

“Note Them”

Paul said, "Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern" (Philippians 3:17). We wish to notice four points from this passage.

The apostles serve as a pattern to us. Paul said, "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). Common sense tells us that we are not to follow the sinful actions of the apostles (cf. Galatians 2:11-14).

However, as they conformed themselves to the image of Christ, we can use them as an example.

Those who follow the righteous

example of the apostles are to be noted by us. We should look at their godly lives and seek to imitate them as well. We understand that Christ is our ultimate pattern (1 Peter 2:21). Still, when fellow Christians abide in Him, we can use them as an example after which to pattern our lives.

This verse underscores the importance of the local congregation. We can all read about the apostles and benefit from their lives. At times we come into contact with brethren from different areas and are edified. However, contact with members of the local church is more frequent. We ought to be noting those among us who live right-

eously and strive to follow their example. Note the elders and their wives (Hebrews 13:7; cf. 1 Timothy 3:1-7). Look at the deacons and their wives (cf. 1 Timothy 3:8-13). Observe the "Tabithas" and "Marys" (Acts 9:36; Luke 10:39-42).

Further, we need to ask ourselves — are we worthy of note? Are we setting an example for others to follow? If we are not setting the right example, then we are setting the wrong example. Let us examine ourselves (cf. 2 Corinthians 13:5). ~

Steven F. Deaton

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8490 James M Harvell Rd
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Bible Class for all ages ___ 9:00 AM
Morning Worship Service ___ 10:00 AM
Evening Worship Service ___ 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Class for all ages ___ 7:00 PM

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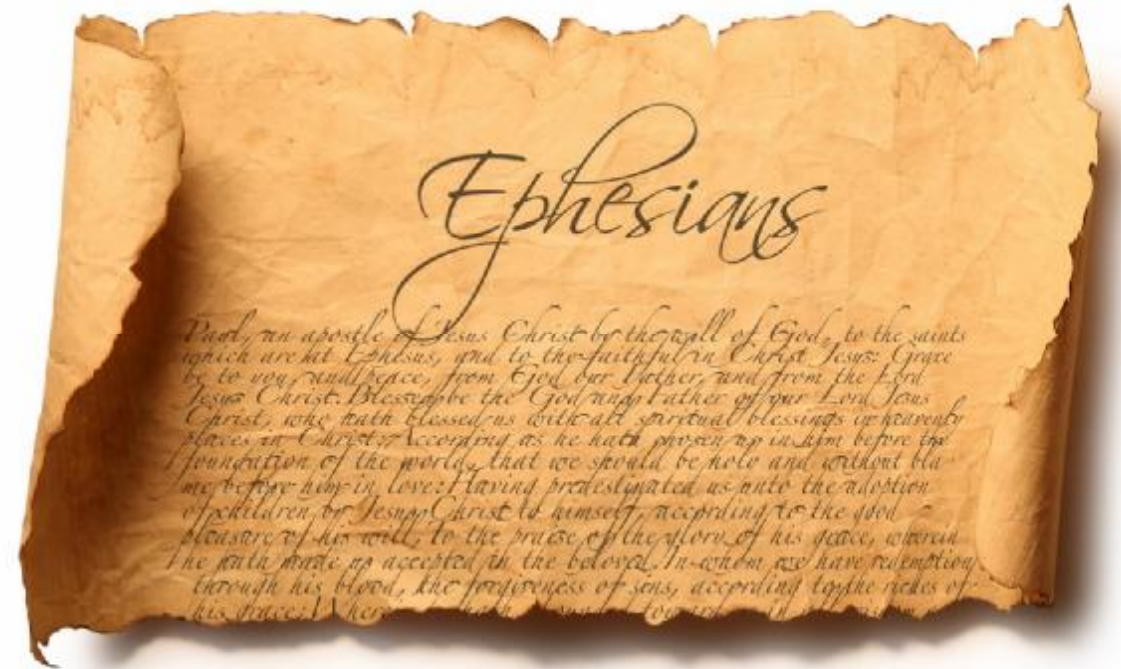
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The Form of the New Testament



by Bob West

"Why isn't the New Testament written in legal form; i.e., broken down into encyclopedic categories and lists? Instead, it contains much historical, biographical and personal material. Yet we are asked to believe that this is God's law for us today. How can this be?"

The above paragraph sets forth a question which we believe is le-

gitimate and needs to be carefully considered.

As a point of fact, some of the New Testament does have catalogs or lists of things both right and wrong (see Galatians 5; 1 Corinthians 6; Ephesians 4-6; Colossians 3-4; etc.). Therefore, the negative effect of the question is somewhat mitigated. Our remarks will be directed to the bulk of the New Testament - why it should indeed be considered as

our law and standard of authority.

Consider what would be lost to us if the New Testament consisted only of categorized lists of "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not's":

- 1. The personality of the speakers.

Specific statements in legal form tell us very little about the lawgiver. We may conclude that the author of a law forbidding stealing

held stealing in abhorrence. Beyond that we are left in the dark. But not so in the New Testament. When Jesus laid down the law that we should "love one another," His inspired biographies reveal how He lived this law every day of His life. This serves to give a moral force to the law which would not otherwise be possible. Much of the "non-legal" portions of the gospel set forth the sinlessness or holiness of Christ. Man is more inclined to heed the precepts of a righteous law-giver than those of evil-doers. Therefore, the scriptures which tell of the holiness of our Lord do not distract from the authority of the New Testament. On the contrary, such accounts establish its authority!

