Back To Basics

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Number 11

A Monthly Journal Dedicated To Teaching First Principles

BEFORE AND AFTER

Johnie Edwards

Companies use "before and after" pictures to sell their merchandise like home improvements and diets of all sorts. The Bible paints spiritual descriptions of "before and after" to encourage us to be God's people. We take a look at some "before and after" basics.

1) NOT A PEOPLE / Now THE PEOPLE OF GOD. In trying to encourage early Christians to be faithful, Peter penned, "Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God" (1 Pet. 2:10). There was a time when Gentiles were not among the people of God; only the Jews were. Old Testament people were Jews and it was not until the conversion of Cornelius in Acts 10-11 that Gentiles were the people of God. Now both Jew and Gentile can be reconciled "unto God in one body by the cross" (Eph. 2:16). You can be among the people of God!

2) SHEEP GOING ASTRAY / Now RETURNED UNTO THE SHEPHERD. When Jesus, "as a sheep before her shearers," was "brought as a lamb to the slaughter," found us "like sheep have gone astray" (Is. 53:6-7); made it possible that we "are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (1 Pet. 2:25). Because sin "separated between you and your God" (Is. 59:2), it took the death of the Chief Shepherd to make the arrangements whereby we can be brought back to God.

3) **DEAD / Now ALIVE.** One is said to be dead in sin before obeying the gospel. A reading of Romans 6:1-11 will teach us: "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" Peter added to this, as he wrote of Christ, "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Pet. 2:24).

4) ALIENS / Now FELLOWCITIZENS. The Ephesian Christians were once, "without Christ, aliens, strangers, having no hope and without God in the world, but now are made nigh, and are fellowcitizens and of the household of God" (Eph. 2:11-19). What a change! Have you had this change made in your life?

5) **FAR OFF / MADE NIGH.** Before folks obey the gospel, they are said to be far off but are made nigh after gospel obedience. Paul wrote, "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph. 2:13). Are you far off or nigh?



THE Sower's Seed

Basic Sermon Starters

"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

QUESTIONS THE LORD ASKED MEN

Introduction

- 1. As the Lord lived among men, there are questions the Lord asked men.
- 2. This sermon looks at lessons to be learned from questions the Lord asked men.

Discussion

I. "HAVE YE NOT READ?"

- A. When the Pharisees accused the disciples of doing that which is not lawful, Jesus asked, "Have ye not read...?" (Mt. 12:1-8).
- B. When the Pharisees asked about putting away for every cause, Jesus asked, "Have ye not read...?" (Mt. 19:3-9).
- C. When the Sadducees asked about the resurrection, Jesus asked, "Have ye not read...?" (Mt. 22:23-32).

II. "WHERE IS YOUR FAITH?"

A. Lk. 8:22-25

- B. The Lord often asked folks about their faith (Mt. 6:30; 14:31; 16:8).
- C. Have you checked your faith?



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- III. "ARE YE YET WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING?"
 A. When Peter said, "Declare unto us this parable," Jesus said, "Are ye also yet without understanding?" (Mt. 15:10-20).
 - B. Jesus often asked people about their understanding (Mt. 13:51; Mk. 8:14-21).
- IV. "HAVE I BEEN SO LONG TIME WITH YOU, AND YET HAST THOU NOT KNOWN ME?" A. Jn. 14:9

B. Would the Lord ask this of you today?

V. "WHAT DO YE MORE THAN OTHERS?" A. Mt. 5:47 B. Many do no better than others. Mt

B. Many do no better than others. Make practical application.

VI. "WHY CALL YE ME, LORD, LORD AND DO NOT THE THINGS WHICH I SAY?" A. Lk. 6:46
B. We must do the Lord's will.

Conclusion

Why not do the things which He says right now as together we stand and sing?

CHARGES BROUGHT AGAINST US John Isaac Edwards

This space is given in answer to some charges that have been brought against us in teaching Truth and exposing error.

