

Preparing Souls To Serve The Lord

VOLUME XIII

OCTOBER 1992

NUMBER 3



Who Decides? What Makes It Right?



By

Jackie M. Stearsman

There is a need to understand what constitutes acceptable authority in religious matters. Men reject to their utter shame and sorrow the truth of God. Romans 15:4 states, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." What makes an attitude or action right? Who decides it?

Not Man Alone

Man himself, without help from the Word of God, is unable to determine what is religiously right or wrong. Trying to reason with some religious persons is fruitless. They have no standard but themselves. When shown the folly of their position, rather than comply with the truth, they hew themselves out new cisterns, broken cisterns that hold

no water (Jer. 2:23). Let us never forget: "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23).

Not Race Or National Origin

The Jews were once the recipients of eternal truth and as a nation were to be a light and blessing to all others. Today there are no chosen nations, no chosen race, the grace of God is for all (Tit. 2:11). To determine what is religiously right we must have something that is above the individual, the group, the race, the nation, the special person(s). We must have that which applies to all with equal merit and justice.

Not The Majority

We know this to be true. It is the case that the majority

may be right but it is not right simply because the majority decided it. There must be something above the majority that determines right or wrong religiously. The majority were wrong in Noah's day (Gen. 6). The majority were wrong in the case of the twelve spies (Numb. 12-13). The majority are often wrong today. Who decides the issue? How may we be sure?

Not The Minority

Diotrephes (III John 9-10) caused difficulties in the early church. Single individuals today may block a good work. Korah and his crowd were a minority movement but they were wrong (Numb. 16). Their rebellion is cited for a lesson to all (Jude 11). Lot was a minority in Sodom. Being in the minority in and of itself does not prove anything. There must be some objective standard that

is understandable and that is to be applied to all. We can not always go with the minority in religious matters. Who decides?

Not By A Special Group

The twelve spies were a special group as were the princes with Korah in his rebellion. "Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, **sons of Reuben**, took men: And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, **two hundred and fifty princes** of the assembly, **famous** in the congregation, **men of renown**: And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?" (Numb. 16:1-3).

Some may think the "would-be-some-whats-among-us" decide it—but they are wrong. Truth does not belong to a special group. It is for all. It can be had by all (Prov. 23:23). Those who abide in it are free (John 8:31-32). Those who know the truth know that the so called "doctors" and "scholars" working to segregate and divide us are wrong.

Having a degree is no guarantee you will love and obey the truth any more than having a million dollars is a guarantee that you will be charitable and faithful.

Not By A Person In A Special Position

Even a king is to submit to his Master. Prophets could depart, and did. In a single chapter we have recorded the digression of a king and two prophets, one prophet is old and the other prophet is young. Neither age nor youth are sufficient, God's will must be obeyed or you are sure to face defeat (I Kings 13).

The Priest and prophets, individuals who were in a position to make a difference, often hindered the cause of right and truth. "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof" (Jer. 5:30-31)?

The Apostle Peter had to comply with more than his position. He was under obligation to live by the truth of the gospel and did not always do so (Gal. 2:11-14).

The Bible Properly Interpreted Determines What Is Right

All God has ever required is that they that have his Word handle it properly. If they/we do the results will be clear to all. "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jer. 23:28-29).

The Bible warns us of those that would twist the Scriptures to their own destruction. It teaches us that we may be carried away by their wickedness (II Pet. 3:14-18). If the Bible teaches that we may know when a person is misinterpreting the Bible, and it does, then we of necessity may know when we are correctly interpreting it.

Those persons who do not believe the Bible may be properly understood are wrong. What some use to justify their actions have not the approval of God. Who decides it? God does. Where can I find His decision? In His Word the Bible.

Why have not all men found the truth, and why do men not agree? We must recognize that the will of man is also a factor. Some do not have the will to believe and to obey (Psalm 10:4; Matt. 23:37).

How many do you know who have mined the Sacred Writings the way Solomon said they must be mined and have come away empty handed? "My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up

The Harvesters

Published Monthly by the Florida School of Preaching
1807 South Florida Avenue, Lakeland, Florida 33803
(813) 683-4043

Editor: Jackie M. Stearsman

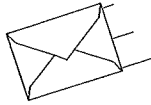
Board of Directors

Gordon Methvin, President	George K. French
Paul Thomhill, Vice President	Wallace Maxwell
J. H. Blackman, Jr., Secretary	James Medlin
E. Robert McAnally, Treasure	Dale Spung
B.C. Carr, Director Emeritus	Jackie M. Stearsman
Maurice Davis	Gene Stilwell
Kenneth W. Franklin	

TRAINING PREACHERS SINCE 1969

thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; **Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God**" (Prov. 2:1-5).

August 31, 1992



Dear Jackie and Staff,

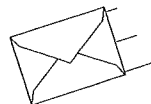
I continue to appreciate the good influence of the *Florida School of Preaching*, not only in my life but in the lives of others. The healthy instruction, coupled with the good atmosphere provided by the school, continues to equip men to be capable and enthusiastic soldiers of the cross.

