

Back To Basics

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SPECIAL ISSUE:

MARK WELL HER BULWARKS

Donnie V. Rader

Psalm 48 is a Psalm of praise to God for protecting Zion. There are two sections to the Psalm: I. **The city of God delivered from the adversary** (vv. 1-8). II. **God of the city praised for defeat** (vv. 9-14). Verse 13 says:

“Mark well her bulwarks; Consider her palaces; that you may tell it to the generations following.”

1) **WHAT ARE BULWARKS?** Bulwarks are ramparts, entrenchments, fortifications, or defense structures.

2) **WHY DID DAVID WANT TO MARK THE BULWARKS?** The bulwarks of Zion are her protection and strength. God is the protection and strength for Zion only as she maintains her bulwarks! Marking or identifying the bulwarks means to draw clear attention to them so that all can see and understand. By doing so, the next generation can easily be taught and kept on the straight and narrow path.

3) **THE BULWARKS OF SPIRITUAL ZION—THE CHURCH.** Just as David instructed, we must mark well the bulwarks of spiritual

Zion. Her bulwarks are her protection and strength. Her defenses must be maintained. We must mark them well. We must tell them to our children and grandchildren. This must be done for the welfare of Zion in the future.

4) **HOW DO WE MARK THE BULWARKS OF ZION?** The strongholds of God’s people are marked by a constant reminder of what God wants His people to be (2 Pet. 1:12). This is done by continual preaching and teaching on basics of the gospel. Obviously, it is not enough to merely teach the bulwarks, but we must practice what is taught (Jas. 1:21-25). What is not practiced will soon be forgotten (Dt. 5). We cannot assume that our children and grandchildren will know and believe what we know to be the truth unless we teach it to them (Dt. 6).

This special issue of *Back To Basics* marks well some of the bulwarks of Zion. The topics developed in this special are strongholds for God’s people. Read this material carefully and go back and read it again. Give a copy of it to your children and grandchildren. Teach the principles found here to others (2 Tim. 2:2).

NO CREED BUT THE BIBLE

Johnie Edwards

Most every religious body has a creed book setting forth their beliefs and practices. These books are written by men, thus not inspired books. The word “creed” comes from a Latin word which means to believe. So, whatever a person believes—that’s his creed. The Lord’s people are different in that the only creed they subscribe to is the Bible. So, we take a look as to why no creed but the Bible.

1) THE BIBLE IS GOD-INSPIRED. The word of God is inspired of God. The creeds of men are not. They are just that—of men. Paul affirmed, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Often Bible writers were told, as in the writings of Jeremiah, “To whom the word of the Lord came...” (Jer. 1:2). Human creed writers are not able to truthfully say, “the word of the Lord came to me saying...”!

2) THE BIBLE IS UNCHANGEABLE. The word of God does not change. Whatever it said yesterday, it says today, and will continue to say the same thing. Peter said the “word of God liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Pet. 1:23). The creeds

of men are in constant need of being revised. A good example can be found with *The Methodist Discipline*. Prior to 1910, this creed book said that babies were “conceived and born in sin.” This statement was revised in 1910 to read, “all men are born in Christ.”

3) THE BIBLE WAS ONCE DELIVERED. Jude penned, “...that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). This means that the word of God was once for all delivered and no new revelations will come. Yet the creeds of men, from time to time, add latter day revelations. The Mormon church is good at doing this when the time is right for such to be added!

4) THE BIBLE HOLDS ALL THINGS. Peter penned, “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness” (2 Pet. 1:3). Since God has given “all things,” there is no room for addition. And you can’t take anything away from God’s word and still have all things!

5) THE BIBLE EXALTS CHRIST. Paul wrote, “that in all things he might have the preeminence” (Col. 1:18). Human creeds exalt men! So, let’s stay with the Bible.

Back To Basics

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NO NAME BUT BIBLE NAMES

John Isaac Edwards

We are strongly supported and protected when we call Bible things by Bible names. Names are words or phrases that constitute the distinctive designation of a person or thing. The precept of Peter—"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God..." (1 Pet. 4:11)—is a bulwark of Zion that needs to be marked well and told to generations following.

