

Some Hard Questions

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What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. (*I Corinthians 6:12-20*)

I have a question: Just who does the above passage apply to? Those who are lost, or those who are saved? Does it apply to all the saved, or just those who are in covenant relationship with the Lord in His church?

I have yet a better question: Does it really matter? If it does, why don't we act like it? If it doesn't, why don't we throw the Bible away? What is the point of having the word of God if we are not going to obey it?

Even better still: Why do we bother assembling together if we are not going to really adhere to what God has called us to? Does not the Scripture state (and quite plainly at that):

And *having* an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the

adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? (*Hebrews 10:21-29*)

You know, we are very quick to point out that it is failing the covenant if we do not assemble together regularly: But I wonder, why do we never finish the thought that this passage lies in? Now I know, this is not the proper motivation for someone wanting to serve God. The LORD God demands we serve Him out of a pure love for Him. However, if someone truly loved God from the heart, would not that person already be diligently working to rule over the flesh and the temptations of the world? So what is this passage for? Perhaps, (it is just a thought) it is to remind us that the standard for obedience under Grace is actually higher than the standard for obedience under the Law. After all, Moses' Law required outward conformance. If you did the sacrifices and offerings, and attended to worship on the days specified, at the place specified, and did not violate the commandments concerning relations with others, then you were justified in the sight of Moses' Law and those around you, whether or not you had truly submitted your heart to God. (However, you were still not justified before God.)

However, we are not under the Law of Moses. Thus the law of Grace applies to us (by "law" I mean the underpinning principles). The standard Grace demands of us is conformance to the will of God from the inward man out. What this world is supposed to see is a people motivated from the inside out to serve God freely, thus glorifying God in all we do. As it is written, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (*I Corinthians 10:31*)

Now we know that the above passage is set in the context of

the local, visible, independent, New Testament church as the passage starts out with the statement "And *having* an high priest over the house of God;" Thus, we know it applies to us, much as an earlier passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews does. In Hebrews, chapter 3, it is stated: "And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. (*Hebrews 3:5-6*)

Now then, what house did Moses build? Certainly Moses presided over the building of the tabernacle and all things pertaining thereto. So then, Moses was faithful in all things he did in setting up the house of witness that demonstrated the work of Christ to come. But a paralleling contrast is given here: Not that Moses did ill, but rather that Moses could not present the perfect picture of the owner of the house, as Moses did not own the house. The following phrase is clear for all to see: Christ is the owner of the house.

However, the very next part of the verse ought to carry great weight with us, for it states "whose house are we," but then gives us a warning "if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." By this meaning at least these two things: First; the church of the living God is not constituted of a building, but rather of individuals covenanted together with the Lord and each other, having done so in proper obedience to the Lord. ((This proper obedience consists of three things:

First; salvation by grace through faith alone.

Second; following the Lord in proper baptism (immersion only by proper authority).

And third; being added to the church the Lord chooses for you.))

Second; there is a price for those covenanted individuals to pay if they fail to hold certain things inviolate. Plainly, we

can cease to be the house Christ owns, if we fail to hold the truth of Christ in its proper place in our individual lives. After all, if we are His house, are we not individuals assembled together into a house by the Lord? Thus, what each and every individual does in their personal lives either builds up, or tears down the house.

This now brings another passage to mind that has everything to do with the questions above, and the passages of Scripture cited. That particular passage was written to a young pastor so that he would understand the import of the office of pastor, and the necessity of maintaining a proper church under his watch. As the Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy by dictation of the Holy Ghost "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. (*I Timothy 3:14-15*)

In the context of the thoughts thus far, there is a certain portion of the passage that stands out: "the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." If then this house of God is the same house as Christ owns, and it is also the church of the living God, does it not then make it the local, visible, independent, New Testament church – which are we? It would certainly seem so. Therefore, the final thought must also apply to us: "the pillar and ground of the truth." both individually and collectively.

This then, raises yet more questions. Questions such as: Is the pillar and ground of the truth found only in the Covenant, Statement of Faith, and doctrine of the church? Or, must it be found in the lives of the individuals that make up the church? Is it sufficient to have wonderfully accurate documents? Or, must the content of those documents translate into the lives of the individuals so that it can be manifested to the world?

There is yet a better question still: If the individuals that make up the house of God do not manifest the truth in their lives, can the collective body actually be “the pillar and ground of the truth?”

This now returns us to Hebrews, chapter 10 cited above, and it raises the question: Can a church sin against God? If so, what is the price for that sin, and continuance in that sin (or sins)? These questions also bring us back to where we started (with a very little step).

Why are we doing what we are doing in the church? If we will not hold to the word of God individually, what is the point of this whole exercise? Because if we will not hold to it individually, we certainly will not hold to it collectively. And if not collectively, are we really the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth?

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