The Jamaican experience continues to be a source of encouragement and a good dose of "fired-upness" that should last well into the winter. Keep up the good work, and be not weary in well doing.

Your brother in Christ,
/s/ Brian Kenyon

[Brian is attending Freed-Hardeman University]

September 24, 1992



Dear Mr. Stearsman,

I called the school of preaching to ask about doing something for the students. I am planning to have you and the students and wives over to my home in the future, but I want to help a little now. I am enclosing this gift for you to use for the students in whatever need they have.

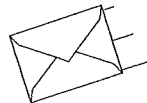
I pray this will be a



blessed year for F.S. of P. May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with your spirit.

Sincerely,
Joyce Mathis

September 4, 1992



Dear Jackie,

Enclosed is

a copy of a letter written to the brethren of the Bushnell, Florida congregation. Stephen Rosenzweig preached for our meeting which was conducted August 28, 29, and 30, and our deep appreciation for his lessons are expressed.

You may use this as a further recommendation for his preaching in other locations as you see fitting.

Our kindest regards.

/s/ William D. Fogle,
for the Countryside Church of Christ.

[The letter reads in part as follows:]

September 3, 1992



Bushnell Church of Christ

Dear Brethren,

We wish to express to you our heartfelt thanks and

deep appreciation for Stephen Rosenzweig and his time and talents to preach for us in our three-day meeting. His lessons were clear, simple and convincing which is the best. Every one knew they were the pure word of God expressed concisely.

Best of all, the members and guests were edified. This applies especially for myself.

All for our Lord,

/s/ William D. Fogle,

for the Countryside Church of Christ.

[Stephen Rosenzweig is a graduate of the *Florida School of Preaching* and we are glad to hear of his good work both at Bushnell and in his meeting work. If you would like for a converted Jew to conduct a meeting for you we are sure Stephen will do his best for you as well. Editor.]

Jamaica Evangelism

[Following are reports by those working in Jamaica. When you support the training of preachers here you are also contributing to evangelism there.]

To the Saints of Christ and fellow workers:

We thank God for the great work that was done by you . . . and we do rejoice that we can give God the glory not only for the many souls saved, but also for tremendous numbers of souls that have heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ both preached and taught. . . .

We are deeply indebted to the CENTRAL CHURCH OF

CHRIST, Clearwater, Florida and the FLORIDA SCHOOL OF PREACHING who for a number of years have made this work in Jamaica possible and continuing. . . .

The . . . workers were all well prepared and organized to effectually proclaim God's Gospel by preaching and teaching and by example. Much was expected of them which required in all, intestinal fortitude, grit, understanding, patience in teaching and the ability to persevere because of what is often laid to cultural differences. They were all this and more, for which we thank God for the fantastic and tremendous work that they were able to undertake and carry out. This was not a question of planting and watering the seed, but also of uprooting, plowing old virgin and overgrown soil (souls). . . .

Cliff Martin
4th September, 1992



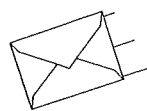
[Cecil Haffelfinger of Freeport, Texas is loved and respected by those who have worked with him. He filed a report. Some things he said about the students is reproduce.]

For the fourth con-

secutive year the Central Church of Christ in Clearwater, Florida and the Florida School of Preaching made a huge contribution to the summer's work in Jamaica. Central provided the financial support for nine dedicated workers, students and past students of Florida School of Preaching, for two weeks. Try as I might, any attempt on my part to define in words the work done by these committed souls would be feeble at best. Their fervent prayers, heart-touching words of encouragement, unselfish devotion and sacrificial giving of self can be measured only in eternity. I found each to have an unswerving love for God conjoined with being arduous students of the Bible. Each was steadfast in the teaching of God's truths and eager to accept any and all challenges against the Bible. The Central church has been a beacon light in support of the Lord's work in Jamaica. I salute in Christ both Central and Florida School of Preaching.

. . .

Your grateful brother in Christ,



/s/ Cecil

[The students took items to the children in the home. Brother Cliff Martin is not only a native preacher he also serves on the Board of the children's home. He writes as follows:]

September 7, 1992



Dear Jackie,

The Maxfield Park Children's Home orphans were indeed very happy for the clothes and other items of gifts that arrived in your baggage.

It is amazing, how every item seemed to reach out to so many and the glee on their faces was more than "satisfying."

Please convey our gratitude to all who made that collection possible. Dolly and I were aware of the fact that the ladies were going to be doing this great work and indeed great it is.

I speak with my other hat (as a member of the Board) in saying thanks to all on behalf of the M.P.C.H. and the Government Department that is "responsible" for the children's welfare.

God bless you all.

Sincerely,
/s/ Cliff

FLORIDA SCHOOL OF PREACHING

1807 SOUTH FLORIDA AVENUE
LAKELAND, FLORIDA 33803-2653

DIRECTOR: Jackie M. Stearsman
Phone (813) 683-4043

Address Correction Requested