2. Corroborative Material.

The historical statements in the New Testament regarding rulers, customs and events, are necessary in that they furnish corroborative evidence for the accuracy of the gospel. The accounts of the miracles were given for the stated purpose of creating confidence in Jesus (John 20:30-31). That which serves to confirm a document surely cannot be cited as evidence against its authority.

3. Illustrative Material.

Laws become exceedingly difficult to apply when dealing with complex situations. However, Jesus cut through this problem by demonstrating the truth in stories, illustrations, and parables. He couched the underlying law in language that only the hard of

hard would fail to understand. Truths taught in "doctrinal passages" are exemplified in such historical books as Acts. The New Testament is thus made meaningful and alive for those who will recognize it.

There may be other considerations that should be added. But a New Testament without the above material is unthinkable. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable..." - 2 Timothy 3:16. Every word in the New Testament is there by God's design. Therefore, an encyclopedic catalog of laws would be far inferior to what we have now - God's living law for mankind.

Bob West, The Milpitas Messenger, February, 1996 ~

Bible Baptism

by Foy E. Wallace

The basic principle of all obedience is understanding. "He that heareth the word and understandeth it" - Matt. 13:23. "Go preach the gospel—he that believeth (the gospel) and is baptized shall be saved" - Mark 16:15-16. Believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is not all that must be understood in rendering obedience in baptism—there are other essential principles of a gospel faith.

Institutions with design carry the necessity of understanding the

design. Example: The Lord's Supper—"Do this in memory of me." No man can observe the Lord's Supper "in memory" of Christ without knowing it. The preposition "for" in Acts 2:38 is "EIS" in the original, and the preposition "in" of 1 Cor. 11:23 is the same "EIS" in the original. No man can take the Lord's Supper in order to, unto or into, the memory of Christ if he does not know it, and for the same reason no man can be baptized in order to, unto or into the remission of sins or salvation, if he does not know it. One cannot accidentally obey God.

If it is not necessary to under-

stand the purpose of baptism, why is it in every case emphasized from the preaching of John to the last verse on the subject in the New Testament? If it is not to be understood, then, that part of the subject is non-essential and when we preach the design of baptism we are preaching something not necessary to be believed, therefore, preaching a non-essential. Why debate with a Baptist preacher on the design of baptism if its design does not have to be believed or understood? Why debate on a non-essential?

Is there a single case in all the

New Testament where the person baptized did not understand the purpose of the act?

It is sometimes said that the purpose is not a part of the command. Let us see:

Acts 22:16 - "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins." The subject understood is you—with the triple predicate—and fully rendered with each part supplied it reads: You arise and be baptized and you wash away your sins. Arise is part of the command; be baptized is a part of the command; wash away your sins is part of the command. No man can do that who believes his sins have already been washed away.

It is said that "to obey God" is the main purpose of baptism. Then why is that purpose never stated? Is it not singular that the New Testament failed to mention the main purpose in connection with the command, but on the other hand emphasized the non-essential purpose, or the purpose not necessary to be believed? "Remission of sins", "into Christ", "shall be saved," "newness of life," and all other expressions are just one design stated in different ways. Baptism has only one design. Alexander Campbell established this premise, and lays it down in that very proposition, in his book on "Baptism." I mention this because so many refer to Campbell on the subject.

We are sometimes asked: If it is necessary to believe that baptism is for the remission of sins then should we not make it a part of the confession and ask every one "Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and do you also believe that baptism is for

the remission of sins?" This is dodging the issue. Try it on the other contention. If the main purpose is "to obey God," then, the argument would require that it also be made a part of the confession: "Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and are you being baptized to obey God?" It's a poor rule that will not work both ways. As a matter fact, all sincere people in religion perform every act of religious service with the general motive to obey God. Baptism has a very specific purpose—just as does the Lord's Supper—and the general idea that it is a command, but not essential to salvation or that it is a duty but the duty of one already saved is a perversion of Bible teaching. If one can be scripturally baptized with such a belief then all our preaching on the subject is inconsistent.

To say that a man can believe that he is saved before he is baptized, and then be baptized to be saved, is to argue that what a man believes has nothing to do with what he does.

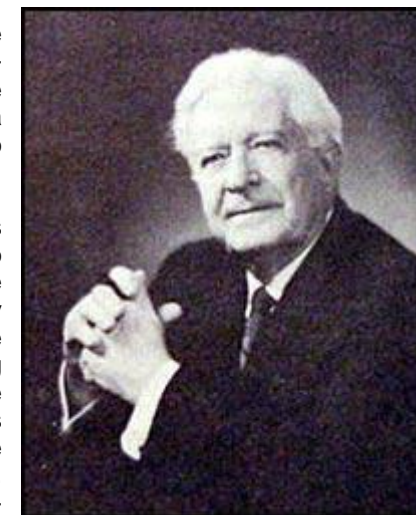
It is frequently said that if one is satisfied we have no right to question them. Why should we hold an inquest? Paul evidently "held an inquest" over the twelve in Acts 19. True, the same thing may not be wrong in the case before us—but something was wrong there and something else just as vital may be wrong now. Satisfaction is not salvation. Apply the argument to other things people believe and do in religion and where would it lead to? If it can be applied to baptism why not to everything else?

It takes more than the right act to constitute valid baptism. The right

act based on the right belief: Error preached, error heard, error believed, is error obeyed. Truth preached, truth heard, truth believed, is truth obeyed.

Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." This cannot be made to mean "You may believe error but if in your error your aim is to obey God, then your error will make you free, anyway." Such apologizing for denominational error cannot advance the truth. It is much easier to teach people to obey the gospel than to defend them in their error.

Bible Banner - 1948 ~



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1896-1979