

*“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God...” (1 Peter 4:11).*

Volume 9

February 2, 2020

Number 5

## PARALLELS TO MARK 16:16

*John Edwards*

Mark 16:16 reads, *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”* Consider some statements that run on the same channel as Mark 16:16.

“He that goeth and washeth in Jordan seven times shall be made clean; but he that goeth not shall be unclean.”

“He that selleth all that he hath and giveth to the poor shall have treasure in heaven; but he that selleth not shall be sorrowful.”

“He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me shall have life everlasting; but he that heareth not shall die.”

Are any of these statements unclear? If an individual is saved by faith alone before and without baptism in Mark 16:16, then one can be made clean by going without washing in 2 Kings 5:10, have treasure in heaven by selling without giving in Matthew 19:21 and have everlasting life by hearing without believing in John 5:24! If one must hear and believe to have life, sell and give to have treasure and go and wash to be clean, then one must believe and be baptized to be saved!

## THE DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION

*John Edwards*

The doctrine of predestination, according to John Calvin, founder of Presbyterianism:

“By predestination we mean the eternal decree of God, by which he determined with himself whatever he wished to happen with regard to every man. All are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and, accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestinated to life or to death.

We say, then, that Scripture clearly proves this much, that God by his eternal and immutable counsel determined once for all those whom it was his pleasure one day to admit to salvation, and those whom, on the other hand, it was his pleasure to doom to destruction are excluded from access to life by a just and blameless, but at the same time incomprehensible judgment” (*Institutes, III.21.5, 7, Beveridge translation*).

The Bible does not teach predestination as taught by John Calvin.

**MAN HAS FREE WILL.**  
Man is a creature possessing the

power and privilege of choice. The apostle John said, *“And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely”* (Rev. 22:17). The doctrine that God chose the person to be lost or saved, without involving his choice, robs man of free will!

**GOD IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS.** If Calvinism is true, then God is partial. If it can be shown that God is not partial, then this doctrine will be proven false. *“God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him”* (Acts 10:34-35).

**GOD CHOSE THE PLACE IN WHICH WE ARE SAVED.** God chose us in Christ (Eph. 1:3-6), and salvation is in Christ (2 Tim. 2:10). Those in Christ are predestined to be saved, while those outside of Christ are predestined to be lost. Whether one enters Christ or not, by being *“baptized into Christ”* (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27), is his choice.

**MAN WILL BE LOST IF HE CHOOSES NOT TO OBEY.** Men and women will not be lost because God chose them personally to be lost, but they will be lost if they choose not to obey God (2 Th. 1:8-9; Heb. 5:8-9). Do you think God would call upon us to obey Him, point out the blessings of obeying and the curses of not obeying, make us in such a way that we cannot

obey and then punish us for not obeying? That is the God of Calvinism, but it is not the God of the Bible!

Have you ever encountered a Calvinist who claimed that he was predestined to be lost? Since many will be lost (Mt. 7:13-14, 21-23), you might think somewhere along the way you would meet one God chose to be lost, right?

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## FELLOWSHIP DINNERS

*John Edwards*

It is common to hear people today talk about fellowship in the context of food and fun. We invite you to study the subject of fellowship in the light of Bible teaching.

**FELLOWSHIP DINNERS MISS THE MEANING OF BIBLE FELLOWSHIP.** Are you aware the Bible does not use the word “*fellowship*” in reference to food and fun? If so, where? One might think that it does, as often as it is used that way today, but it does not. The word “*fellowship*” is found 15 times in the New Testament, and always has to do

with joint participation in spiritual activities. Read the following Scriptures and see what Bible fellowship is all about (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). When we do what God says, we have fellowship with God and others who do the same.

**FELLOWSHIP DINNERS OVERLOOK THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND THE INDIVIDUAL.** Failure to recognize the distinction between the church and the individual Christian has caused churches to get involved in all kinds of things in which the church has no business being involved. 1 Timothy 5:16 — “*If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed*” — shows there are some things we are to do as individuals with which the church is not to be charged. Paul wrote the church at Corinth, “*What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God...?*” “*And if any man hunger, let him eat at home*” (1 Cor. 11:22, 34). Eating and drinking belong to the home and the individual; not the

church. “*For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*” (Rom. 14:17).

**FELLOWSHIP DINNERS TWIST THE WORK OF THE CHURCH.** As the body of Christ, the church is governed by the authority of Christ, the head (Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23-24). Thus, the function of the church is limited to those things which are authorized by Christ (Col. 3:17). The Scripturalness of a work is not decided by the good it may do, but on the basis of “*What saith the scripture?*” (Rom. 4:3). Where did Christ, the head of the church, give direction to His body, the church, concerning “*fellowship dinners*”? The church is “*the pillar and ground of the truth*” (1 Tim. 3:15). To engage in “*fellowship dinners*” is to step beyond the realm of authorized work and disrespect the authority of Christ.

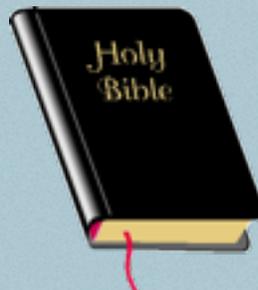
The church in the first century did not have “*fellowship halls*”, “*kitchens*”, or “*parlors*”. Members of the first church did not try to attract new converts through “*fellowship dinners*”. The cross of Christ (Jn. 12:32), the gospel of Christ was their appeal (Rom. 1:16).

**The Terre Haute **SPEAKER**** is published weekly by the church of Christ at Terre Haute, Indiana.

**Assembling At:**  
4017 E Margaret DR  
Terre Haute, IN 47803  
[Exit 11 (I-70) W on HWY 46,  
West on Margaret DR 1 mile]

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