1) FOR THE CHURCH. The New Testament church is divinely designated as *the church* (Acts 8:1), *the church of God* (Acts 20:28), *the church of the firstborn* (Heb. 12:23), *the churches* (Acts 9:31), *the churches of Christ* (Rom. 16:16), *the churches of God* (1 Cor. 11:16).

2) FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH. Those who feed and lead the flock of God are called *elders* (Acts 14:23), *pastors* (Eph. 4:11), and *bishops* (Phil. 1:1). Those serving under their oversight are called *deacons* (1 Tim. 3:8). Those who preach the word are identified as *preachers* (1 Tim. 2:7), *evangelists* (Eph. 4:11), and *ministers* (1 Cor. 3:5). Those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus are called *saints* (1 Cor. 1:2), *brethren* (1 Cor. 1:10), *Christians* (Acts 11:26), *members* (1 Cor. 12:12), *children of God* (Gal. 3:26).

3) FOR THE WORK OF THE CHURCH. In New Testament days, the church *sounded out the word of the Lord* (1 Th. 1:8), *sent relief unto the brethren* (Acts 11:29), and engaged in *the edifying of itself* (Eph. 4:16).

4) FOR THE WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH. Luke spoke of the worship of the Jerusalem church in these words: *apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers* (Acts

2:42). Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 mention *singing*.

If we cannot speak in the language of Scripture to convey, describe, and express what we believe, teach and practice, then it may not be Scriptural! Other names than Bible names suggest other things than Bible things! Some need to change their vocabulary or their practice or both!

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THE WOMAN'S PLACE IN WORSHIP

Melba Edwards

We must keep the woman's place in worship protected. With all the women's rights in our day, one could be confused concerning the woman's place in worship. She does have a place in the public assembly when it comes to worshipping God.

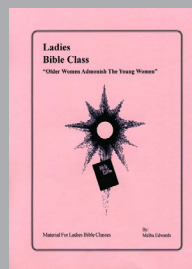
1) THE WOMAN IS TO BE A TRUE WORSHIPPER OF GOD. We can learn this from the example of the Samaritan woman of John 4:19-26. In verses 23-24, Jesus said, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." God is who we are to worship. We must worship Him in spirit or with the right attitude. We are also to worship Him in truth or according to the Scriptures. We also have the example of Lydia who worshipped God (Acts 16:13-15).

2) THE WOMAN IS TO WORSHIP IN QUIET SUBJECTION. 1 Timothy 2:11-12 reads, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." The NKJV reads, "Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence." The reason Paul gives is found in verses 13-14. "For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." Silence, in this

passage, means quietness. She is not in a headship or leadership position, but she is to be in submission. Her adorning should be one "of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Pet. 3:4). She can sing and must according to Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16. But she cannot lead the singing, for that would go against the above Scriptures. She can and must pray according to 1 Corinthians 14:15. But she cannot lead the congregation in prayer. We have no example of women leading the congregation in any way. Her demeanor is to be one of quiet subjection as she worships God Almighty.

We must never allow the woman's place in worship to go unprotected. We must set the proper example for our daughters so that the church will continue to have women in their place of worship. A strong church has women who are true worshippers and worship in quiet subjection.

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NO UNIVERSAL ORGANIZATION, BUT ELDERS IN EVERY CHURCH

Rick Duggin

An old saying honors old people: “When an elder passes away, it’s like a library burning down.” It is sad when an old person carries his wisdom and experience to the grave. Young people rob themselves if they let this treasure slip away untouched. When men fail to prepare themselves to serve as elders, they rob a congregation of the benefits of godly elders. This is even sadder. When men become elders without first meeting the Scriptural qualifications, they may rob a congregation of its spiritual growth and divine approval. Many churches have departed from the faith because they were misled by unqualified elders. This is saddest of all. By remembering three simple principles, we can avoid many problems.

1) **THE NEW TESTAMENT USES DIFFERENT WORDS TO DESCRIBE ELDERS.** *Elder* describes a man from the standpoint of his age and maturity. *Presbyter* simply transliterates the word for elder (1 Tim. 4:12). *Bishop* and *overseer* describe the same men with reference to their work of oversight. *Shepherd* and *pastor* emphasize their relationship to the flock (Eph. 4:11). Even prominent denominational writers acknowledge that these words are synonyms. “There was in apostolic times no distinction between elders (presbyters) and bishops such as we find from the second century onwards; the leaders of the Ephesian church are indiscriminately described as elders, bishops (i.e. superintendents) and shepherds (or pastors)” (F. F. Bruce, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament, The Book of Acts*, p. 415).

