

November, 2005

Pause Ponder Profit

The Authority of Scriptures

L. A. Stauffer

What modern man calls the *Bible*, Jesus and the apostles called the *scriptures* — a word that means

“writings” (see Jn. 5:39; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 3:15-16). Those writings include the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament. These writings are said to be “inspired of God,” an expression that means that they were uttered from the mind of God by the Holy Spirit. Paul said “all scriptures are inspired of God” and Peter says they were written when “men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit” (see 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).

Peter says further that these scriptures did not come by “will of man,” meaning that they have a higher source and authority than the wisdom and thinking of man. Jesus during his public ministry often quoted scripture to settle issues, whether debating the devil or Jews who were hardened against him. When being tempted of the devil, he would answer by quoting

scripture with the simple introduction, “It is written” (see Matt. 4:1-11). He would respond to his fellow Jews with the charge: “You do err, not knowing the scriptures” (Matt. 22:29).

After Jesus ascended to heaven, he sent, as he had promised, the Holy Spirit to the apostles to “teach them all things” and to “guide them into all truth” (Jn. 14:25-26; Jn. 16:13). The apostle Paul told the brethren at Corinth to “take knowledge of the things which I write unto you, that they are the commandment of the Lord” (1 Cor. 14:37). The apostle Peter said that when men twist and distort what has been written in scriptures that it will bring them to destruction (2 Pet. 3:16-17).

Both Jesus and the apostles are informing us that the scriptures contain the mind and will of God and are the standard of right and wrong — and that they determine whether a man will be saved or lost. Jesus, the scriptures say, “became unto all them that *obey him* the author of eternal salvation” (Heb. 5:9). The inspired writings also say that he will return “with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and *obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (2 Thess. 1:7-8).

What this means is that the authority of God and Jesus is found in the scriptures, and that obedience to those scriptures determines whether man will be saved or lost. Paul affirms that if any man preaches any other gospel than what was preached and received in the first century, he shall be accursed (Gal. 1:8-9). The apostle John said that whoever goeth onward and abides not in the teaching of Jesus has not God (2 Jn. 9).

(Continued on page 4)



Fellowship

by James A. Brown

“We had a great **fellowship supper** last night in our **fellowship hall**. But that was after we had some **fellowship ball** in the church gymnasium. But neither of these compare with the **flags fellowship** the church has planned for us next week — the trip to Six Flags.” The New Testament does not sanction such a use of the word “fellowship”. But this is the way some professed Christians speak of fellowship. To them everything from eating a common meal together to engaging in all kinds of social and recreational events together is Bible fellowship.

Some have encouraged the unscriptural use of the word “fellowship” by attaching it to the unauthorized entertainment and recreational activities engaged in by many churches of Christ. Evidently they seem to think that if they replace “banquet hall” with “fellowship hall” and “basketball” with “fellowship ball” that, somehow authorizes the church to involve itself in all kinds of social and recreational endeavors. But when one takes that with is spiritual, — “fellowship,” — and applies it to that which is secular, — “fellowship hall,” — he becomes a profaner of God’s word. The sectarians have misapplied Bible words for years. For example they call their preachers pastors but that doesn’t make them pastors in the biblical sense. They call sprinkling baptism but that does not make it baptism. So it should not surprise us when professed Christians speak of all joint participation as “fellowship”.

There is nothing wrong with the word “fellowship”. It is a good word to use — it is a Bible word. However, I know of no place in the Bible where the word is used to describe the sharing of a social meal or recreational activity. I recognize that the word “fellowship” is used by

Webster and others in a modern sense to allow sharing, companionship, and friendly association in social and recreational events. But I also realize that there is a huge difference between the modern secular use of the word “fellowship” and the Bible use of the word.

The English word “fellowship” is found fifteen times in the King James Version (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 1:9, 10:20; 2 Cor. 6:14, 8:4; Gal. 2:9; Eph. 3:9, 5:11; Phil. 1:5, 2:1, 3:10; 1 Jn. 1:3, 6, 7). This word is translated from four different Greek words: *koinonia*, *koinonos*, *synkoinoneo*, and *metoche*.

“Koinonia” is defined by Thayer as, “fellowship, association, community, communion, joint participation, intercourse”. Thayer goes on to tell us that “koinonia” is: “(1) the share which one has in anything, participation (2) intercourse, fellowship, intimacy (3) a benefaction jointly contributed, a collection, a contribution.” Please note, Thayer does not tell us whether this “fellowship, association, or joint participation” is secular or spiritual. We must determine that by the context in which the word is found. By “secular”, I mean, that which is not concerned with religious or spiritual matters. By “spiritual”, I mean, that which relates to religious and sacred things rather than worldly things. This word “koinonia” is found twenty times in the original (Acts 2:42; Rom. 15:26; 1 Cor. 1:9, 10:16; 2 Cor. 6:14, 8:4, 9:13, 13:14; Gal. 2:9; Eph. 3:9; Phil. 1:5, 2:1, 3:10; Phm. 6; Heb. 13:16; 1 Jn. 1:3, 6, 7). In the King James Version, “koinonia” is translated “fellowship” twelve times, “communion” four times, “communication” one time, “distribution” one time, “contribution” one time, and “to communicate” one time.

