

Question: What one main thing do you hope to accomplish in your articles?

Our main goal is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in its purest form, or as it was preached in the first century. The gospel includes *facts* to be understood, *commands* to be obeyed, and *promises* to be embraced by men and women seeking God's approval and acceptance. Addressing these topics and related issues is an unending task. Therefore, in order to achieve the above stated goal, we make a simple appeal to anyone who will listen, an appeal to our reader's sense of honesty and reason. We plead for you to understand the importance of accepting the Bible as the final expression of God's will and authority (2 Ti 3:16-17), and the New Testament as the Christian's only rule of faith and practice today. This is the same plea heralded by faithful prophets in the Old Testament as well as by inspired men in the New Testament times:

- Jeremiah told his people, "Thus says the Lord: 'Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls' (Jer 6:16).
- In a similar vein, Paul said to the church in Philippi, "let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind...The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you" (Ph 3:16; 4:9).

Throughout all time, God's only desire is that men honor and obey Him. In the beginning, God impressed upon Adam and Eve the importance of heeding His voice. One day they chose to defy God by disobeying His direct command, and they were punished for it (Gen 3). Since then and until the coming of Christ it is God's desire that men confine their faith and actions to His word (cf. Ga 1:6-10; 2 Jn 9-11; Re 22:18-19).

- Jesus said, "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him – the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day" (Jn 12:48).
- "And I (John) saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and the books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books" (Re 20:10).

These verses tell us that how God judges us will depend on how our "works" measure up to what is "written." One day our lives will be measured by what Jesus taught during His personal ministry. Since we were not there to hear Him teach, He promised to send the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles in writing down His word for our benefit (Jn 14:26; 16:12-13; 20:30-31; 2 Pe 1:3).

Our plea for unity is based upon what is "written." Such unity is possible only when men lay aside all creed books, disciplines, catechisms, articles of faith, etc., and go back – all the way back – to the New Testament and learn to "speak as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11). Next week we will look at what this plea demands of us.

[MEETING INVITATION]