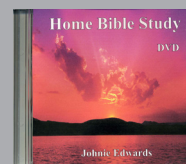
2) **THE NEW TESTAMENT PATTERN SHOWS A PLURALITY OF ELDERS IN EACH LOCAL CHURCH.** During Paul’s first preaching journey, Luke says they “...appointed elders in every church...” (Acts

14:23). In the second century, men departed from this pattern by making one man the elder over a congregation. This new organization required new definitions of elder, bishop, and shepherd. Philip Schaff, the Presbyterian historian, admits, “...the word ‘Bishop’ gradually changed its meaning, and by the middle of the second century became restricted to the chief Presbyter of the locality” (*History of the Christian Church, Vol. I, p. 488*).

3) **THE NEW TESTAMENT AUTHORIZES ELDERS TO OVERSEE ONLY THE ONE CONGREGATION WHERE THEY SERVE.** Paul commanded the Ephesian elders, “therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers” (Acts 20:28). In the second century, churches authorized elders to oversee more than one congregation. This departure from the New Testament pattern led to the formation of the Roman Catholic Church. Their hierarchy, in turn, became the model for the organization of various denominations. When men prefer their wisdom to the Lord’s, apostasy cannot be avoided.

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THE LORD'S SUPPER EVERY FIRST DAY AND ONLY ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK

Carrol R. Sutton

Jesus promised to eat the bread and drink the fruit of the vine with His disciples in the church when it came into existence (Mt. 26:26-30; Mk. 14:22-26; Lk. 22:14-20). Observing the Lord's supper was not a one-time act. The early disciples "continued steadfastly" in observing it (Acts 2:42). Let us consider some facts about the Lord's supper.

1) **THE PARTICIPANTS.** The proper "participants" are Christians (true disciples of Christ). In Acts 20:7, we learn that "the disciples came together to break bread." 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 says "we," meaning Paul and other saints. "Ye" and "brethren," in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, 33, refers to saints to whom the letter is addressed (1 Cor. 1:2).

2) **THE ELEMENTS.** The proper elements to be used in the Lord's supper are also specified. They are "bread" and "the cup" which Jesus identified as "the fruit of the vine" (Mt. 26:26-29; Mk. 14:22-25; Lk. 22:15-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-29, 33).

3) **THE PLACE.** The proper place of the observance is in the church (assembly). It is "when ye come together to eat" the Lord's supper (1 Cor. 11:20-33; Acts 20:7).

4) **THE MANNER.** The proper manner is "worthily," "discerning the Lord's body," and "showing the Lord's death till he come" (1 Cor. 11:26-28).

5) **THE DAY.** When should the Lord's supper be observed? It is not and can not be decided by human tradition, personal likes or dislikes, or

by human creeds. We must appeal to what the Scriptures say. We learn from Acts 20:7, when (the day) the saints gathered together to partake of the Lord's supper. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread..." NOTE: "The first day of the week" is specified as to when (what day) the early Christians "came together to break bread." The context of Acts 20:7 (Paul and his companions waited seven days in Troas and assembled with them "upon the first day of the week when the disciples came together to break bread") indicates that this was not a common meal. Obviously, it was the Lord's supper. In 1 Corinthians 16:2, Paul commanded saints, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store..." In Hebrews 10:25, saints are exhorted, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together..." Since every week has a first day, the Lord's supper should be observed every first day of the week! Compare the sabbath command. "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy" necessitated an observance every sabbath since every week had a sabbath. There is no precept (statement or command), approved divine example or necessary implication that the Lord's supper may be observed on any other day than the first day of the week! It cannot be done by faith! It is not in the doctrine of Christ! It can't be done in the name of Christ! We can observe it by faith only on "the first day of the week" (2 Cor. 5:7; Rom. 10:17); if we follow the approved example in Acts 20:7 (Phil. 4:9; 3:17). We should be satisfied to abide in the doctrine of Christ!

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ONE CHURCH WITHOUT DENOMINATIONS

Keith Greer

A denomination is a large group of religious congregations united under a common faith and name and organized under a single administrative and legal hierarchy. Is the Lord's church a denomination?