1) YOUARE BEING MORE COMBATIVE THAN LOVING. Is the party making the combative charge more loving than combative or more combative than loving? The statement suggests that to be combative is to be unloving, and to be loving is to be non-combative. Paul knew nothing of the sort. He commanded Timothy, "follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness" (1 Tim. 6:11), and in the very next breath said, "Fight the good fight of faith" (1 Tim. 6:12). To be combative is to be loving, and to be loving is to be combative.

2) YOU ARE NOT RESPECTING OTHER PEOPLE'S TRADITIONS. When we point out the errors of the "ists" and "isms" in the religious world, we are told that we ought to just stay within our own traditions. "Just deal with error in your own tradition; respect other people's traditions - these are things we hold dear," we are advised. Was Jesus failing to show respect for other people's traditions when He said to the scribes and Pharisees, "Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition" (Mt. 15:6)? When Paul taught the one true God and exposed idolatry error in Athens, was he being narrow-minded and not respecting what the Athenians held dear? (Acts 17:22-31). Those who make this charge are not respecting our traditions, for it is in keeping with the apostles' traditions (2 Th. 2:15; 3:6) to expose error within and without. So when they attack us for not respecting their traditions, they are not respecting our traditions (the apostles' traditions) and violating their own traditions in the process!

3) YOU ARE BEING TOO JUDGMENTAL. "You shouldn't be judging people; Jesus said, 'Judge not, that ye be not judged' (Mt. 7:1)," it hath been said. You're not judging us, now are you? Surely not! The non-judgment people who run to Matthew 7 overlook John 7. The same Jesus who said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged" in Matthew 7:1 also said, "judge righteous judgment" (Jn. 7:24). The judgment condemned is an unrighteous, hypocritical judgment. *Question:* Were the Lord or His apostles ever "judgmental" in their teaching? Why is the charge brought against us when we teach as they did?

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BIBLE BAPTISM Dathan V. Rader

It is not all uncommon to find that there are great differences among religious people on the subject of baptism. It amazes me how much men have perverted the text of Mark 16:16, even to the point of saying, "He that believeth not and is not baptized shall be saved." There are even some who have taught that complete immersion is not required. I hope to clear up these things in this article and point men back to what the Bible says on the subject.

1) **DEFINING BAPTISM.** What is baptism? Smith's Bible Dictionary defines baptism as immersion or "to submerge." We should all know that submerge does not mean merely sprinkling a few drops on the head. It is clear that baptism involves going fully under the water. Romans 6:4 says that we are "buried" with him through baptism. I don't believe that you can be buried with a sprinkling. It is stated in John 3:23 that when John was baptizing in Aenon there was "much water." Much water is not necessary for sprinkling. When the eunuch was baptized by Philip, they both went down into the water (Acts 8:38). I have given a few of the many passages that refute sprinkling. By simply reading the text we can see what is acceptable to God.

2) **REASONS FOR BAPTISM.** Some may wonder why baptism is essential. By reading Matthew 28:19 we see that baptism is commanded by Christ. One of the main passages that is used when discussing baptism is Mark 16:16 which plainly states, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned." We can conclude that baptism saves us. As I pointed out in the introduction, men have perverted this passage. It puzzles me why men

would do this, because it is easy to understand and easy to obey. Another reason for baptism is that it washes away our sins (Acts 22:16).

3) WHO BAPTISM IS NOT FOR. Baptism is not for infants. In Acts 2:38 we read that we are baptized for the remission of sins. This passage refutes infant baptism because infants are not sinners (Ezek. 18:20). The Scriptures tell us that we are to go forth teaching all nations and baptizing them (Mt. 28:19). A baby cannot comprehend the teachings and therefore cannot be baptized. Acts 8:37 says that if you believe you may be baptized. Infants are not believers and cannot believe, so consequently cannot be baptized. Another one who cannot be baptized is the unbeliever for the Bible tells us, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mk. 16:16). The last person who cannot be baptized is the one who does not repent. Acts 2:38 says, "Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins."

