"From Heaven, or of Men?"

Matt. 21: 23 - 27
Donald Townsley

INTRODUCTION
1. Prudence teaches us that before receiving anything into our system (physical or spiritual) that is capable of vitally affecting us, we should investigate it.
2. God instructs us to do so in spiritual matters -- I Thess. 5:21; I John 4:1.
3. The question asked by Jesus is the acid test of any religious body, doctrine, or practice.

I. THE TEST
1. In this study we are seeking the origin:
   (1) It does not make so much difference as to where it is NOW, or WHO and HOW MANY practice it, but where did it start?
   (2) To find the ORIGIN is to find the author or the ORIGINATOR.
2. If a thing come from HEAVEN, it of course comes from God, and must come through His WORD -- John 16:13; Heb. 1: 1 - 2.
   (2) It furnishes us unto all good works -- 2 Tim. 3: 16 - 17
   (3) No further revelation is needed -- Gal. 1: 6 - 9; Jude 3; James 1:25; 2 Tim. 3: 16 - 17.
   (4) It will judge us -- John 12:48.
   (5) If from HEAVEN it is unfailing; it shall not pass away -- Matt. 24:35; I Pet. 1: 23 - 25.
3. The test may be applied to any religious institution, doctrine, or practice.

I. SALVATION BY FAITH ONLY -- IS IT "FROM HEAVEN, OR OF MEN?"
1. Some "FAITH ONLY" proof texts examined:
   (1) John 1: 11, 12 -- power to become
   (2) Acts 16:31 (read the context).
   (3) Rom. 5: 1 - 2-- This is not faith only -- Eph. 2:8
      1. By faith -- Heb. 11:4; 11: 7,8
2. The Bible teaches that a working faith saves and not faith only:
   (1) James 2: 14 - 26; Gal. 5:6; Matt. 7: 21 - 23.
3. One may believe and not be saved -- John 12: 42 - 43.
4. The doctrine of "faith only" is from men:
   (1) Martin Luther is the father of the doctrine of "faith only".
   (2) In his desire to get away from the Catholic doctrine of works, he went to the other extreme.

II. THE CONFESSION "THAT GOD FOR CHRIST'S SAKE HAS PARDONED MY SINS" -- "FROM HEAVEN, OR OF MEN?"
1. The New Testament does not teach such a confession.
3. The New Testament teaches we are freed from sin after we have obeyed the gospel -- Rom. 6: 16 - 18; 6: 3 -4; Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16.
4. This confession is of men and not from heaven.
III. "REPENTANCE AND FAITH", IN THIS ORDER, -- IS IT "FROM HEAVEN, OR OF MEN?"

1. Mark 1:15 and Acts 20:21 are used as proof texts.
   (1) Talking to people who believed in God.
3. Repentance and Faith is the order of men.

IV. "ONE CAN BE SAVED OUT THE CHURCH AS WELL AS IN THE CHURCH", "FROM HEAVEN, OR OF MEN?"

1. Salvation is in Christ -- 2 Tim. 2:10; Eph. 1: 3 - 7; 2:16.
2. The church is the fullness of Christ -- Eph. 1: 22 - 23.
3. The saved are added to the church -- Acts 2: 47.
4. He is the Savior of the body -- Eph. 5:23.
5. If one can be saved out of Christ, as well as in Christ, then one can be saved out of the church as well as in the church.
6. This doctrine is from Men.

V. IS THE IDEA OF "MANY WAYS TO HEAVEN" "FROM HEAVEN, OR OF MEN?"

1. The Bible teachers there is but one way to heaven -- Matt. 7:14; John 14:6
   (1) One door -- John 10:9
   (2) One Shepherd -- John 10:16
   (3) One fold -- John 10:16; Acts 20:28; Eph. 2:16
   (4) One Gospel -- Gal. 1: 6 - 9
   (5) One Church -- Matt. 16:18
   (6) One Body -- Eph. 4:4
   (7) One Spirit -- Eph. 4:4
   (8) One Hope -- Eph. 4:4
   (9) One Lord, Faith, and Baptism -- Eph. 4:5
   (10) One Doctrine -- 2 John 9
2. The idea that there are many ways to heaven is from men, not from heaven.

