

HOW TO LEARN GOD'S WILL FROM HIS REVELATION

Text: Acts 15:1-2, 5-6

INTRO: In the first few years of Christianity, the church faced its first doctrinal problem. In our day many insist that doctrine is of little importance, that doctrinal problems should be ignored or soft-pedaled. But we can see that such was not the case in the early church.

But, not only does our text tell us that the apostles & elders in early Christianity saw the need to arrive at a proper understanding and attitude toward doctrine, but it also helps to show us HOW God's will may be learned from His revelation to man. This is the matter upon which we will now focus our attention.

I. THE FIRST STEP IN LEARNING THE WILL OF GOD WAS TO ASSEMBLE ALL GOD HAD REVEALED.

A. It should be noted that in 50 AD none of the NT epistles had yet been written. The NT message was in inspired men.

B. The apostles & elders assembled to consider all God had revealed to them & thru them, vs. 2-7.

READ GALATIANS 2:1-2

II. ONCE ALL PERTINENT FACTS HAD BEEN GATHERED THOSE FACTS WERE EXAMINED SO AS TO DETERMINE WHAT GOD WOULD HAVE THEM DO IN REGARD TO ACCEPTING GENTILES INTO THE FAITH.

A. Many persons have read the NT in its entirety, but have never learned to understand & apply its teachings.

B. By examining the methods they used to determine God's will, we will learn the principles that we today must use to understand what God wants us to do.

1. God's will was understood by taking note of an approved example, vs. 7-11.

NOTE: Peter had not always been aware of this

truth. It took a series of miracles to get Peter & Cornelius together--but now Peter knows God's will, Acts 10:29, 34-35.

2. God's will was understood thru necessary implication, vs. 12. When all the facts are considered, & we are left with only one logical conclusion, we must accept that conclusion to indicate the will of God in the matter.
 - a. The basic purpose of miracles was to confirm the revealed word & show approval of the men God had inspired & entrusted with His message, JN 3:5; MK 6:20; JN 20:30-31
 - b. The miracles worked by Barnabas & Paul proved God approved their teaching & their acceptance of Gentiles into the faith. There is no other logical conclusion.
3. God's will is made known by precept: direct statement or direct command, vs. 13-19.

NOTE: In the OT (Amos9:11-12) God had foretold His purpose of approving Gentiles who would be called by His name. The time had now come & the early Christians could know God's will in the matter by correctly applying His direct statement thru the mouth of Amos.

CONCLUSION: God's will with regard to any subject can be determined by the use of one or more of these methods today.

- A. Remember it is first necessary to collect all the information God has revealed pertaining to the matter to be settled.
- B. Then examine that information to find out what God has made evident by:

1. Direct statement or command.
2. Examples that indicate His will. BINDING.
3. Necessary inference.

C. It should be noted that it is not necessary to find a case of all three methods in order to know the will of God in a matter. Any one is sufficient to establish the will of God, but of course the more evidence one can collect, the more obvious it is that he has reached the right conclusion.

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