4) WHO BAPTISM IS FOR. Baptism is for both men and women. Acts 8:12 reads, "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." Also baptism is for one who is in sin (Acts 22:16). As I pointed out in the last point, some are not in sin.

Hopefully I have helped clear up some of the confusion on this subject by simply pointing men back to the text and back to God.

1533 HWY 41-A N Shelbyville TN 37160

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST David Eldridge

This article will not deal with the literary work of Oscar Wilde, but rather with the great importance of a Christian being earnest. The word "earnest" is defined as, "Diligence, having haste, intently, and more abundantly" (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*). Truly there are a great number of things in which a Christian must be earnest according to the definition given above. Consider the great importance of being earnest.

1) **IN PRAYER.** Paul commands, "Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving" (Col. 4:2). Do you earnestly, diligently, and intently pray to God? You should, for "the effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much (Jas. 5:16). There is great importance found in being earnest in prayer to God.

2) IN YOUR CARE FOR OTHERS. Titus is a good example of being earnest in care. Paul said of him, "But thanks be to God who puts the same earnest care for you into the heart of Titus" (2 Cor. 8:16). Sometimes we see a lack of care for one another among brethren. This should not be the case! Paul said of the church, "That the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it" (1 Cor. 12:25-26). We must be earnest, more abundant, in our care for one another as brothers and sisters in Christ and show that care by our actions.

3) IN DEFENDING THE FAITH. Jude admonishes us "to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). One does not need to look far to see

that the truth of God's word needs to be defended. Many "untaught and unstable people" are perverting the gospel to their destruction and to the harm of those who heed them (2 Pet. 3:16). As God's people we must have great haste as we diligently defend the faith. Souls are on the line! Are you earnest in defending the truth?

4) IN OUR DESIRE FOR HEAVEN. As a Christian one should "groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven" (2 Cor. 5:2). Paul personally had "a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better" (Phil. 1:23). It is far too easy to become content with this world and not earnestly desire a Heavenly home. As a child of God we should be intently longing for a better place, understanding "this world is not my home." Do you earnestly desire a Heavenly home?

5) IN OUR OBEDIENCE. The apostle said "we must give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard" (Heb. 2:1). As we find God's commandments revealed to us in His word we must, with diligence and haste, take heed and obey. There is great reward in earnestly obeying for Jesus is "the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9). Therefore, let us have the "earnest desire" of the church at Corinth to obey the commandments of God (2 Cor. 7:7).

There is great importance in being earnest. Are there some ways you could more earnestly serve God?

62 Granite DR Carmel IN 46032 HARD WIRED FROM CONCEPTION? John Isaac Edwards

The following statement appeared in the local newspaper:

"In reference to the homosexuality issue, homosexuality is not a choice, it's something that is from birth. If you don't believe it, try walking in our shoes. Trying to change homosexuals is just like trying to change heterosexuals into being gay. A well-renowned newsman, Paul Harvey, just announced that scientists at Stanford University have announced that there are 56 genes at the base of the neck that determines a person's sexual preference. They came to the conclusion that you are hard wired from conception. Why is it that people are so narrowminded as not to believe science on this, but farmers can believe what science has found out for their chemicals and farm seeds? People who use pharmaceuticals believe what science has found out for their medication and all, but they can't believe what science has found out about human conception and development."

First of all, having been "shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace" (Eph. 6:15), "homosexual shoes" do not fit my feet. My feet are much too "beautiful" to be blackened by your shoes anyway (Rom. 10:15). In the second place, whatever is true of "the homosexuality issue" also holds true for another person's "sexual preference." If not, why not?

