

QUESTIONS ABOUT GOPHER WOOD

Int.

1. Aim: to show some important truths by this Old Testament account of Noah.
2. Flood - Gen. 6-8 - Gen. 6:5-8
 - a. People were wicked - all will be destroyed by flood
 - b. God gave Noah opportunity to save himself and family by building the ark.
3. "Make thee an ark of gopher wood". - Gen. 6:14a
4. Gopher wood - Gen. 6:14
 - a. Some think it refers to wood like cedar, others think cypress.
 - b. In Hebrew the term gopher and cypress are nearly the same.
 - c. The cypress was used by ancient people in ship building. It was not easy to rot and it was resistant to insects. It abounded in several parts of the world.
5. Notice some simple questions about the use of gopher wood and then an application to us today.

Discussion

I. DID GOD HAVE TO SAY GOPHER WOOD TWICE OR MORE TO MEAN GOPHER WOOD??

- A. God only said it one time
 1. Gen. 6:14
 2. Never mentioned again there in Genesis or any other place.
 3. Was that enough?

- B. Would God have to say it twice in order for gopher wood to become necessary?
- C. We know the answer
 - 1. God meant "gopher" wood even though He only said it one time!
 - 2. By faith Noah built the ark of gopher wood
 - a. Gen. 6:22 "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he."
 - b. Heb. 11:7 "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."
 - 3. Faith comes by hearing the word of God. - Rom. 10:17
 - 4. Noah heard God say "Build the ark of gopher wood". He obeyed.

II. SUPPOSE NOAH WANTED TO USE OAK AND HE REASONED "GOD DID NOT SAY: 'DO NOT USE OAK!' WOULD THIS HAVE BEEN ALL RIGHT ?

- A. If you had been there would you have argued for OAK wood?
 - 1. If so, why?
 - 2. Not on the basis of what was commanded, for God commanded gopher wood, and oak was not mentioned.
 - 3. It would be on the basis of "silence" that you would argue for the use of oak wood.
 - 4. You would argue that God didn't say "don't use oak wood."
 - 5. You would use this to try to convince Noah that it was alright.

B. The law of exclusion is plain common sense.

1. A command to do a thing authorizes only the doing of the thing specified.
2. The doing of all other things is forbidden.
3. The expression of one thing is the exclusion of another. It must be this way or there could be no contracts or judicial decrees.
4. If you ordered a shirt from J.C. Penney's, and they added a belt, a tie, and a pair of shoes and charged you for them, would you pay for them? What if you told the store manager that you didn't order these things and he replied, "You did not tell us we couldn't send these other items also." Would you be satisfied with this reasoning? Do you think God is pleased when man treats His Word in the same careless and disrespectful manner?

C. Other illustrations of this truth are seen from the Bible!

1. God commanded Abraham to offer Isaac as a burnt-offering. - Gen. 22:2 "And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."
 - a. This excluded other members of his family
 - b. He could not offer an animal until God changed the orders and required a ram in the place of Isaac
2. The Passover illustrates this truth - Ex. 12:3-5
 - a. A lamb was to be killed - not a heifer
 - b. It was to be of the first year - not of the second or third
 - c. It was to be a male - not a female

- d. It was to be without blemish - not with a blemish
- e. On the 14th day of the month - not on some other day
- f. Blood applied to door-posts and lintels -- not elsewhere

D. When God commands anything to be done it excludes doing it any other way.

III. WOULD THE USE OF GOPHER WOOD BE A MATTER OF EXPEDIENCY LIKE THE TOOLS HE MIGHT USE?

- A. He would need tools
 - 1. Hammers, saws
 - 2. Those would expedite his building
 - 3. God did not specify the kind of tools - therefore he could use the ones he desired

- B. But Gopher wood was not an expedient!
 - 1. It was commanded of God. - Gen. 6:14
 - 2. Noah had no choice in wood
 - 3. But he did have a choice in tools!

IV. WOULD GRACE PROTECT NOAH IF HE USED OAK NOT GOPHER?

- A. Suppose that Noah was sincere in his use of Oak
 - 1. Would the grace of God take care of this change?
 - 2. Noah found grace in the sight of God - Gen.6:8 "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord."

- B. Grace was found in God giving him instructions about how to escape the flood.
1. Would substitution of Oak be ignored?
 2. To suggest such is to say that God's instructions are faulty and that we do not have to obey them.
 3. Grace would not ignore disobedience!
 4. If Noah had used Oak instead of gopher wood then the wrath of God would have descended upon Noah.

