

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

AUTHORIZED AIDS

By Larry Ray Hafley

The Bible does not state that Noah used hammers, saws, and axes in the construction of the ark. However, such instruments were authorized by the command, “*Make thee an ark*” (Gen. 6:14). Without the instruction to build the ark, the tools would have been unauthorized.

The Bible does not mention church buildings per se. However, they are scriptural because of the authority to assemble (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:18, 14:23; Heb. 10:25). Without the right to assemble, church buildings would be without divine authority.

The Bible does not refer to song books. However, they are authorized by the command to sing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). They assist us in carrying out the divine direction to “*sing and make melody*” in our hearts to the Lord. Without the authority to sing, songbooks would be unscriptural.

The Bible does not talk about chalk boards, computerized images, or overhead projectors. However, they are approved by the authority to teach (Matt. 28:19). They assist in doing what the New Testament churches did; namely, teach (Acts 11:22-26). Without the authority to teach, boards and projectors would be contrary to Scripture.

The Bible does not say anything about collection baskets. However, they are authorized by the command to “*lay by in store*” (1 Cor. 16:2). Without the authority for a contribution, collection trays would be unauthorized.

The Bible does not mention plates on which to serve the bread of the Lord’s supper. However, they are authorized by the command to “*take, eat*” (1 Cor. 11:24). Were there no communion, the plates would not be scriptural.

The Bible does not specifically cite a baptistry, an artificial pool in which baptism is performed. However, the command to baptize authorizes a place to baptize. Without the right to baptize, a baptistry would be without authority (Matt. 7:21-23).

Note These Scriptural Contrasts:

The Bible does not directly mention the use of pianos and organs in the worship of the church. If we had scriptural authority to “play music,” such instruments would be authorized. As there is Bible authority for song books because we are to sing, so there would be authority for pianos in worship if we were commanded to “play music.”? When someone finds Scripture for “playing,” he will have found authority for guitars, trumpets, “*and such like.*”? Until then, they cannot be used with the approval of Heaven.

The Bible does not show where any church built and maintained recreation and entertainment facilities as a part of its work. As plates are authorized by the command to “eat” the bread of the Lord’s supper, so there would be authority for dinner plates and badminton nets if the church were authorized to provide social meals and recreation for its members. If we had the authority to “play” games, such things would be authorized. When someone finds authority for the church to furnish recreation, amusement and entertainment, he will have found authority for gymnasiums “*and such like.*”? Until then, such things exist without scriptural authority. ■

Where Is Your Name Written?

By Heath Rogers

Many of us are familiar with what the Scriptures call the “*Lamb’s Book of Life.*” This book is mentioned throughout the Bible as a record of those who are saved.

The first mention of such a book is by Moses as he interceded for the children of Israel after they made and worshiped the golden calf. ***“Then Moses returned to the Lord and said, ‘Oh, these people have committed a great sin, and have made for themselves a god of gold! Yet now, if You will forgive their sin - but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written’”*** (Ex. 32:31-32). Moses was willing to give up his place in this record if God would forgive the Children of Israel.

David pleaded with God concerning his enemies, ***“Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous”*** (Psa. 69:28). Paul spoke of ***“my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life”*** (Phil. 4:3) and Jesus told His disciples to ***“rejoice because your names are written in heaven”*** (Lk.10:20).

What is the importance of having our name written in the Lamb’s Book of Life? It will make the difference between us spending eternity in Heaven or Hell. ***“And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire... But there shall by no means enter it [Heaven - HR] anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life”*** (Rev. 20:15; 21:27).

We may think the Lamb’s Book of Life is the only place our names could possibly be written, but an interesting statement is found in Jeremiah 17:13 regarding those who forsake the Lord: ***“Those who depart from Me shall be written in the earth.”*** What does this mean?

Some see this statement referring to the practice of making temporary writing in the dust or sand. Sometimes children were taught how to write on planks of wood covered with dust or sand. The writing was never intended to be permanent. It would be cleared away almost as quickly as it was written.

With this understanding, Adam Clarke makes the following comment on this verse, ***“They shall never come to true honor. Their names shall be written in the dust; and the first wind that blows over it shall mar every letter, and render it illegible.”*** As opposed to having their names remembered by God as being saved, the names of these individuals will be forgotten, blown away like dust in the wind.

Another possibility is that in this passage the word for ***“earth”*** represents the underworld, meaning those who turn away from the Lord will be marked for death. This would certainly fit the context of the book of Jeremiah, as Judah and Jerusalem were destined to be destroyed by Babylon. It would also fit the spiritual significance of one’s name not being found in the Book of Life. Such a person will be cast into the lake of fire, which is called the ***“second death”*** (Rev. 20:14-15).

Both interpretations bring about the same eternal consequence: such an individual will be lost eternally.

All names are written somewhere. The names of those who are saved are written in heaven. The names of those who are lost are written upon the earth. The important question is: ***“Where is your name written?”*** – ***Knollwood church of Christ Bulletin***, March, 2017. ■



Wisdom Calls

By Joe R. Price

“20 Wisdom calls aloud outside; She raises her voice in the open squares. 21 She cries out in the chief concourses, at the openings of the gates in the city she speaks her words: 22 ‘How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity? For scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge’” (Prov. 1:20–22, NKJV).

King Solomon personifies wisdom in this passage. She cries out in open venues, offering her instruction and blessings to all who will acknowledge her. But, she is not met with ready reception. Instead, she is met with scorn and mockery. A knowledge of her ways begins with ***“the fear of the Lord”*** (Prov. 1:7). Her ways are held in contempt by fools; they hate the knowledge she offers (verse 22). And so, they live foolishly, spurning the rewards of her righteous counsel (Prov. 8:8). Her words of truth warn of sin’s danger, but, fools ***“hate knowledge,”*** and ***“mock at sin”*** (Prov. 14:9). Such foolishness primes one to be seduced and destroyed by evil (cf. Prov. 6:20-29; 7:1-7). Listen to wisdom when she calls. She speaks truth. Her words contain righteousness. They are plain, and they are right. Knowledge of her ways is more valuable than silver, gold, and precious gems (Prov. 8:5-11). The wise agree; the foolish mock. Which are you? – ***Sword Tips***, November 20, 2017. ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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