1) HARD WIRED FOR ADULTERY? Leviticus 20:10 says, "And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death." Suppose you found your husband in the arms of another woman and he sought to justify the affair saying, "Now hunny, in reference to this adultery issue, adultery is not a choice, it's something that is from birth. If you don't believe it, try walking in our shoes. Trying to change adulterers is just like trying to change the monogamous into being adulterers." Would you accept that? It has been argued, "Having a law preventing gay marriage is morally and constitutionally wrong." *Question:* Would it be morally and constitutionally wrong to have a law forbidding polygamous marriages? Answer please.

2) **HARD WIRED FOR INCEST?** Suppose one in your family was having sexual relations with "his father's wife," "his daughter in law," "his mother in law," "his sister," "his uncle's wife" or "his brother's wife" (Lev. 20:11-12, 14, 17, 20-21) and suggested, "Scientists announced that there are 56 genes at the base of the neck that determine a person's sexual preference. They came to the conclusion that you are hard wired from conception..." Would that pacify you? Incest is a statutory crime, in this country. Is having a law preventing incest morally and constitutionally wrong? We would like an answer to this please.

3) **HARD WIRED FOR BESTIALITY?** Again it is written, "And if a woman approach unto any beast, and lie down thereto, thou shalt kill the woman, and the beast..." (Lev. 20:16). What if you went to the barn to find your daughter approaching unto Mustang (the horse) or your son lying down to Billy (the goat), and said they were hard wired for bestiality? You might think they had fallen from the loft and hit their head on something! Would it be morally wrong to have a law forbidding bestiality? Would it be constitutionally wrong to have a law that prevents man from marrying his best friend, Spot (the dog)? 4) **HARD WIRED FOR PEDOPHILIA?** Pedophilia is sexual perversion in which children are the preferred sexual object. Suppose you learned a pedophile was engaging in sex acts with your son or daughter and tried to justify the relationship on the basis that he was hard wired from conception? You might want to put a short in his circuit, right? Would a law preventing an adult man from marrying your six-year-old daughter be morally and constitutionally wrong?

If you object to the idea of one being hard wired for adultery, incest, bestiality or pedophilia, "Why are you so narrow-minded as not to believe science on this, but farmers can believe what science has found out for their chemicals and farm seeds?" Such reasoning is agriculturally incorrect - try having persimmons with two male trees, or red berries with two female holly bushes! Through whatever door you bring the homosexual, others will bring those who commit adultery, polygamy, incest, bestiality and pedophilia! Whatever argument or attempt is made to indemnify or justify the practice of homosexuality can be made to indemnify or justify the practice of all other sexual sins; yea, all ungodliness and unrighteousness! Hard wired for lying? for drunkenness? for stealing? for murder? What's next?

As to the idea that "trying to change homosexuals is just like trying to change heterosexuals into being gay" - as "women did change the natural use into that which is against nature" (Rom. 1:26), the Corinthians, some of whom were "abusers of themselves with mankind," changed as they were "washed," "sanctified," and "justified" (1 Cor. 6:9-11), when they "hearing believed, and were baptized" (Acts 18:8).

Homosexuality - The Sin		The	e Homosexual - The Sinner		
(A Comparison from Romans 1)					
×	Uncleanness (v. 24)	×	Vain in their imaginations (v. 21)		
×	Dishonor (v. 24)	×	Have a foolish, darkened heart (v. 21)		
×	Vile affection (v. 26)	×	Change the truth into a lie (v. 25)		
×	Against nature (v. 26)	×	Change the natural use (v. 26)		
×	Unseemly (v. 27)	×	Of a reprobate mind (v. 28)		
×	Error (v. 27)	X	Filled with all unrighteousness (v. 29)		
×	Not convenient (v. 28)	X	Worthy of death (v. 32).		



The book of Acts records several sermons preached in the beginning of the church. Peter's sermon in Acts 2:14-36 is the very first sermon preached under the Great Commission. It was the day of Pentecost which was determined according to Leviticus 23:15-17. It was the first day of the week, the day our Lord was raised from the dead (Mt. 28:1-6). The apostles received the baptism of the Holy Spirit on this day (Acts 2:1-4). All nations were represented (Acts 2:5, 9-11).

