



YOKEFELLOW

THE REBELLION OF DENOMINATIONALISM

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With rebellion being defined as “refusal to accept some authority or code or convention” or “organized opposition to authority; a conflict in which one faction tries to wrest control from another,” some may view the title of this article with some curiosity. To the average religious person in this nation, the above statement might seem to miss the mark, for the average person would think that anyone proclaiming God as his authority must be living in harmony with that authority. The fact of the matter, though, is this: The religious world is composed, primarily, of many religious bodies operating the way that *they* choose to operate with little more than lip-service being given to the authority in religion, God. Notice please the following with regard to the rebellion of denominationalism: first, denominations rebel against the authority of God; second, denominations rebel against the sacrifice of Jesus; third, denominations rebel against the record of Scripture; fourth, denominations rebel against the unity of the Godhead with man; and fifth, denominations rebel against the salvation of the soul.

Denominations rebel against the authority of God. When anyone obeys not God’s commands, he is living in rebellion! Whether it be a rejection of the proper means of salvation (1 Pet. 3:21) or the proper means and manner of worship (John 4:24) or some other responsibility, when one changes the way these things are done to suit his preconceptions or scruples or hobbies, he has rebelled. Nehemiah showed that this was characteristic of rebelling against God, for he wrote, “Nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy law behind their backs, and slew thy prophets which testified against them to turn them to thee, and they wrought great provocations” (Neh. 9:26).

Denominations rebel against the sacrifice of Jesus. When Jesus gave His life upon the cross, He did it for the church—not for churches. Paul wrote to the Ephesians, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it” (Eph. 5:25). Paul similarly had told the elders of Ephesus, “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you

overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28). Thirty-seven times in the English Bible is the word *churches* found; it always refers to congregations of the one body, never to multiple religious bodies!

Denominations rebel against the record of Scripture. The Bible contains all that pertains to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3), so any addition to It or subtraction from It is necessarily rebellion against It and will be punished (Rev. 22:18-19). Furthermore, any rebellion against Scripture is a rebellion against Its producer, the Holy Spirit. When one rebels against the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit becomes his enemy. Isaiah painted a picture of those who so rebelled: “But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them” (Isa. 63:10).

Denominations rebel against the unity of the Godhead. To rebel against the Godhead is to ally oneself not with Them, but with the adversary: Satan (1 Pet. 5:8). This rebellion flies in the face of the desire and prayer of Christ for unity (John 17) and the unity of the Spirit about which Paul wrote (Eph. 4:1-3).

Denominations rebel against the salvation of the soul. This is done in two ways: by keeping the members of the denominations themselves from the Truth, and by keeping those who are not affiliated with any religious body from the Truth. The one who misleads others will ultimately be punished by God for his evil, for “An evil man seeketh only rebellion: therefore a cruel messenger shall be sent against him” (Pro. 17:11).

Let us not fall into the rebellious trap of denominationalism, for salvation is not in rebellion, but in submission. Israel, afraid of the Canaanites, was told by Moses, “Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not” (Num. 14:9). In like manner today, the Lord’s church may confidently say, “The defense of the denominational is departed from them; the Lord is with us!”

RESPECTING THE SILENCE OF THE SCRIPTURES

Billy Bland, Associate Director

INTRODUCTION

“**God did not say not to**” is an answer given sometimes when confronted with a matter for which there is no Biblical authority. While the person may be honest in his response, the reality is he does not respect the silence of the Scriptures. When God is silent on a matter, does that mean we have permission to do as we please? Or, when God is silent, does that mean it is prohibitive?

The importance of this matter is seen in that one day we will all be judged by the Word of God. Jesus said, “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48). Since we are going to be judged by the Word, we should desire to live in harmony with the Word of God so that heaven will be our eternal home.

NOT TO ADD TO OR TAKE AWAY FROM THE WORD

God has placed several warnings throughout the Bible, informing us not to add to His Word or take away from His Word. Near the beginning of the Bible, Moses recorded, “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish *ought* from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you” (Deu. 4:2). Then near the middle of the Bible, it is written, “Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar” (Pro. 30:6). Finally, near the end of the Bible, God said, “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book” (Rev. 22:18-19).

WE MUST HAVE BIBLE AUTHORITY FOR ALL WE TEACH AND PRACTICE

A significant verse that helps us understand what we are to practice in religious matters is found in the Book of Colossians. Paul wrote, “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Col. 3:17). We must have authority from Jesus in all that we say (word) and all that do (practice). One cannot teach just any doctrine and be approved by God. Neither can one practice any doctrine or action he pleases and be accepted by God. We must have a “Thus Saith the Lord” for all we say and do.

