

# FINDING THE WILL OF GOD

# AN ISSUE TO BE SETTLED

- For whom?
  - Not the apostles; they knew
  - The un-inspired
- If you or I have a religious question to be resolved
  - You and I are the un-inspired
  - You and I need to go to the inspired for the answer
  - The inspired have the answer
    - 2 Peter 1:2-4

# SETTLED?

- Already settled by God
- Whether a question is settled for you and me is irrelevant as to its settlement in heaven
- Psalm 119:89
- The issue to be settled here as either true or false:
  - “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved” (Acts 15:1)

# TROUBLING SOULS

- Disturbed and divided – verse 24
- Heb 4:12
- Churches of Galatia
  - “another gospel”
  - Not: twist, nuance, flavor, another view, another perspective, “what does it mean to you?”
  - In this case, troubled others about it so that they would not suffer persecution themselves – 6:12
- Remember King Ahab’s estimation of Elijah and Elijah’s answer?
  - I Kings 18:17-18

# LISTEN TO THE INSPIRED

- Listen to Peter
  - 1 Peter 1:1, 2 Peter 1:1
  - Verse 7-11
  - Peter gave an example that bears God's mark of approval
  - Led hearers to a necessary conclusion
  - If God gave them (Gentiles) the Holy Spirit just as he did to the apostles, then God has approved them apart from circumcision
    - Thus the conclusion in verse 11

# LISTEN TO THE INSPIRED

- Listen to Paul
  - 1 Corinthians 9:1, 2 Corinthians 12:12
  - Verse 12
  - Led hearers through an example – preaching to the Gentiles that bears the mark and certification of God's approval
  - Their argument required the hearers to necessarily infer what Paul and Barnabas necessarily implied
    - God saved Gentiles apart from circumcision and the keeping of the law of Moses

# LISTEN TO THE INSPIRED

- James
  - Most probably the Lord's brother, not an inspired apostle
  - But appeals to the INSPIRED SCRIPTURES
  - Amos' prophecy
  - A direct statement that the Gentiles were to be His people

# HARMONY OF THE INSPIRED

- Listening to the inspired, James harmonized all the facts – direct statement, approved example, and necessary conclusion (inference/implication) – to arrive at the truth of the matter
- Verses 18-20
- We can know God's will by harmonizing direct statements, commands, approved examples, and necessary conclusions
- The letter was delivered, resulting in rejoicing over its encouragement



# NOT THIS WAY

- Majority
- Opinion
- Vote of council
- Vote of the church
- Appeal to hierarchy
- Reasonable to me
- Personal Experience
- Tradition
- Latest “science”
- Doctor of Theology
- “It doesn’t say not to”
- “I feel like”
- “I can’t find it in a do-not list so it must be ok”
- Perplexing hypotheticals

# HOW DID THE UN-INSPIRED GET THE ANSWER?

- No new revelation
- No new miracle or sign to confirm the words they spoke on that occasion
- Simply:
  - Appeal to existing inspired Scripture
  - Appeal to approved apostolic examples
  - Necessary conclusions that follow

We have in Acts 15 an example of the method that we, the un-inspired, can use to determine the truth of a subject.... THE inspired method to use to determine the truth of a subject

# LEAD ME TO THE TRUTH

- In Acts 15, the inspired lead the un-inspired to the answer in a way that we can follow today.
- Take all these and harmonize:
- Statements in holy Scripture, and that includes facts, commands, instructions, wisdom
  - I Pet 4:11
- Approved apostolic examples
- Necessary conclusions

# ATTACK!

- This method taught to the un-inspired in Acts 15 on that occasion and for our learning and use is often despised
- Many “churches” decide issues for their “church” through some hierarchical method
- Books of official “doctrine” are published by some
- Councils convene, votes are taken
- Adapt, because “the times they are a-changin’”
- Cry “Legalism! Phariseeism!”

I'm not ashamed of the method taught by the inspired to the un-inspired in Acts 15!

# CONSIDER

- Matthew 28:20
- Acts 15:24
- 1 Corinthians 14:37
- 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- Phil 4:9
- 2 Thessalonians 2:15
- Matthew 7:7-8

# HOW SHALL WE WORSHIP GOD?

- John 4:24
- Music?
- Instruments?
- Clapping, humming?
- Look for statements, commands, examples with the clear approval of God, necessary conclusions
- Eph 5:19-20
- Col 3:16

# HOW SHOULD THE CHURCH BE ORGANIZED?

- Priests, bishops, cardinals, pope?
- Living apostles?
- Reverends?
- Councils?
- “Pastor” system?
- Look for statements, commands, examples with the clear approval of God, necessary conclusions
- Phil 1:1

# ACTS 15

- Does not just teach us how to solve a question about circumcision
- A blueprint for the un-inspired to find what pleases God
- Appeal to
  - Holy, God-breathed Bible statements, commands
  - Holy, God-breathed Bible record of approved apostolic examples
  - Resulting necessary inferences/conclusions implied by the inspired
- Religious discussion needs to appeal to these things to know the truth