1) **JESUS PROMISED TO BUILD ONLY ONE CHURCH.** "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Mt. 16:18). Please notice that the word "church" is singular—not plural. Jesus promised to build ONE church.

2) **JESUS IS THE ONLY HEAD OF THE ONE CHURCH HE BUILT.** "And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (Eph. 1:22-23). Christ is not the head of every denominational church. He is the head of just ONE church.

3) **JESUS DIED FOR ONLY ONE CHURCH.** "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28). Our Lord shed His blood to purchase only ONE church—not many churches.

4) **JESUS ADDS THE SAVED TO ONLY ONE CHURCH.** "Praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47). Christ adds the saved to the ONE church He promised to build and over which He is Head.

5) **ONLY ONE CHURCH STARTED ON PENTECOST.** "Then those who gladly received his word

were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them" (Acts 2:41). The ONE church began on the first Pentecost following Jesus' ascension back to heaven. The denominational churches all started too late!

6) **JESUS IS GOING TO GIVE ONLY ONE CHURCH TO HIS FATHER.** "Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power" (1 Cor. 15:24). When the world ends, only ONE church will be given to the Father.

7) **ELDERS ARE THE ONLY LOCAL AUTHORITY IN THE ONE CHURCH.** "Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly" (1 Pet. 5:2). The ONE church has no president, board of directors, cardinals, or council. Each congregation is self-governing.

Dear reader, can you make these statements about the church to which you belong? Shouldn't you assure your salvation by being a member of the ONE true church? Sadly, mankind has made this a complicated issue. Yes, there are many different churches, but only ONE is the true church. The Lord's church is not a denomination—a part of the whole. She stands alone just the way God designed her.

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SINGING PRAISES WITHOUT MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS

Mitch Stevens

Singing praises without mechanical instruments is one of the most immediately distinctive elements of the assemblies of Christ's churches that sets them apart from popular religion. But this alone is not what makes the exclusion of instruments an important defining element of the Lord's church. Rather, it is the matter of authority behind it which, if ignored in regards to worship, leaves no consistent foundation upon which to argue for any specific doctrinal belief. Our form of musical worship rests on the most fundamental principles for discerning God's will for us.

1) A DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS.

A majority of the arguments made in favor of worship with mechanical instruments are based in the Old Testament. Following its implementation by King David (1 Chr. 13; 15; 16), there are over 50 references to instruments in worship in the old law, most of them in the Psalms. In that time, it was sanctioned by God (2 Chr. 29:25). However, the decrees of the old law have now been set aside, their purpose having been fulfilled in the ministry of Christ (Mt. 5:17-18; Rom. 7:1-6; Gal. 3:23-25). Therefore, we cannot reinstitute the use of instruments for worship on the grounds that the Old Testament commands it any more than we can argue for the reinstitution of the priesthood and animal sacrifice in Christian worship!

2) THE CLARITY OF SPECIFICS.

Within the law of Christ, God commands that we worship Him with music. Specifically, we are commanded to express our thankfulness by singing in order to praise God and edify one another (Eph. 5:18-20; Col. 3:16; Heb. 13:15; Jas. 5:13). We read of Christians singing praises, both privately

and in their assemblies (Acts 16:25; 1 Cor. 14:15, 26, 40) and a few references to singing are made from the Old Testament (Rom. 15:8-9; Heb. 2:12). Every command, reference, and example regarding musical worship in the New Testament refers specifically to singing.

3) **THE LIMITS OF SILENCE.** The New Testament says "sing." Not "play." Both are specific forms of making music, in the same way that walking and running are specific forms of movement. Any first-grade student knows that when the teacher says "walk," that specific command excludes the option to run! So it is with singing and playing. By the principles of God's instruction, omission is the same as restriction. The writer of Hebrews bases a vital argument on this conclusion. Jesus, our High Priest, could not have been a priest according to the old order because our Lord was from Judah, "a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests" (Heb. 7:14). Judah didn't have to be specifically excluded—that was necessarily implied when only Levi was mentioned. In the same way, for the New Testament to mention **ONLY** singing as musical worship is sufficient to limit it to singing **ONLY**.

If the exclusive command to worship by singing praises may be compromised, so may every other New Testament pattern for the church that rests on these principles.

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SAVED BY GRACE, FAITH, AND WORKS

E. R. Hall, Jr.

“**F**or 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. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:8-10).