1) **PETER ANSWERS FALSE CHARGES.** The apostles were falsely charged with being drunk (vv. 12-13). Peter shows the apostles were not drunk, but this is that which was prophesied by Joel (Joel 2:28-32). Peter identifies the events of Pentecost as being what Joel prophesied (vv. 16-21).

2) PETER PREACHES JESUS AS THE CHRIST. Peter shows Jesus was a man among them of Nazareth (v. 22). This Jesus was a God- approved man (v. 22). God approved Jesus by the miracles, wonders and signs which He did. Miracles were "works of a supernatural origin and character such as could not be produced by natural agents and means" (Vine's, vol. 3, p. 75). Wonders were "something strange, causing the beholder to marvel" (Vine's, vol. 4, p. 229). Signs were "a mark, indication, token" (Vine's, vol. 4, p. 29). The miracles were done by God (v. 22). Nicodemus said to Jesus, "No man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him" (Jn. 3:2). All of these mighty works were done in the midst of those present and they knew well that they were done (v. 22). The council was determined to kill Jesus (v. 23), but this was also according to the foreknowledge of God (v. 23; 1 Pet. 1:18-20). Peter then charges them (the

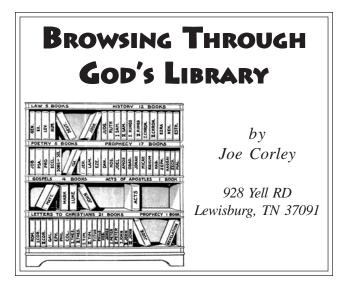
Jews, v. 5; the house of Israel, v. 22 and v. 36) with killing Jesus by crucifixion (v. 23).

3) **PETER PREACHED JESUS WAS RAISED.** Peter now proclaims that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead (v. 24). The Jews could not question that Jesus did the miracles among them or that they had killed Him. This they knew. Peter calls thirteen witnesses to testify that Jesus was raised. David was witness number one (vv. 25-31). The apostles were the other twelve witnesses (v. 32). The resurrected Christ was preached as being enthroned in heaven (vv. 30, 33-35). God made this same Jesus both Lord (ruler) and Christ (anointed), thus God's annointed ruler (v. 36).

4) **THE RESULTS OF PETER'S SERMON.** When the multitude heard Peter's sermon they were "pricked in their heart" (v. 37). They asked, "what shall we do?" - which both they and Peter understood to be, "what shall we do to be saved?" They were told to "repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (v. 38). About three thousand gladly received the word and were baptized (v. 41), and the Lord added the saved to the church (v. 47).

5) PETER REFUTES FALSE DOCTRINE. (1)
Faith only is refuted in verse 38. (2) Baptism not being essential to salvation is also refuted in verse 38. (3) Praying for salvation is refuted in verse 38. (4) There is nothing you can do to be saved is refuted in verse 40. (5) Salvation by grace alone is refuted in verse 38. (6) Christ is coming to earth to sit on His throne is refuted in verses 30-34.

P.O. Box 271407 Tampa FL 33688



As we explore the section of God's Old Testament library called "Minor Prophets," we find twelve books: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. These are not classified "minor" because they are less important than the rest, but because they are shorter books.

After Solomon's death, God's people divided into two kingdoms: the kingdom of Israel, and the kingdom of Judah. Both kingdoms became idolatrous and wicked, and both were ultimately carried away into captivity because of such. Israel fell to the Assyrians around 722 B.C., and were lost to history as a nation. Judah fell to the Babylonians about 589 B.C. After seventy years of captivity, a remnant began to return to their homeland, and, in time, both the temple and the city of Jerusalem were rebuilt and the worship restored.