V. WOULD A DESIRE ON THE PART OF THE MAJORITY JUSTIFY THE USE OF OAK OR ANOTHER KIND OF WOOD ?

- A. Suppose the boys and their wives decided that they preferred another kind of wood - Oak. What then?
1. Would we be able to support them in their desire to add or substitute?
 2. Would you advise Noah to go along with the Majority?
- B. We could not! God's law cannot be altered by the majority!!!
1. When God commands then that is final.
 2. We have no option of altering or changing His Rules.

VI. WHAT IF DIVISION TOOK PLACE IN THE NOAH FAMILY OVER THE USE OF ONLY GOPHER WOOD?

- A. If Noah's children decided they were going to use oak and gopher wood but Noah opposed such, who would cause the division?
1. Would Noah be the cause of division by his opposition to this addition?
 2. Or would they cause it by adding that which plainly was not authorized?
- B. The answer is obvious. Division is not caused by those who stand for God's word!!

VII. HOW WOULD UNITY BE REACHED IN THE NOAH FAMILY AS TO THE USE OF THE KIND OF WOOD?

- A. Should Noah ignore what God said? - Gen. 6:14
1. Should he say it was only a matter of interpretation and let it go at that?
 2. Should he get everybody together and agree to disagree and go on building the ark using oak and gopher wood?
 3. Would this be ignoring God's instructions?
 4. Would you want to take a chance on that kind of ark in the middle of the flood?
- B. Not me!! No right thinking person would agree to follow a course which differed with God!!

VIII. THE APPLICATION OF THIS PRINCIPLE TO THE KIND OF MUSIC WE USE IN WORSHIP.

- A. There are two kinds of music in the world (1) vocal (2) Mechanical.
1. If God had not expressed Himself on one kind we would be free to use any kind.
 2. But God expressed Himself and specified that vocal music be used in worship
 3. When God specified singing that excluded mechanical music!
 - a. Eph. 5:19 "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;"
 - b. Col.3:16-17 "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."

- c. Heb. 13:15 "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name."
 4. If God's Word does not teach something, it cannot be done by true Biblical faith, it can only be done by our own will. This is serious. Anyone who uses instrumental music does so without authority from God.
- B. Someone asks "Where did God say not to use mechanical music?"
1. Where did God say "Thou shalt not use oak" in talking to Noah?
 2. Where did God say "Do not offer a pig, cat or dog" in the Passover feast?
- C. When God specified something all others are excluded. - This is the law of exclusion
1. God told Noah to use gopher wood - that excluded all other.
 2. God told Abraham to use a lamb - that eliminated all other animals.
 3. When God authorized "singing" that excluded all other kinds of music!!!
- D. Mechanical instruments of music is not an expedient!
1. It would be an addition. Different kind of music
 2. Song books would be an expedient - still singing
- E. The grace of God will not ignore disobedience!!
1. Eph. 2:8-9
 2. Heb. 5:9
- F. Majority does not decide - God's word is the standard - Gal. 1:8-9

G. Who caused the Division in the use of Instrumental music?

1. It was not those who objected to additions!
2. It was instead those who introduced the instrument.
3. Those who brought in instruments have divided the church instead of uniting it.
They have divided the church by their insistence of adding to the Word of God.
The only way instruments can be justified in worship to God is by including them
by the authority of man.

H. How can Unity be achieved?

1. Not by agreeing to disagree - and tolerate that which God has not authorized.
2. But by discarding all changes made to God's plan and go back and follow His way.

CONCLUSION

1. God told Noah to build the ark of Gopher wood.
 - a. He did not change to another, nor did he use any additional kind of wood along with the gopher.
 - b. He obeyed and they were all saved from the flood.
2. God's word today is sufficient
 - a. II Tim. 3:16
 - b. The scriptures furnish us unto all good works
 - c. But there is no authority in the scriptures for mechanical music in worship
 - d. Therefore it is not a good work authorized by the scriptures!
3. Heb. 13:15 "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name."

Bibliography

1. F.F. Nov.6,1984 p.606 Article by Winfred Clark.
2. Book "Why I Left" by Campbell-Caskey see 1st chapter by Floyd A. Decker .

Sermon by Arthur Pigman -
Evans Church of Christ
515 Gibbs Road
Evans, Ga. 30809
706-855-1249
arthurpigman@cybrtyme.com