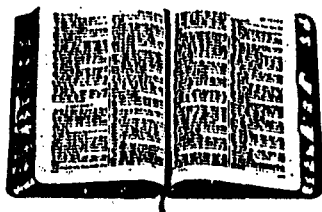


THE INSTRUCTOR



"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." (2 Timothy 3:16)

Volume 35

JULY, 1998

NUMBER 7

VAIN RELIGION

It seems that many people think and believe that there is no such thing as *vain* religion. It is obvious that some people think that *"one religion is just as good as another religion"* or *"as long as you are sincere it does not matter what you believe or practice religiously"* or *"God is pleased with all religions"*, etc. In contrast with the idea that "no religion is vain" the inspired writer said: **"If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridled not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain."**

(James 1:26). Yes, it is possible for a man to be religious and *his religion be vain!* In fact it is possible for the religion of "brethren" to be *vain!*

If I do not bridle my tongue, but deceive my heart, then my religion is in vain! (See. James 1:26). In view of this *I must carefully guard my speech.* (Cf. 1 Peter 3:10; Psalm 34:13; Prov. 6:16-19; 15:2; 18:21; 21:23; Psalm 39:1; 35:28; 119:172; Col. 4:6; Psalm 19:14). God expects us to *bridle* our tongues. *An unbridled tongue will cause one's religion to be vain!*

We learn from Matthew 15:7-9 that the religion of the scribes and Pharisees was *vain* because their

heart was far from God and they taught **"for doctrines the commandments of men"**. Although they were drawing nigh unto God with their *mouths* and were honouring Him with their *lips* their worship was in vain. They were *not* always *teaching truth* with their *mouths* and their *hearts* were far from Him. Their *"tongues"* played a part in their *vain* religion, but observe the fact that the *teaching for doctrines the commandments of men made their worship in vain.*

To worship God acceptably, *one must worship him* in spirit and in truth according to Jesus in John 4:24. He said: **"they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."** The expression *"in truth"* means *according to truth* or *as truth directs* or *according to instructions or directions found in the truth.* Let us keep in mind that *God's Word is truth* according to John 17:17.

The Pharisees made the Word of God of **"none effect"** by their tradition and so can we. (Cf. Mark 7:1-13).

To practice a pure and undefiled religion a man must **"visit the**

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THE INSTRUCTOR

(usps # 581680)

Published monthly in the interest of truth and righteousness by the congregation of Christ, meeting at 4777 U.S. Highway 431, Albertville, Alabama.

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Second-class postage paid in
Albertville, AL 35950.

Editorial...

MUST WE KEEP THE SABBATH TODAY? (No. 14)

In past articles we have shown from the Scriptures that the law that required the *Israelites* to keep the sabbath day holy was *provisional* and *temporary*. There is no Scriptural *proof* that the LORD ever intended for *Christians* to keep the law that He gave to the *Israelites* after they came out of Egypt. The sabbath day was given to a *specific* people for *specified* reasons. When that law had fulfilled its purpose *it ceased to be binding*. When the law that required sabbath keeping was fulfilled, *it was no longer in force!* (Cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:6-13; 7:11-19; 9:16-17; 10:9-10; Romans 7:1-7; 2 Cor. 3:6-17; Col. 2:14-17; Gal. 3:23-27; Col. 2:14-17; etc.

In our last seven studies we have been examining some arguments made by "sabbath keepers" in an effort to show that sabbath keeping is *binding* on Christians today. We

have shown that Scriptural *proof* is lacking. *Assumptions* and *assertions* are not Scriptural *proof*! Let us continue our study.

ARGUMENTS FOR SABBATH KEEPING CONSIDERED

25. "IN THE NEW TESTAMENT WHEN WE ARE TOLD TO KEEP OR OBEY THE LAW OF GOD (OR GOD'S COMMANDMENTS) IT ALWAYS MEANS OR INCLUDES THE SABBATH COMMAND."

REPLY:

(1) The Sabbatarian who makes the above argument assumes and asserts his desired conclusion without *proving* his conclusion from the text!

(2) The only way that one could know that the command to keep the sabbath is included would be by the *text* or immediate context or the general context of the Scriptures indicating that such is the case. *Assuming* and *asserting* that the sabbath command is *always* (or even one time) included does *not prove* that such is the case.