Some of these minor prophets lived before either of these kingdoms went into captivity (Obadiah, Joel, Jonah, Amos, Hosea, and Micah). Others lived during the 135 years between the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities (Zechariah, Nahum, Habakkuk), while the rest (Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi) lived after the return from captivity. The mission of some of these prophets was to warn Judah and Israel of coming doom unless they repented. Others, such as Obadiah, Jonah and Nahum, pronounced judgments upon the enemies of God's people. Haggai and Zechariah encouraged the Jews in the rebuilding of the temple after the captivity, while Malachi's mission was to get the people who had returned to Jerusalem and who had become careless in their life and worship back on track.

Sprinkled throughout these books are prophecies of Christ and His kingdom, a few of which are as follows: Joel 2:28-32 prophesies of the last days when God's Spirit would be poured out upon "all flesh" as quoted in Acts 2:14-21. Micah 4:1-4 was a prophecy of the coming of Messiah's kingdom in the last days. Micah 5:2 names the birthplace of Christ as quoted in Matthew 2:6. Zechariah 5:12-13 prophesies of "the Branch" (Christ) who would build the temple and would be a priest upon his throne. Malachi 4:5-6 is a prophecy of John the baptist, as referred to in Matthew 17:10-12. Jonah's experience of being swallowed by a great fish is a type of Jesus being in the tomb three days and nights (Mt. 12:39-40).

These books contain some of the finest gems of literature unexcelled anywhere in the world. The style of writing varies considerably from a simple historical account (Jonah) to a challenging apocalyptical style (Zechariah); from a dialogue between a prophet and God (Habakkuk) to a question-and-answer format (Malachi); from the relatively slow-moving style of Haggai to the fast-paced, rhythmic style of Nahum. They are filled with graphic figures of speech, powerful and moving language, and lessons worth the learning.

Though written so long ago, much of what was said in these books can be applied today because conditions are similar. We can still plead with Amos, "Let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream."



Memory Verse: "Nevertheless the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them" (Judges 2:16).

OId Testament Judges OSSAMN BEHAORD RASHGAM NIDEOG

Quiz Question

She lived during the days when the Judges ruled. Her first husband Mahlon died and she remarried. She was a Moabitess. Who was she?

"Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14).

Back To Basics - November 2004

In Answer To Your Question Johnie Edwards

A concerned brother has asked this question be answered in *Back To Basics*: "Do women have the right to lead in a public assembly such as funeral services, etc?"

1) **ROLE EXPANDED.** The role of women has been expanded over the last few years, among many religious bodies. This issue has also risen among many churches of Christ. The only way we can know the answer to this, or any other spiritual question, is to appeal to, "For what saith the scripture?" (Rom. 4:3).

2) **THE DIVINE ORDER.** To help answer this question, the divine order is necessary. Paul penned, "For I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (1 Cor. 11:3). Since man is the head of the woman, she is not to lead over the man.

3) WOMAN'S SUBJECTION. Paul told the Ephesian Christians, in regards to the husband/ wife relationship, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing" (Eph. 5:22-24).

4) WOMEN NOT IN A LEADERSHIP POSITION. Paul answered this question in these words: "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach nor usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (1 Tim. 2:11-12). A woman's demeanor must be that of quietness. Any thing a woman does such as leading in prayer, waiting on the Lord's table, leading singing, teaching a class, preaching and the like, with men present is to violate what Paul wrote Timothy!

5) THE REASON FOR THIS SUBJECTION. God made the rule and gave the reason for so doing. Going back to the Garden of Eden's sin is the place where we are first introduced to woman's subjection to man. "Unto the woman he said...thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Gen. 3:16). Paul also addressed this issue when he said, "For Adam was first formed, then Eve...but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (1 Tim. 2:13-14). This early sin brought about serious consequences; one of which is that of woman being in subjection to man and not allowed to "teach nor usurp authority over the man."

GOD

CHRIST

MAN

WOMAN

"How Readest Thou?" *Test Your Bible Knowledge*

How is a fool's voice known?

By multitude of words (Eccl. 5:3).

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