

“LET US WALK BY THE SAME RULE {*kanon*}”

INTRODUCTION

If the New Testament means anything to us regarding our conduct in life and worship, it means everything. Some have “argued” that the first century church did not have the written New Testament in completed or written form as we today, so they could not have had the same rules of interpretation (*Command Examples, and Implication*) that we have “developed’ or “invented” (so they say, but are actually what we have “**discovered** through investigation and study), and since THEY did not have these written rules or regulations, neither should WE today. Let us see if such “reasoning” is logical and true.

The apostle Paul (who was speaking for the Lord, 1 Cor. 14:37) state that we are ALL to walk by the “same rule”. Read Phil. 3;16.

DISCUSSION

I. 1st, let’s make an EXAMINATION OF THE TEXT OF Philippians 3:13.

A. The admonition applies to all, either in the first or second century, as Paul the writer, was speaking for Christ. 1 Cor. 14:37

1. In verse 15, Paul stated that if the Lord wanted anything more, that He (God) would make it known by revelation.
2. The church is to follow Paul (and his writing) only as **he** followed Christ, verse 17. cf 1 Cor. 11:1

B. The word “rule” is from the Greek word *kanon*, spelled c-a-n-o-n in English, and authorities make it plain that this means a standard, or rule of action.

1. YOUNG’S Concordance states that the noun stands for “a rule (of measure or of conduct.” (page 826)
2. THAYER in his Lexicon states, “any rule or standard, a principle or law of investigating, judging, living, acting.” (page 324)
3. GREEN’S Lexicon states, “a measure, rule; in the N.T. prescribed range of action or duty...rule of conduct or doctrine, Ga. 6:16; Phil. 3:16” (page 92)
4. VINCENT Word Studies states, “The idea of a regulative standard is implied.” (page 836)
5. VINE states, “originally denoted ‘a straight rod,’ used as a ruler or measuring instrument. By a common transition in the meaning of words, ‘that which measures,’ was used for what was measured...In general the word came to serve for anything regulating the actions of men, as a standard or principle...Here it signifies the limits of the responsibility in gospel service as measured and appointed by God.” (page 496)

II. 2nd, let’s study how this RULE WAS DELIVERED. Jude 3; Gal. 3:23-25

A. The same context that speaks of the canon by which we are to walk says it came ORALLY given or was “**SPOKEN.**” Phil. 3:18

1. Jesus first SPOKE THE CANON AS He gave instructions unto men. Matt. 5:1-2; 7:28-29; John 12:48; 14:25-26; Acts 1:1-3; Heb. 2:3
2. The apostles and inspired teachers and prophets also “spoke.” cf Acts 2:38-39, 42
3. All who “heard” the rule of God through Christ and the apostles were **bound** to follow it.
 - a. This SPOKEN message began about A.D. 30 with Jesus’ teaching.
 - b. This SPOKEN message continued till about A.D. 100, as long as inspired men were alive.

B. Then, the rule of action, or *canon*, was “**WRITTEN.**”

1. The same context that speaks of the *canon* being “spoken” **also** speaks of it having been written. Phil. 3;18

- a. Often, that which was “spoken” was repeated in “written form. Cf Gal. 1:9; 5:21; 2 Thess. 3:10, 12
- b. That which was “written” was **circulated** among the early churches to support the “spoken” word. Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 2:13; 5:27; cf Rev. 1:3, 10-11

III. 3Rd, let’s observe that the written CANON is God’s word.

A. That which was “written” was to be observed by mankind. John 20:30-31; Eph. 3:3-5

B. That which was “written” was called “scripture.” 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 3:15-16

1. The “written” Canon began to be written in A.D. 52 with 1 Thess., and ended in A.D. with the book of Revelation.
2. The inspired letters were copied and circulated among the various congregations, and recognized as the NEW COVENANT, with ALL the authority of Christ and His apostles. 1 Cor. 14:37
3. Then, the letters began to be collected and recognized as scripture (even in the first century), though not FULLY generally accepted until the 4th century.
 - a. For 3 centuries there were critics and doubters as to the voracity of all 27 books, but the TRUTH was still in them.
 - b. Today, there are STILL critics and doubters of the New Testament, but the TRUTH of God is still in the written New Testament.

IV. 4th, let’s note that the “kanon” of God is still needed today.

A. The biggest “fad” today in the brotherhood is that of “culture.”

1. For several years, some of the so-called “scholars” among us had taken issue with the idea that we learn from **commands, examples** and **implication**.
2. They pushed for the “new hermeneutic” or some “**new**” way to understand what the scripture says.
3. Not being successful enough with this claim, they began to think of “culture”, meaning “a stage in civilization.”
 - a. Civilization changes some every day, meaning “culture” also changes daily, and it is something humans develop.
 - b. IF we determine God’s will through “cultural’ changes, there are certain conclusions we will have to face.
 - 1) We must conclude that CULTURE **is** the standard, or rule (canon), and NOT God or the Bible.
 - 2) We must conclude that God is simply GIVING people what THEY “want”, as it developed through civilization.
 - 3) We must conclude that we do NOT SIN unless we DO that which violates culture, even if it goes against the culture of another age, or in another place, making something wrong today that was right a few days or ago, or maybe right in the future.
 - 4) We must conclude that there is NO stability TO THE WORD OF God, because it would change from culture to culture, and with the passing of time.

CONCLUSION

I. The canon by which **we** are to walk is what GOD has given.

- A. John did not say we sin by transgressing culture, but by transgressing LAW. 1 John 3:4
- B. The RULE (canon) of God is His precious word, that was spoken, and then written.
- C. It has been preserved for us in what we call the New Testament, and will be our standard till the judgment day. John 12:48
- D. It does not change, and we must walk by the same rule as did believers in the first century.

II. The Philippians were under a rule, as all believers are today, and we are to walk by it.

- A. The same instruction was given to the Corinthian church, and the letter to **them** was to **all** who call upon the name of the Lord—at any place and at any time. 1 Cor. 1:2
- B. It is STILL *command, example AND implication*.

III. . Are you willing to abide by the teachings of the written new testament?

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