1) GRACE, FAITH, AND WORKS ARE INCLUDED IN GOD’S PLAN OF SALVATION. This passage clearly shows grace, faith, and works are a part of God’s plan to save mankind from sin. Grace is undeserved favor or kindness that God demonstrated when He sent His Son to die for us even though we were sinners (Rom. 5:8). “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1). “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17).

2) WORKS WHICH DO NOT SAVE. We must understand that when it comes to “not of works,” there are certain kinds of works which do not save. The Scriptures identify those. For example, we are not saved by the works of the law of Moses. “And by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:39; Gal. 2:16). Christ took the law of Moses out of the way and nailed it to His cross (Col. 2:12). We no longer live under the law and therefore cannot be justified when we try to keep the law. Another type of works that will not save us are works of our own righteousness. “For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God” (Rom. 10:3). “Not

by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit” (Ti. 3:5). Neither will our engaging in any of the “works of the flesh” save us but will rather cause us to not inherit the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:19-21).

3) WORKS TO BE DONE. The “works” which are to be done are the “good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10). “Good works” are those found in the Scriptures. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). The “good works” are the “works of God” (Jn. 6:28-29); the things which God has commanded in the Scriptures. We must be certain of the works we do in religion. If we do according to the commandments of men, Jesus says our worship is “vain” (Mt. 15:9). When we stand before Him on Judgement Day, it will not be the person who says, “Lord, Lord” but “who does the will of the Father” that will enter Heaven (Mt. 7:21).

Let us be thankful unto God for the grace which He has manifested unto us in the sending of His only Begotten Son to die and shed His blood for our sins. Let us hear His word so that we might have faith in Him and know His will. Also, let us “be doers of the word, and not hearers only” (Jas. 1:22).

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NO WOMEN PREACHERS, ELDERS, OR DEACONS

Ron Roberts

The push to get women into leadership positions within the church is not due to a new understanding of the Scriptures. The Bible is clear on the subject (1 Cor. 11:3). The issue springs from a submission to societal changes instead of the Scriptures. As women have been pushed to lead in the home, to enter the work force, to advance on the battlefield, so they are now encouraged to take charge in the church.

1) NO WOMEN PREACHERS. From the word of God we learn that women are to be silent within the church (1 Cor. 14:34-35). The context does not suggest that women are never to open their mouths in the assembly, but rather that they are not to speak out as if they were leaders within the congregation. 1 Timothy 2:9-15 supports this interpretation as we are told that a woman can not teach or usurp authority over a man. Some will lightly dismiss this arrangement as a part of the culture in Bible times. They claim that God never intended for women to submit to men in the church forever. However, if you read the reasons for the command you will see that they date back to Adam and Eve.

2) NO WOMEN ELDERS. Within a congregation of the Lord's people, elders have been given the rule (1 Tim. 5:17; 1 Pet. 5:1-3). These leaders must meet certain criteria before they can be appointed to this position (1 Tim. 3:1-7). Among these qualifications is one that says an elder must be the husband of one wife (1 Tim. 3:2). This requirement alone removes all women from consideration for this position.

3) NO WOMEN DEACONS. Like elders, deacons must only be appointed after having met

the assigned qualifications (1 Tim. 3:8-13). Also like elders, the deacon must be the husband of one wife (1 Tim. 3:12). It has been argued that Phebe was a deaconess in the church (Rom. 16:1). The sister was indeed a servant of the church. The word "deacon" means servant. The context must be used to discern whether the passage is talking about a serving Christian or about an office within the church. For example: In Philippians 1:1, Paul writes to saints, deacons, and bishops. The verse clearly refers to the office of the deacons as they are separated from other saints. A similar problem of understanding might lead one to believe in women elders. The term "elder" can refer to the office or to an elderly person. The context will again reveal which is being discussed. In 1 Timothy 5:1-2, the apostle gives instruction on how to treat older men, younger men, older women, and younger women. The term "elder" is used but it refers to men and women of age.

Within the church, as well as within the home, women are to be in subjection (Eph. 5:22-24; 1 Pet. 3:1-6). This is God's arrangement. If men would lead and love as God commands them, then the women of the church would find it much easier to fulfill their command to submit (1 Pet. 3:7, Eph. 5:25-33).