VI. DENOMINATIONALISM, IS IT "FROM HEAVEN, OR OF MEN?"

1. What is denominationalism?
   (1) "Denominationalism" defined: "Adherence or devotion to a denomination, sect, or policy; specifically a disposition to maintain sectarian ideas in matters of religion."
   (2) A denomination is defined as: "A class, or society of individuals, called by the same name; a sect".
   (3) From these definitions we see three essentials to denominationalism:
      1. Division -- a sect.
      2. A distinctive name
      3. An attitude to maintain sectarian ideas.
   (4) All three essentials for denominationalism are condemned from heaven.
2. Division
   (1) Is contrary to the prayer of Jesus in John 17 -- John 17: 20 - 21.
3. A Distinctive Name
   (1) Paul condemned the Corinthians for wearing human names -- I Cor. 1:10 - 13.
   (2) Paul said the Corinthians were carnal for wearing human names -- I Cor. 3:3 - 7.
   (3) There is salvation only in one name -- Acts 4:12.
4. An attitude to maintain sectarian ideas.
   (1) I Cor. 4:6; Rom. 12:3
5. The divided state of the religious world is from man.
   (1) The Lord knew this would happen -- I Tim. 4:1 - 6; 2 Thess. 2:3 - 12.
6. Protestant denominationalism had their origin in the Reformation.
   (1) The voice of History.
7. Denominationalism gives sanction to the way of one’s choice.
   (1) You hear men in the denominational world say, “Go to the church of your choice.”
   (2) “It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” -- Jer. 10:23.
   (3) Man does not have a choice in religion; if he wants to go to heaven he must follow God’s choice for him.
     1. God has but ONE way -- John 14:6; Matt. 16:18.
8. Denominationalism is built upon SINCERITY ALONE.
   (1) You will hear men say, "It does not matter what you believe just so you are sincere."
   (2) If one were truly sincere in holding to Atheism, would sincerity alone be enough???
9. Denominationalism ignores the divine standard of unity.
   (1) Denominations talk about unity and they try to bring it about with the wrong standards, the opinions, and agreements of men.
     1. They try to have unity upon ill-defined faith in Christ.
   (2) The only standard of unity is the Word of God -- John 17:20 - 221; I Cor. 1:10.
10. Denominationalism endorses the making of laws where God has not made them.
    (1) The Lord said Baptism is a burial -- Rom. 6:4.
    (2) Denominations sanction sprinkling and pouring.
    (1) It causes people to believe that the church is not very important.
    (2) Denominationalism advocates believe that one can be a member of any church, or none, and be perfectly alright.
12. The word "church" in the New Testament:
    (1) The word "church" is used in two (2) senses in the New Testament:
        1. In the Local sense -- the local church is the called out of Christ in any definite locality, who jointly work and worship together -- Phil. 1:1; Rom. 16:16; I Cor. 1:2.
        2. In the Universal sense -- The church universal includes all the saved of the earth -- Matt. 16:18; Eph. 5:23.
    (2) No denomination can qualify for the church of the New Testament.
        1. A denomination is smaller than the church universal, and bigger than a local church.
13. Causes of denominationalism:
   (2) Holding to traditions -- Matt. 15: 3 - 9.
   (3) Making laws where God has not legislated -- 2 John 9; Matt. 15:9
      1. "one lawgiver" -- James 4:12
   (4) Compromise with error -- Jude 3
   (5) Following personal desires in religion -- Rom. 15:2

IV. IS THE DOCTRINE "BAPTISM IS NOT ESSENTIAL TO SALVATION" "FROM HEAVEN OR OF MEN"?

1. Baptism puts one into Christ -- Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27.
   (1) These are the only two passages in the whole of the New Testament that tells us HOW we are to get into Christ.
   (2) In Christ we enjoy all spiritual blessings -- Eph. 1:3.
   (3) In Christ we have redemption -- Eph. 1: 7.

2. Baptism puts one into the body of Christ -- I Cor. 12:13.
   (1) Only in the body can we be reconciled to God -- Eph. 2:16.
   (2) The church and the body are one and the same -- Eph. 1: 22 - 23.
   (3) The church is the fullness of Christ -- Eph. 1: 22 - 23.

3. Baptism puts one into the death of Christ where His blood was shed -- Rom. 6:3; John 19: 33 - 34.
   (1) Heb. 9: 22 "Without shedding of blood is no remission"


5. Baptism is to have one's sins washed away -- Acts 22:16.

6. One must be baptized to be saved -- I Pet. 3:21; Mk. 16:16.

7. Baptism is part of the "new birth" -- John 3:5.


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