

This email is the *tenth in a series of articles* I've titled "GOD WANTS YOU TO KNOW". Each future article builds upon previous articles, so if you need to review an earlier article, they are available online at www.warnerschapelchurchofchrist.org . It is my hope that these articles will be beneficial to everyone who receives them. Please share them with your friends and family members and feel free to email any questions or comments to me [David Moore] at dmoore5@triad.rr.com .

GOD WANTS YOU TO KNOW!

God wants you to know that rejecting the words of Jesus is synonymous with rejecting Jesus. In John 12:48 (NKJV) Jesus said: "**He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.**" Since you will be judged by the words of Jesus, it is important for you to receive and obey the doctrine taught by his apostles [Acts 2:41-42, 47]. If you haven't been receptive to the words of Jesus presented in the previous nine lessons, it may be because you noticed they differ from what you've been taught in the past. Various denominations have created confusion by teaching man-made doctrines ["commandments of men"] instead of the apostle's doctrine. This practice is mentioned in Matthew 19:9 which states: "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men." Like others who've had this experience, you may have made the following comments:

1. Just because your interpretation of scripture is different from mine doesn't mean you're right and I'm wrong."
2. "Oh, that's just church of Christ doctrine."
3. "I realize that's what the Bible says, but don't you think?"

In response to comment number 1, I must admit that just because our interpretations are different doesn't necessarily mean I'm right and you're wrong. Actually it could mean either one of us or both of us are wrong. What then determines the proper interpretation? According to 2 Peter 1:20-21 (NKJV), "no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit." In other words, the proper interpretation of scripture should originate with the Holy Spirit and not with the individual. For this reason, I believe the Bible is its own best interpreter. No one verse provides the complete picture, but when all verses pertaining to a particular topic are pieced together like the parts of a puzzle, you can see the proper interpretation if your spiritual vision is not clouded by preconceived ideas.

Comment number 2 suggests that the church of Christ has its own doctrine or creed book similar to that of various denominations [i.e. the Baptist Manual, the Methodist Discipline, etc.]. The church of Christ has no creed book other than the Bible itself, so the answer to any religious question should come from scripture as discussed in the previous paragraph.

The implication in comment number 3 is that regardless of what God's word says, He will accept your way of thinking even though it may be contrary to his. In Isaiah 55:8-9 God word says: " 'My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,' says the Lord. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.' " Since God's thoughts are higher than our thoughts, it should be clear why verse 7 of this same chapter states: "Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the Lord." God expects you to forsake your thoughts when they are contrary to his word.

Why do people seeking forgiveness of sin and eternal salvation not find what they are looking for? Assuming they have access to the New Testament, the most credible reason is that they do not receive and obey the words of Jesus. What causes people to reject Jesus and not receive his words? Probably the most common cause is preconceived ideas generated by the teaching of man-made doctrines. Concerning those who obeyed the apostles' doctrine, Romans 6:17-18 (NKJV) states: "But God be thanked that *though* you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness." I pray that you will not let past experiences and preconceived ideas prevent you from being obedient to the apostles' doctrine in order to receive forgiveness of sin and eternal salvation.

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." (James 1:19 KJV)