“Koinonos” is defined by Thayer as, “(1) a partner, associate, comrade, companion (2) a partaker, sharer, in any thing.” Note again, Thayer

(Continued on page 3)

(Fellowship — Continued from page 2)

does not tell us whether to be a “partner or sharer” is in things secular or spiritual. We must decide that from the context in which the word is found. “Koinonos” is found ten times in the original (Matt. 23:30; Lk. 5:10; 1 Cor. 10:18, 20; 2 Cor. 1:7, 8:23; Phm. 17; Heb. 10:33; 1 Pet. 5:1; 2 Pet. 1:4). In the King James Version, “koinonos” is translated, “partaker” five times, “partner” three times, “fellowship” one time, and “companion” one time.

“Synkoinoneo” is defined by Thayer as, “to become a partaker together with others, or to have fellowship with a thing.” Thayer, again, does not tell us if this is secular or spiritual fellowship. We will establish that by the context in which we find the word. “Synkoinoneo” is found three times in the original (Eph. 5:11; Phil. 4:14; Rev. 18:4). This word is translated in the King James Version, “have fellowship with” one time, “communicate with” one time, and “be partaker of” one time.

“Metoche” is defined by Thayer as, “a sharing, communion, fellowship.” Whether this is secular or spiritual is only to be settled by how the word is used in its context. “Metoche” is found only once in the original (2 Cor. 6:14). It is translated “fellowship”.

Having given you the four Greek words translated “fellowship”, their definitions, and the passages in which they are found, let me ask this question. Can all joint participation, sharing, and partnering be considered Bible fellowship? I ask that because some brethren believe, at least according to their practice, that when they have shared a common meal with another they have had what the Bible calls fellowship. And when they have partnered with another in some entertainment, they have had Bible fellowship. And when they have had joint participation with another in some recreational activity, then, they have had what the New Testament calls

fellowship. According to their reasoning, every time I partner, share in anything or participate jointly with another I am having Bible fellowship. When I play tennis, go fishing, eat with, partner with another in a business deal, am I having fellowship? Of course not, all joint participation, sharing, and partnering is not to be considered Bible fellowship.

Jesus shared a common meal with tax collectors and sinners (Mk. 2:16). Did Jesus have fellowship with these sinners? If He did, then He sinned, because the New Testament condemns fellowshiping sinners (2 Cor. 6:11-17). But the scriptures tell us that Jesus was without sin (Heb. 4:15). The only thing we can conclude from this is that Jesus did not have fellowship in the biblical sense, when He shared a common meal with sinners. So eating a common meal together is not fellowship. Why, you might ask? Well, eating a common meal together is a secular activity. And any sharing, partnering, and participating jointly with others in any secular activity that is good, wholesome, and alright to join in should never be called fellowship, biblically speaking. Why, you ask? Well, if we look at the four Greek words translated “fellowship” and the context in which these words are found, we see that they are always addressing things of a spiritual nature. That is, they always, without exception, are used in relation to religious and sacred things rather than worldly things.

As we have seen, the Bible definition of the word “fellowship” is, “a sharing, association, communion, joint participation, partnership”. So, in what did the early Christians have fellowship? They had fellowship in prayer, the Lord’s supper, and the teaching of the word (Acts 2:42). God had called them “into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 1:9). They participated in “the fellowship of the ministering to the saints” (2 Cor. 8:4). They were commended for their fellowship

(Fellowship — Continued on page 4)

(Fellowship — Continued from page 3)

with Paul “in the gospel” (Phil. 1:5). Their fellowship was with God by “walking in the light” (1 Jn. 1:7), i.e., by living and conducting their lives in harmony with His teaching. And this, my friends, is the fellowship we should be interested in. Yes, that is the way the word “fellowship” is used in the Bible. Having joint participation in that which is religious and sacred rather than in that which is secular or worldly.

We make a serious mistake when we take the word “fellowship” out of its scriptural context and made it apply to social, recreational, or entertainment activities, which is not the biblical use of the word. Let us call Bible things by Bible names and do Bible things in Bible ways. If you want to have a fellowship supper, you can, — by eating the Lord’s supper (1 Cor. 10:15). If you want to have a fellowship hall, you can, — the auditorium where you meet for religious joint participation, in those things sacred, as you worship God (Acts 2:42; 1 Jn. 1:3, 7). Whatever we do in word or in deed, let us do it all by the authority of Jesus Christ, our Lord (Col. 3:17).

(The Authority Of Scriptures — Continued from page 1)

Luke tells us when Paul entered the Jewish synagogues he preached to them from the scriptures. He likewise commends the Jews at Berea because they examined the scriptures to determine whether the things Paul preached were true (see Acts 17:1-3; Acts 17:10-11). Those who want to know the truth and find salvation in Christ must have that same spirit today. Read, study, and obey the scriptures!



Non-profit Org.
U. S. Postage Paid
Permit # 356
Paragould, AR

Second and Walnut
Church Of Christ
400 N. 2nd St.
P. O. Box 356
Paragould, AR 72451

Pause — Ponder — Profit is a monthly publication of the Second and Walnut Church Of Christ, Paragould, Arkansas.

Sunday
Radio 1490 AM 9:00 A.M.
Bible Study 9:45 A.M.
Worship 10:45 A.M.
Worship 6:00 P.M.
Wednesday
Bible Study 7:00 P.M.

Preacher: James A. Brown
Phone: 870-236-3371
E-Mail: jabrown@grnco.net