THE SILENCE OF THE SCRIPTURES MUST BE RESPECTED

When God tells us what to do, He does not have to tell us what not to do. The silence of the Scriptures does not authorize us to add whatever we wish. The Bible gives us several illustrations that teach us to respect His silence. The Hebrews writer stated, “But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool” (Heb. 1:13). Since God has not said to any angel “Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool,” no angel has authority to sit on God’s right hand. Likewise, the same writer stated, “For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood” (Heb. 7:14). God was silent (He “spoke nothing”) about anyone from the tribe of Judah serving as priest under the law of Moses. Consequently, no one from the tribe of Judah could serve as a priest. If someone from the tribe of Judah had attempted to be a priest, he would have been stoned. His defense that “God did not

say not to” would have been in vain. When God tells us what to do, that is all that is authorized. He does not have to tell us what not to do. Some refer to this principle as God’s law of exclusion. When God said the priest was to come from the tribe of Levi, God did not have to say to all other tribes, “You cannot serve as priests.” All who were authorized to serve as priests had to come from the tribe of Levi.

God instructed Noah to build an ark so that he, his family, and the animals in the ark would not perish in the coming flood. His instructions were clear, “Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. And this is *the fashion* which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark *shall be* three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; *with* lower, second, and third *stories* shalt thou make it” (Gen. 6:14-16). Notice that God specified the type of wood that was to be used. He said, “Make thee an ark of gopher wood.” What if Noah had used pine, oak, or any other type of wood? He would have violated the Word of God. Noah understood and did as God told him to do. “Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he” (Gen. 6:22).

APPLICATION FOR TODAY

Jesus gave the following instructions regarding the Lord’s Supper. “And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Mat. 26:26-28). Jesus was using unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine (grape juice) when He gave this command. But what if one were to say, “but I like ribeye steak. I want to use it in the Lord’s Supper.” Could he argue God did not say not to use steak in the Lord’s Supper? While this is a ridiculous illustration, it illustrates that we cannot add what God has not authorized.

We learn from the apostolic example that the Lord’s Supper is to be eaten on the first day of the week. “And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight” (Acts 20:7). Every week has a first day. Consequently, Christians must observe the Lord’s Supper every first day of the week. When God told the Israelites to “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Exo. 20:8), they knew the sabbath was to be observed every seventh day of the week. God does not have to tell us when **not** to observe the Lord’s Supper since He told us when to partake of it. Yet, some in the church violate this command by observing it at times other than what God authorized.

God tells us to “sing” in our worship to Him. Singing is a specific command from God. Had God said, “Make music,” this would have been a generic command, and man would have been a liberty to choose whatever type of music he wished in worship. But since God said, “sing” (Col. 3:16, Eph. 5:19), that is what we are to do. He does not have to tell us, “Do not use drums, guitars, etc.” That would be a different type of music than what God has authorized.

CONCLUSION

The Lord’s authority comes by what He has said, not by what He has not said. We have no authority for that which He has not authorized. “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Col. 3:17).

THE WIDOW'S MITE

Roy J. Hearn

From "Sermon Outlines By Roy J. Hearn: Memorial Edition."

Text: Mark 12:41-44

Introduction:

1. Jesus taught the greatness of little things (cf. Zech. 4:10).
 - a. Two of smallest coins made great lesson.
 - b. Some little things great. Her ALL.
 - c. Some give small amounts; to them it may be sin.
2. Difficulty of teaching Christians some things. We wonder how world can reject simple gospel. Great wonder: How can Christians reject plain teaching in living and service?
3. God appreciates drunkard much as covetous man (Col. 3:5; Eph. 5:5).

I. What Jesus Observed (v. 41).

- A. "Sat." Was there for a purpose. Not accident.
- B. Beheld how they gave. Giving indicates attitude.
 1. May express love for God in giving.
 2. May express covetousness (Col. 3:5).
- C. Jesus beholds all now (Mat. 18:20).
 1. All men, as Ananias and Sapphira, public, private.
 2. Sees state or condition: Abundance of rich, poverty of the poor. Dives and Lazarus.
 3. Sees what we possess, how we use it; whether we give liberally or sparingly.