(3) Here are some questions for Sabbatharians: "*Did God ever have any commandments beside the ten commandments?* If so, what were they? *Does He now have any commandments beside the ten?* If so, what are they? OBSERVATION: If God has some commandments (or a law), besides the ten commandments how would a Sabbatarian know that the expression "the law" or "commandments" *always* includes the sabbath command. *The truth is they don't!* Another question is: "*Have any of God's commandments been discontinued?* If not, should we keep every commandment that God ever gave anyone? If yes, is it

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possible that the command given to the Israelites to keep the sabbath day holy has been discontinued and does not apply to anyone today?

(4) God gave Adam a *command* not to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil which was in the midst of the Garden of Eden. (Cf. Gen. 2:15-17; 3:1-3). NOTE: This was not one of the ten commandments. God gave Noah some *commands* relative to building the ark, going into the ark, etc. (Cf. Gen. 6:14-22; 7:1-5, 9, 16; Heb. 11:7.) NOTE: This was not one of the ten commandments. God gave Abraham a number of *commandments* and he kept them according to Gen. 26:5. (Also cf. Gen. 12:1-4; 17:9-14; 22:1-19; Heb. 11:8, 17; James 2:21-23). NOTE: The command to keep the sabbath day was not included in any of these commandments.

PROOF: There is nothing in any of the *texts* or *contexts* to indicate that any of the commandments mentioned above included the command to keep the sabbath day holy. In addition to this we read the following in Nehemiah 9:13-14: "Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments; And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedest them, precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant: And gavest them bread from heaven..." NOTE: The sabbath was made known to the Israelites beginning in Exodus 16. *There is no Scriptural proof that any man was ever commanded to keep the*

sabbath day holy before it was given to the Israelites.

(5) There is absolutely no *proof* that such passages as 1 Cor. 7:19; 1 John 2:3; 3:4; 3:24; 5:3; Rev. 12:17; 14:12; 22:14 refer to the ten commandments which includes the command to keep the sabbath day holy!

(6) In writing to the church at Corinth the apostle Paul said: "**If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.**" (1 Cor. 14:37). NOTE: There is no evidence that Paul ever taught (either by letter or orally) that the saints at Corinth (or Christians anywhere) should keep the sabbath day holy as the Israelites (including himself) under the first covenant were taught to do.

In 1 Cor. 5 God *commanded* (through Paul) the saints to *put away from among them* the brother that was a fornicator. He told them not to keep company with "**any man that is called a brother**" who is "**a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner**". He said: "**with such an one no not to eat.**" In 7:10-11 the Lord gave this *command*: "**Let not the wife depart from her husband...**" In 10:31 He said: "**...Do all to the glory of God.**" In 11:23-34 the Lord gave some *commands* relative to the Lord's Supper. In 14:34-35 Paul said: **Let your women keep silence in the churches...** In 16:2 he said: "**Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him...**" NOTE:

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The above things in 1 Corinthians are some *commandments* of the Lord. There are many other commandments that the Lord gave in the New Testament that were *not* given in the Old Testament. OBSERVATION: *The Lord never commanded any Christian to keep the sabbath day holy!* CHALLENGE: *We sincerely challenge Sabbatarians to produce a passage of Scripture that shows that God commands Christians to keep the sabbath day holy!* (To be continued)

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VAIN RELIGION

fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” (James 1:27). Two aspects of pure religion

are stated in this verse. If a man does not meet the requirements of this verse he is not practicing pure and undefiled religion. Thus his religion is vain!

As we have shown here are some things that will make our religion vain. (1) *An unbridled tongue.* (2) *Traditions and commandments of men.* (3) *Impure hearts.* (4) *Worship that is not “in spirit and in truth”.* (5) *Failing to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and not keeping ourselves unspotted from the world.* What about your religion? Is it in vain? You should conform your religion to the Word of God!

GOSPEL MEETINGS

AIRPORT, West Columbia, SC -Sept, 6-11, 1998
Clintwood, VA—Sept. 20-26, 1998

SENTENCE SERMONS

Along with giving advice, Christians should lend a helping hand.

* * * * *

Patience is a quality that is most needed when it is exhausted.

* * * * *

It takes a lot of moral courage to ignore an insult.

* * * * *

Wise people are liable to make mistakes, but foolish people practice them.

* * * * *

When trouble and discouragement weigh a man down, kind words may pick him up.

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