

NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

CHRIST AND HIS WORD

LESSON FOUR

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LESSON 4

Holy Scriptures.

carefully and truly translated

Thomas Coverdale,

Bishop of Exeter,

1535.

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FOUNDATION OF THE FAITH

Everyone who seriously considers spiritual values must be deeply concerned with the Word of Christ. Jesus' Word is the Word of God. So impressed was the public with His teaching that "the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God" (Luke 5:1).*

"What think ye of Christ? Whose son is He?" Everyone possesses an opinion of Christ. He was a good man, a great teacher, or the Son of God. If the Son of God, He cannot be ignored. The human response to Christ, in summary, is to respond in obedience to His Word.

Precisely because His Word was the Word of God it possessed great authority. "And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power" (Luke 4:32). His miracles confirmed His Word as being the Word of God. "And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following" (Mark 16:20). John records that "many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God;

* Read the text of all scriptural references. All quotations in this lesson are taken from the King James Version. For those using other versions, the words may differ but the meanings are the same.

and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:30-31).

Because Jesus' Word is the Word of God it is disastrous to dilute it with human doctrines and traditions. Jewish leaders in Jesus' time gathered up ancient traditions and promoted these as though they were the Word of God. For this, Christ severely condemned them: "Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye" (Mark 7:13).

In much the same way, religious leaders of our day gather traditions and creeds and assign authority to them as they do the Word of God.

PERPETUAL POWER OF THE WORD

Christ's Word is essential to man's conversion and in the development of Christian character. His Word produces faith: "And many more believed because of his own word" (John 4:41). The apostle Paul said, "So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). Jesus' Word was said to have cleansed people — that is, in leading them to do what Christ required, to be cleansed from their sins. "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3). Jesus' expected His Word to abide in human hearts — to be the guiding force in directing them in ways of righteousness. Jewish leaders stood condemned when He said, "And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not" (John 5:38). Thus, continuing in the Word of God is the central demand of discipleship: "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed" (John 8:31).

The Word of Christ did not stop with His death. He directed His twelve apostles to remain in Jerusalem after His death and resurrection — to receive the Holy Spirit which would come upon them. "And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). The Holy Spirit would guide them in their preaching: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, what-

soever I have said unto you" (John 14:26). "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come" (John 16:13).

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE FULLY REVEALED

On a Jewish feast day, Pentecost, the twelve apostles received the Holy Spirit: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1-4).

The Word they taught was inspired by the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul said, "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:11-12). In fact, Paul warned the disciples against receiving any different message — even if from an angel (Galatians 1:8, 9).

The early Christians were taught the finality and completeness of Christian doctrine inasmuch as they had been furnished completely "unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:17) and had been given "all things pertaining to life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3). In view of this, they were urged to contend earnestly for "the faith" which was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3). The Christian faith was thus fully revealed in the days of the apostles.

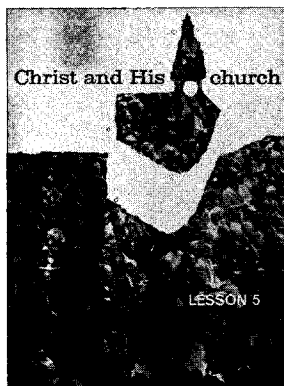
CONTRASTING THE WORD OF GOD AND MEN

Knowing they were preaching the Word of God, the apostles proceeded with a serious understanding of the magnitude of their work. They would not abandon the teaching of this Word to do menial labor: "Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables" (Acts 6:2). Converts became

harbingers of this Word for they “went everywhere preaching the word” (Acts 8:4). Nor would they handle the Word deceitfully: “But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God” (II Corinthians 4:2). And the apostle Peter warned of those who would misuse the Word of God and be condemned (II Peter 3:16).

It should always be borne in mind that there is a striking difference in the Word of God and the word of man. The one is divine, the other is human; the one is inspired, the other uninspired; the one is authoritative to govern man’s actions, the other is human opinion.

“For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard from us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe” (I Thessalonians 2:13).



YOUR NEXT LESSON . . .

Christ and His Church contrasts modern concepts of the church with the word as used in the New Testament; that is, the “called out” body or kingdom established by Christ — non-denominational in character and fully committed to Christ, the head of the church.

LESSON FOUR: REVIEW

The questions below are based on the following passages in the Word of God: Mark 4:33; Luke 5:1; Luke 4:32; Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:2-4; John 20:30-31; Mark 7:13; Romans 10:17; John 5:38; John 8:31; Luke 24:49; John 14:16-26; John 16:13; Acts 2:1-4; Galatians 1:8-12; Acts 6:2; Acts 8:4; II Corinthians 4:2; II Peter 3:16; I Thessalonians 2:13; John 15:3. Read each passage carefully and thoroughly before completing the exercise. The questions are designed for brief answers — sometimes only one word, or a few words, or a sentence at the most.

1. Why were the people who heard Jesus astonished at His teaching?

2. How was the preaching of the Word of God confirmed in the first century?

3. Why were the activities, mighty works, and teachings of Jesus recorded in the New Testament?

4. How do human traditions in religion affect the Word of God?

5. How does faith come to man?

6. How does one remain a true disciple of Christ?

7. What was Christ's plan for continuing His Word after His death?

8. What is another name used by Christ to designate the Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost?

9. Jesus promised that the Apostles would be guided into "all truth" by whom?

10. In what city were the Apostles when they received the Holy Spirit with power?

11. On what day did the Apostles receive the Holy Spirit?

12. How were early Christians taught to respond to additional doctrines — even from an angel?
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13. From whom did Paul receive the doctrine he taught?
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14. What tasks did the Apostles assign to others so they could use their time in prayer and the ministry of the Word?
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15. What is the outcome of those who misuse and distort the Word of God?
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16. To what extent does the New Testament provide man with things essential to life and godliness?
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17. Was the Christian faith fully revealed in the days of the Apostles?
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18. What, therefore, is the only creed authorized by God for men today?
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19. List three differences between the Word of God and the word of man?
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20. How had the disciples in Thessalonica received the Word that Paul taught?
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Completed by:

Name _____

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