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A SPIRITUAL, NOT A SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND GOSPEL

Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

One does not have to be very astute to figure out that modern “Christianity” is geared to the “here and now” rather than the “hereafter.” As modern “Christian theologians,” since the nineteenth century, have either expressed doubt or have outright denied the reality of the resurrection and an afterlife, there has been a marked change in many professed Christians’ concept of the mission of Christ and His church in the world. As faith in the world to come has declined, “Christians” have had to try to make sense of the real mission of Christ and the church. So, there has been a reinterpretation of the mission of Christ on earth and a shift of the church’s role in the community. Hence, local churches have shifted the focus of their “ministries” from saving souls and preparing them for the world to come to that of trying to solve all the problems of this world and making it a better place for mankind. This shift in emphasis has become known as the “Social Gospel.” Even those who still profess faith in the resurrection have been affected by it without knowing the roots of it. It is appealing because it offers instant gratification rather than having to wait until the next life for our reward.

1) **THE MISSION OF JESUS.** Jesus came to “seek and save the lost” (Lk. 19:10). He came to address the problem of sin—the thing that causes man to be lost. He came to wage a “war on sin” rather than a “war on poverty.” He lived a life of poverty and warned “ye have the poor with you always” (Mt. 8:20; Mk. 14:7). He refused to be diverted from His spiritual mission to that of settling civil disputes (Lk. 12:13-15). It was far more important to Him that those involved beware of covetousness (a sin that would affect

their souls) than who may have been right or wrong in the civil matter. Jesus came to help men go to heaven not to try to bring heaven to them on earth. The good news of the gospel of Christ is He came to save sinners, not to right the social, civil, political and economic ills of the world.

2) **THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH.** The mission of the church somewhat mirrors the mission of its Founder and Head. It is the “pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). The early church engaged in limited financial aid to the poor. It was limited to the poor among the saints (Acts 2:42; 4:34; 6:1-3; 11:30; Rom. 15:25-28; 1 Cor. 16:1; 2 Cor. 8 & 9). Even among the saints, it was limited to those with no other means of support (1 Tim. 5:8-16). The church was not a general welfare agency. The primary work of the church is that of equipping the saints for the work of ministry (service) unto the edifying of the body of Christ (Eph. 4:11-16, ASV). It provides the means and facilities for local Christians to assemble “in one place” for spiritual worship (1 Cor. 11:20; 14:23; Acts 20:7). It provides the support, means, and facilities for preaching/teaching the gospel to saint and sinner (Phil. 4:15-16; 2 Cor. 11:8).

3) **GOD’S PROVISIONS FOR OTHER NEEDS.** He leaves it to individuals, rather than the church, to provide for “houses to eat and drink in”—i.e., social meals (1 Cor. 11:22). He has given great social institutions (Home and State) through which man’s temporal needs can be addressed.

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WITHDRAWING FROM THE DISORDERLY

David Eldridge

One strong support and protection of the Lord's church is the act of withdrawing from the disorderly. Though this action is not practiced in all cases as it should be, it nonetheless is commanded by the Lord.

1) THE CHURCH IS TO CONTROL ITS FELLOWSHIP. This is done in two ways. First, it has the ability to choose who it does and does not allow as a member of the local church (Acts 9:26). Secondly, it has the responsibility to "put away from yourselves the evil person" (1 Cor. 5:13). This article will deal with the latter method.

2) INSTRUCTIVE AND CORRECTIVE DISCIPLINE. There are two types of discipline in which the local church is commanded to engage. The first is instructive discipline—teaching and admonishing one who is in the wrong. Paul spoke of this kind of discipline when he wrote, "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly..." (1 Th. 5:14). However, when this type of discipline fails, the church must practice corrective discipline—the act of withdrawing.

3) WHO IS TO BE WITHDRAWN FROM? Paul commanded, "...that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us" (2 Th. 3:6). To walk disorderly "signifies 'to be out of rank, out of one's place, undisciplined, to behave disorderly': in the military sense, 'to break rank'" (*Vine's Expository Dictionary*). This disorderly conduct may manifest itself in: an unwillingness to resolve a problem with a brother (Mt. 18:15-18), divisive teaching or practices (Rom. 16:17; Ti. 3:10), sexual im-

morality (1 Cor. 5), or any sin practiced by a brother or sister of which they refuse to repent (1 Cor. 5:11).

