace with all men. We are to "*pursue what makes for peace, and for mutual upbuilding*" (**Rom. 14:19**). If people would just do this, we would have a much more peaceful existence upon this earth! God instructs us to speak to others in an edifying way, and to not tear one another down through malicious words and gossip (**Eph. 4:29, 31**). Husbands and wives are to submit themselves to one another and love one another, cleaving to each other, and forsaking all others (**Eph. 5:22-33**). For any relationship you wish to discuss, the Bible has the answer. It truly contains "all things desirable to men."

The Bible also contains God's plan for the salvation of mankind from sin. We see it unfolding from **Genesis 3**, and continue to take shape until the coming of Christ who died on the cross for us! The Bible teaches that Christ was "*the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*" (**Rev. 13:8**). His blood was shed to purchase us and to take

away our sin (**I Pet. 1:18-19; Matt. 26:28; Jn. 1:29**). God loved man so much that He allowed His Son to die on our behalf (**Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:6-9**). Christ died for us, shed his blood, and resurrected on the third day, declaring Himself to be the Son of God with power (**Rom. 1:4**). The Holy Spirit was then sent to guide the apostles into "*all truth*" so that they could preach and teach the truth to all nations, which they did (**II Pet. 1:20-21; Jn. 14:26, 15:26, 16:13; Col. 1:5-6, 23; Rom. 16:26**).

Now, it is man's responsibility to do that which is right and submit himself to God's will. He must come believing that Jesus is the Son of God (**Jn. 8:24**), repenting of his sins (**Lk. 13:3**), he must confess his faith in Christ (**Rom. 10:10**), and then be baptized for the remission of his sins (**Acts 2:38**). Upon doing these things, the Bible reveals that man is saved (**Mk. 16:16**). Notice please that man is not saved simply by "doing something." Man is not saved on his own merit. Man is saved by hearing and doing the will of God. He has done nothing on his own by which to boast, but has simply done what Christ expected of Him (**Lk. 17:10; Eph. 2:8-9**). He must then live a faithful life to God, doing the Lord's will as His faithful servant (**I Cor. 15:58; Rev. 2:10**). The Bible teaches that when we submit to God, doing His will, and obeying His word, we become His servant or slave (**Rom. 6:16-18**). Still, this is a desirable position! What better place to be than in the loving care and mercy of a loving God whom you can now call your Father (**Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6**)? What could be more "desirable" than this?

The Bible contains the wisdom, and power of God to salvation (**Rom. 1:16**). Why men continue to push God aside amazes me! Only in this Sacred Volume can we learn of God's wisdom. God has revealed things to us that

Continued from Page Two, "All Things Desirable To Men ..."

belong to us and our children forever (**Deut. 29:29**). When men refuse God's word, they are refusing God's wisdom! They are refusing God's power to save, for the Bible says the gospel "*is the power of God for salvation*" (**Rom. 1:16**). The Bible reveals our origin, it reveals our purpose for being here, and it reveals what shall become of us (the faithful AND unfaithful) at the end of time. Jesus said that this book will be our standard of judgment on the Judgment

Day (**Jn. 12:48**). Seeing that this is true, how foolish it is to cast this book aside as "antiquated," or "a book of myths," or anything else! The Bible is necessary, vital, and alive, and we better never forget that (**Heb. 4:12**)!

Yes, "all things desirable to men are contained in the Bible." The question is: Will you accept or reject the Bible?

Credit: The Old Paths - 7/29/12 ♦

If You Abide In My Word

By Jonathan L. Perz

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "*If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed*" (**John 8:31**).

In this statement, Jesus not only defines one of the terms of discipleship, but impresses upon the believer the importance of His word.

TRUE DISCIPLESHIP

"If" is a critical word in the understanding of any statement. It is a word that places a condition upon the statement that follows or precedes.

In this case, a condition is placed upon true discipleship. In order to be His disciples, we *must* abide in His word. If we do not abide in His word, are we truly His disciples?

ABIDING IN HIS WORD

What does it mean to "abide in His word?" To "abide" means to continue in, not to depart from. Hence, we must continue in His word, or teachings, if we are to truly be His disciples.

A disciple is one who is taught, one who follows a discipline, or teaching of another. Therefore, it is fundamentally implied that unless we continue in Jesus' teaching, we are not His disciples.