II. What Jesus Saw.

- A. Many cast in much. Some rich didn't.
- B. Visualize Pharisees, finery, display.
- C. Widow cast in all. Less than one cent.
- D. God commended her, not the rich. "Commend us, compliment."
 1. Do like the widow; let God commend.
 2. Didn't say she gave too much.

III. Jesus Teaches The Disciples.

- A. Why commend her above the rich? Answer in paradoxes.

1. Gave less than all, yet more. They gave a little of their abundance; she, abundance of her little (2 Cor. 8:2-3).
 2. Her quality vs. their quantity. Yet quantity in her quality.
 3. Rich made a contribution; she made a sacrifice.
- B. Thus, Jesus considered the amount, based on what they had.

IV. The Great Contrast.

- A. Small part of abundance vs. all.
- B. The great faith of the widow. All her living (Heb. 13:5-6).
 1. The promise of Christ (Mat. 6:19-33).
 2. David said: Psa. 37:25.
 3. The widow of Sarepta (Luke 4:25-26; 1 Kin. 17:8-16).
- C. In the church now:
 1. Poor widow vs. rich, well off.
 2. Those with houses, those who have none.

V. Giving Is Pleasing to Jesus.

- A. So many would blame widow, could not expect to find many who would imitate her.
- B. Who has much should give much; who has little should give of that little.
- C. God loves a cheerful, liberal giver (2 Cor. 8:8-12; 9:6-8).
- D. Lesson:
 1. To the rich who for covetousness and luxury give little.
 2. To the poor who distrust God, give nothing.
- E. Better give more than able, be blest, than give less and be condemned.
- F. Widow could have made excuses.

Conclusion:

1. Would we be different in giving if we realized "Jesus sits over against the treasury?"
2. Does our contribution represent an abundance of our little or a little of our abundance?

CONCERNING ROY J. HEARN'S OUTLINE ON THE WIDOW'S MITE

Mike McDaniel

We are delighted that this issue of the Yokefellow includes a sermon outline on "The Widow's Mite" by former Director Roy J. Hearn with the permission of the Alumni Association. This outline was first published in the hardback book, Sermon Outlines By Roy J. Hearn, in 1989 by First Century Christian in a modified exponential format made popular by brother A. G. Freed. Permission was later granted to the Memphis School of Preaching Alumni Association on March 1, 2000 by brother Hearn "to reproduce and reprint any of my works, of any kind." A memorial edition of Sermon Outlines in paperback form was published by the Alumni Association in 2001 following his death on November 25, 2000 at the age of 89. The outlines were converted into a more standard format. Included in the book were a series of tributes to him by family, faculty, and friends. The book can be purchased for \$5 from Christian Family Bookstore. To order, you may call 1-800-782-8175.

Truly, we have warmed ourselves by the fires that other men have built. Without the vision and dedication of Roy J. Hearn, the Memphis School of Preaching would not exist and many of us might not be preachers. We owe him so very much.

In 2018, the Alumni Association began to gather the following materials related to brother Hearn: (1) The Memorial Edition of Sermon Outlines by Roy J. Hearn (which includes the Widow's Mite outline). (2) Tributes to brother Hearn from Curtis Cates,

Garland Elkins, Billy Bland, Keith Mosher, and Bobby Liddell. (3) An interview done by Dennis Gullede. (4) A lengthy article written by this writer about him based on brother Hearn's biographical notes. (5) His debate notes on Materialism, Sabbath Day, One Cup, Women Teachers, Holy Spirit, Jews' Return, Faith Only, and Baptism. (6) His teaching notes on the Church, the Holy Spirit, and the book of Acts. (7) Handouts on the Gift of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit and the Christian. (8) His outlines on Elders, Deacons, and Evangelists. (9) His notes on Producing Distinctive Preachers and an article on Duties of Gospel Preachers. (10) A Syllogistical study of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and Women Teachers. (11) His original advertising for the Memphis School of Preaching. (12) His Memorial edition of his Sermon Outlines book. (13) Pictures of many of his sheet charts. (14) Some recorded audio sermons. (15) 234 Knight Arnold News bulletin articles. (16) Handbook on Materialism (book). (17) Is Baptism Necessary? (booklet).

All of this is included in the R. J. Hearn Digital Library. This flash drive sells for \$15 plus \$5 for shipping. All proceeds benefit the Alumni Association. To receive your flash drive, please send your order along with a check for \$20 made out to the Memphis School of Preaching Alumni Association to the Memphis School of Preaching and a designated alumnus will send it right out to you.

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