4) HOW DO WE WITHDRAW FROM AN UNREPENTANT SINNER? It is to be done collectively (congregationally) when we "are gathered together" (1 Cor. 5:4), and is enforced personally (2 Tim. 3:5). In regards to our behavior towards one who has been withdrawn from, we are told "not to keep company...not even to eat with such a person" (1 Cor. 5:11). That is, we are to withdraw our fellowship from the one who walks disorderly. However, we must "...not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother" (2 Th. 3:15).

5) WHY DO WE PRACTICE WITHDRAWAL? First and foremost, we practice this action because it is a command of the Lord. The purpose of withdrawing is: to keep the local church pure (1 Cor. 5:2, 6-7), to make the one withdrawn from feel ashamed of their sin (2 Th. 3:14), and to attempt to bring about their repentance (1 Cor. 5:5).

When a church fails to practice the act of withdrawing from the disorderly, they are failing to obey a commandment of the Lord. Though it is a punishment (2 Cor. 2:6), it is done out of love for the soul that is in sin. The Bible testifies that God's plan will work. The one who was withdrawn from by the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 5) repented and was restored to faithfulness once again (2 Cor. 2:6-8).

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VERBAL INSPIRATION

Donnie V. Rader

Believing that the Bible is inspired of God is fundamental to all our belief and teaching. The Bible makes the claim that it is the word of God. Over 2,000 times an expression like, “thus saith the Lord,” “God said,” or “The Lord said” is found in the Bible.

1) **INSPIRATION DEFINED.** It is “the supernatural influence exerted on the sacred writers by the Spirit of God, by virtue of which their writings are given Divine trustworthiness” (*B.B. Warfield, ISBE, III, 1473*). Perhaps David said it best, “The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, And His word was on my tongue” (2 Sam. 23:1-2).

2) **ALL OF THE BIBLE IS INSPIRED OF GOD.** We call this *plenary* inspiration. Paul said, “all scripture is given by the inspiration of God” (2 Tim. 3:16). Thus, every book of the Bible is from God. We must accept the books of James, Paul, Peter, etc. just like we accept the words of Christ.

3) **WHAT IS VERBAL INSPIRATION?** This refers to *every word* being inspired of God. Some believe in “thought inspiration.” That theory says that God gave the writer the thought to teach, but the writer was left to choose his own words. Such thinking would make the Bible subject to error. The Bible claims that not only is the entire book inspired, but that every word was chosen by the Holy Spirit.

4) **WORDS CHOSEN BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.** Paul wrote about inspiration in 1 Corinthians 2:9-13. Having stated that we cannot know the mind of God unless and until God reveals it (v. 9), he affirms that God has revealed His mind by the

Holy Spirit (v. 10). Then he says, “These things we also speak, not in *words* which man’s wisdom teaches, but which the *Holy Spirit* teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual” (v. 13, emphasis mine DVR). Notice that the *words* were chosen by the *Holy Spirit*. That is verbal inspiration.

5) **THE APOSTLES WERE DIRECTED IN WHAT AND HOW TO SPEAK.** The apostles were told, “But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you” (Mt. 10:19-20). Notice that they would be told both *what* (the content of the message) and *how* (the words to express the message).

6) **SCRIPTURES ARE RELIABLE DOWN TO THE SMALLEST DETAIL.** Jesus said, “For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled” (Mt. 5:18). A *jot* is the smallest Hebrew letter. A *tittle* is the small stroke distinguishing one Hebrew letter from another. A jot and tittle is much like our dot of the “i” and cross of the “t”. Jesus said that there would not be one jot or tittle to pass until all was fulfilled. His point is that the Scriptures are true and reliable down to the smallest detail!

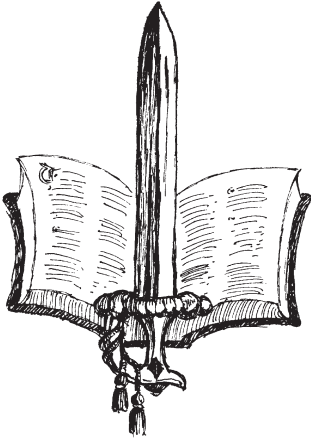
May we all strive to fight any belief, doctrine, or theory that attacks the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures.

