

“UNDERSTAND WHAT THE WILL OF THE LORD IS”

INTRODUCTION

A. Ephesians 5:17 (475)

We are commanded to understand the Lord’s will.

B. Ephesians 3:1-5 (474)

This we can do, if we are willing to study.

1. 2nd Timothy 2:15 (482); **Ecclesiastes 12:12** (274)

It requires a great deal of effort.

2. Acts 17:11 (450)

It evidences an honorable mind.

C. 1st Corinthians 1:10 (462)

Furthermore, we are required to understand the Lord’s will alike. There must be a common rule by which we abide when interpreting the will of God.

Rules for interpretation are called “hermeneutics,” and correct hermeneutical procedure is limited to the following:

I. DIRECT STATEMENTS

A. John 14:15, 21, 23-24; 15:14 (438); **1st John 2:3-5** (493); **3:22; 5:3** (494)

A command from Christ, in whom is all authority (**Matthew 28:18**), certainly establishes authority.

B. 2nd Thessalonians 2:15 (480); **2nd Peter 3:1-2** (492)

Commands from His apostles, whom Christ authorized (**John 13:20**), are equally authoritative.

II. APPROVED PRECEDENT

A. John 13:15 (438); **1st John 2:6** (493); **1st Peter 2:21** (491)

Christ and His apostles **commanded** that we observe His example and pattern our conduct accordingly.

- B. **1st Corinthians 4:16** (463); **11:1-2** (465); **Philippians 3:17** (476); **4:9** (477);
2nd Timothy 1:13 (482)

The apostles' examples are equally binding.

III. IMPLICATION

- A. **Matthew 22:23-33** (402)

Jesus told the Sadducees they were mistaken, being ignorant of the scriptures and God's power, because they failed to understand that the resurrection of the dead was implied by God when He used the present tense to speak of His relationship to dead saints.

- B. **Acts 10:9-29** (446)

Peter inferred that God no longer considered the Gentiles unclean based on a vision he saw in which God declared clean animals that had been unclean under the Law of Moses.

- C. **1st Corinthians 15:24-28** (467)

It is by inference that we conclude God is excepted from the rule of Christ.

- D. **Hebrews 11:17-19** (487)

Without God specifically saying so, Abraham concluded that God would raise Isaac from the dead, knowing the promise made concerning him.

CONCLUSION

- A. **Acts 15:1, 6-19, 22-24** (449)

This method of interpretation was used by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem.

1. Peter appealed to **apostolic precedent** (7-8), reminding them that he had already been sent to preach to gentiles, and that while yet uncircumcised, they had received the Holy Spirit as had the apostles initially.
2. Barnabas and Paul relied on **necessary inference** (12), reporting of the

miracles that God had worked among the gentiles, which He would not have done if He disapproved of them.

3. James quotes a **direct statement** from God (16-17; cf. Amos 9:11-12), speaking of the gentiles called by His name.
4. All the brethren agreed that **silence** on their part was prohibitive on the part of others (24), stating that they had given no commandment to those who had gone forth from them with the erroneous doctrine of circumcision.

B. 2nd Peter 3:14-16 (493)

Although we are required to understand the scriptures, it is not always easy to do so. Some guidance is appropriate.

1. **Acts 8:30-31** (446)

When asked whether he understood what he read from the scriptures, the treasurer of Ethiopia admitted that, without help, he could not.

2. **Nehemiah 8:8** (200)

When the Law was read to Israel, some were appointed to make sense of it to the people, helping them to understand the reading.