

Words of Truth

Whose House Is It?

By: Brian A. Yeager

Imagine for a moment that some of your family members have decided to move into your house. From time to time, they have made “suggestions” as to how your house could be better. One day you come home from work. You find your checkbook has some new entries. You then find new furniture in your home. There are new foods in your refrigerator that you neither like nor want in your house. You also find out that your family members have decided to use your money to be “benevolent”. The people they’ve given your money to, are people you wouldn’t have aided (i.e. II Thessalonians 3:10). When you question your family members they say, “we had a business meeting and we voted to do these things”.

Brethren, unless you are the biggest fruitcake I have ever met, you’d be upset that someone rearranged your house and spent your money in unauthorized ways. Each one of us, in accordance with the Lord’s will (Colossians 3:17), has authority over our own households (cf. Joshua 24:15). We choose what we will and will not have in our homes. We choose whom we have in our homes and what occurs when those guests are with us (Acts 16:15). Everyone understands these biblical and societal principles. Why then do so many ignore these facts when it comes to the house of the Lord?

The Church Is Not Our House

Jesus promised to build His church (Matthew 16:18). After His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension to Heaven; the church was in place (Acts 2:47). Notice what the Lord calls His church through the pen of the inspired Apostle Paul: *“These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in **the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth**”* (I Timothy 3:14-15). To be clear, the church in this context is not in the universal sense of all the saved as in Hebrews 12:22-23. The church, as the term is used in this context, has elders and deacons (I Timothy 3:1-13). The church, in a universal sense, does not have elders and deacons (I Peter 5:1-3). The church, in the local sense, does have elders and deacons (Acts 14:23, Acts 15:4, Acts 20:17, and Philippians 1:1).

Why is it important to discern that the house of God in I Timothy 3:15 is the local church? Well, throughout the remainder of this article I am going to show us that the Lord is head over His body the church. I am going to show that He is the head of His house. Lest there be someone who argues that such only applies to the “church universal”, I wanted to make it clear that we are talking about the local church (i.e. The Sunrise Acres church of Christ). The congregation here is not my house, our house, your house, or any other person’s house. We, who make up this local church (Romans 12:4-5 and I Corinthians 12:27), are the church of Christ. We have been bought with the price of the blood of the only begotten Son of God (Acts 20:28). Individually and collectively, we do not belong to ourselves; we belong to the Lord whom bought us (Romans 14:7-9, I Corinthians 6:19-20, II Corinthians 5:15, and Titus 2:14). Seeing

as how we belong to Christ, as His household, shouldn't it be clear that He is the decision maker?

Christ Is Over His House

Christ is the head of His body, the church (Ephesians 1:22-23, Ephesians 5:22-24, and Colossians 1:18). Yet, so-called “brethren” seem much more willing to submit to the authority of elderships and “men’s business meetings” than to the Lord. The word of God says: *“Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God. And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; But **Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.** Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness”* (Hebrews 3:1-8).

Why would the Holy Spirit have the inspired penman of the Book of Hebrews tell people not to harden their hearts against the head of the household? Hint – IT’S NOT A NEW PROBLEM! While the Scriptures you read above clearly establish Christ as the head of His house, those who have “moved in” have decided to overrule His authority. They take up a collection on the first day of the week, as instructed in the Scriptures (I Corinthians 16:1-2). Yet, instead of realizing this is the Lord’s money (Malachi 3:8-10 and Acts 5:1-4), people make decisions on how to rearrange the Lord’s house using His money. Rather than seeing the Lord restricts the usage of His money (cf. I Timothy 5:3-16), they are liberal in how they use the checkbook of Christ. In essence, they forge His signature on many checks.

Consider another point. We all know that the Holy Spirit is no longer given today. The laying on of an Apostle’s hands and the age of miracles has ceased (Acts 8:12-24 and I Corinthians 13:8-13). So, don’t get confused on the next Scripture reference. Having said that, notice something about the new temple of God: *“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? **If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are**”* (I Corinthians 3:16-17). Today, the temple of God is not a physical structure in Jerusalem (cf. I Peter 2:5). When the temple was a physical structure, the Lord did not react kindly to those who did things in His house that were not authorized. Notice: *“And the Jews’ passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting; And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers’ money, and overthrew the tables; And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father’s house an house of merchandise. And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up”* (John 2:13-17). Consider now, if the Lord was that upset over abuses in a temporal structure, how do you suppose He feels towards those that pollute His spiritual house (cf. Jeremiah 7:29-34 and Hebrews 10:28-31)?

Conclusion

There will be a lot of people on the Judgment Day that find out what they’ve done in the name of the Lord wasn’t by His authority (Matthew 7:21-23). Jesus gives us everything He wants done in His house (Matthew 28:18-20 and II Timothy 3:16-17). Let’s listen to head of the household (Luke 6:46).