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Kids Activity Page

Aleisha Edwards

Bulwarks of the Church



Verse to Remember: "Mark well her bulwarks..." (Ps. 48:13).

A bulwark is a strong support or protection.

Draw a line from each bulwark
to the Scripture where we read about it.

**Singing without
mechanical instruments**

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Elders in every church

Acts 4:12

No creed but the Bible

Ephesians 4:4

**The Lord's supper
every first day**

Ephesians 5:19

Baptism

Acts 14:23

**One church without
denominations**

Acts 20:7

The name of Christ

Mark 16:16

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

ESTABLISHING BIBLE AUTHORITY

John Isaac Edwards

A defence structure or bulwark that must constantly be built in the hearts of the Lord's people is the knowledge of how to establish and apply Bible authority.

1) **TWO EXTREMES.** There are two extremes in establishing Bible authority. *Extreme #1:* For a thing to be authorized, it must be specifically mentioned in the Scriptures. *Extreme #2:* For a thing to be unauthorized, it must be specifically condemned in the Scriptures. The first extreme binds where God has not bound and the second extreme looses what God has bound. A thing is contrary to the Scriptures when the Scriptures specifically say not to do it (Eph. 4:28; Heb. 10:25). A thing is contrary to the Scriptures, even though the Scriptures nowhere say not to do it, when there is no positive authority for it. So, how do we establish authority for a thing from the Scriptures?

2) **THREE METHODS.** There are three ways of establishing Bible authority.

□ *Direct statement or command (precept).* When the Lord or the apostles give an order for us to do a thing, there's authority for it. We have divine approval for withdrawing from the disorderly in the command to "withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly" (2 Th. 3:6).

□ *Approved example.* The Lord taught by example (Jn. 13:15) and we are taught to "follow his steps" (1 Pet. 2:21). As well, Paul penned, "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do..." (Phil. 4:9). Not all examples are approved examples. We have examples of those with whom "God was not well pleased" (1 Cor. 10:5). So, if the Lord,

His apostles, or the early church with the presence and approval of an apostle engaged in a thing, there's authority for it. We establish authority for appointing elders by appealing to the example of the apostles in Acts 14:23, "...when they had ordained them elders in every church..."

□ *Necessary inference.* A necessary inference is where a thing is not specifically stated or exemplified, but is necessarily implied by the clear meaning of the language used. For example, it is not specifically stated that Sarai, Abram's wife, and Lot went down into Egypt (Gen. 12:10), but it is necessarily implied in Genesis 13:1. They must have gone down into Egypt in order to have come up out of Egypt.

3) **ILLUSTRATED BY THE LORD'S SUPPER.** All three of these methods of establishing Bible authority may be illustrated by the Lord's supper observance.

□ *The observance.* Authority for the observance itself is found in the command, "this do" (1 Cor. 11:24).

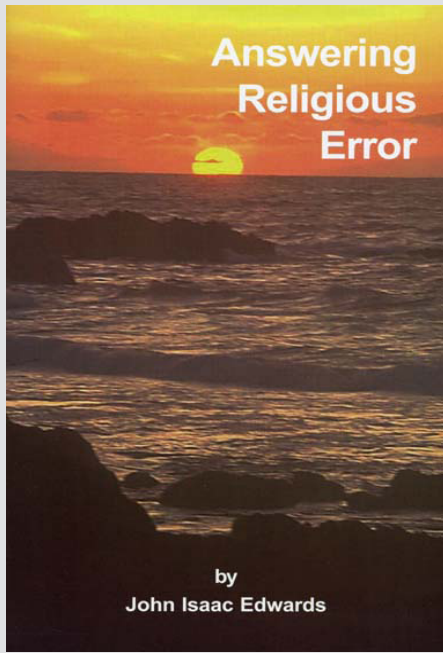
□ *The day.* We establish authority for the day of the observance by appealing to the example of the church at Troas meeting, "...upon the first day of the week..." (Acts 20:7), with the presence and approval of an apostle.

□ *The frequency.* Though every first day of the week is not specifically stated in Acts 20:7, it is necessarily implied.

4) **USED IN ACTS 15.** These methods of establishing authority were employed by the apostles in Acts 15, in settling controversy over the circumcision question. Every religious issue can be resolved by these same three methods today. We must keep our defences strong!

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