DISCIPLES INDEED

The word "indeed" means truly, of a truth, in reality, most certainly. Many profess to be a disciple, but not all are followers. Jesus asked, "*Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not the things which I say?*" (**Luke 6:46**). It follows that we cannot do what He says if we do not abide in His word.

The word "indeed" infers more than in thought. It infers action (deed). One must show His discipleship in action, not only in word.

APPLICATIONS

Many today profess to "follow Christ," but practice things not taught in His word. If one were to assemble a panel of 10 "Christians" representing various "faiths" and they were all asked what one must do to be saved, what would the end result be?

Chances are some would state that you must believe, accept Jesus into your heart and say some version of a sinner's prayer. One might teach that you must be baptized in the Holy Spirit. One might propose that there is nothing you can do to be saved. Another might declare that you must be baptized, and then later confirmed into "The Church." Yet another would argue that you must be immersed in water for the remission of sins, having heard the gospel message, believed, repented, and confessed Christ as Lord. Still another would say, you must simply be a good person. One may cite the keeping of a specific doctrine regarding the day of worship, while another may cite the importance of attending church.

The problem is obvious. Some of these "Christians" are not disciples indeed. How do we discern who is and who is not? Which answer is correct and which is error? What is the measure by which we may know?

As a disciple indeed, who abides in Christ's word, every action should be based on a book, chapter and verse (**Colossians 3:17**). A disciple indeed will pay careful attention not to twist or wrest His word by his own understanding (**2 Peter 3:16**). Furthermore, a disciple indeed will want to be extremely careful not to transgress (go beyond) or omit (fall short of) any aspect of His teaching (**2 John 9-**

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10; Revelation 22:18-19).

A disciple indeed will not seek a passage to prove a position, but rather base a position on the whole of God's teaching on a given matter (**Acts 20:27**). A disciple indeed will be studious and diligent to present themselves approved unto God, rightly dividing the word of truth (**2 Timothy 2:15**). He will not be willing to base his faith on what everyone else is practicing or doing, but accept no other foundation but the word of God (**Luke 6:46-49**). He will prove all things, test the spirits, search the scriptures daily, and examine himself (**1 Thessalonians 5:21; 1 John 4:1; Acts 17:10; 2 Corinthians 13:5**).

All of this emphasizes the premium that Jesus placed upon His word, His teaching, and His doctrine. His word is the measure by which we shall be judged (**John 12:48**). His word is the authority for all that we say and do (**Matthew 28:18; Colossians 3:17**). His word, His gospel, is

the basis of our salvation (**Romans 1:16; Ephesians 1:13; 1 Peter 1:22-25; James 1:21**).

To answer the question posed earlier, the measure by which we may know how to be saved is God's word, and God's word alone. Jesus concludes the statement—which is the basis for this article—by saying, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (**John 8:32**).

God's word is truth (**John 17:17**). Despite men's best intentions and best efforts to obfuscate, twist, pervert, hide, rationalize, render obsolete, marginalize, and re-characterize God's truth to conform to some modern standard or idea—they will never succeed. For what is written is written in heaven (**Revelations 20:12**) and will be there just as it was originally given in that final day.

Therefore, our only hope is to "abide in His word" and be His "disciples indeed" knowing "the truth" which shall "make [us] free." Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com ♦

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

- BETWEEN** the atheist who would not dream of financially supporting the church and the Christian who will not financially support the Lord's church?
- BETWEEN** the skeptic who does not believe the Bible and the negligent Christian who never reads it?
- BETWEEN** those who do not believe in Bible classes and those who choose never to attend a class?
- BETWEEN** the atheist who does nothing to build up the Lord's church and the Christian who finds fault with others, but does nothing himself?
- BETWEEN** a man of the world, and a person in the church who lives like a man in the world?
- BETWEEN** a man of the world who lives for self and a person in the church who lives for self, not God?

These are tough questions for Christians who live in a tough world. The fact is, Christians make no difference until they are different. Again, **WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?** ♦

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

About the Hillcrest church of Christ

Evangelist: Jimmy Pettigrew

How to Contact Us

Telephone: (920)499-5677
E-mail: hillcrestcofc@live.com



Our Address

1621 Hillcrest Drive
 Green Bay, WI 54313



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