

NO ACCEPTABLE SUBSTITUTES IN THE SPIRITUAL REALM

Rev 22:13-21

INTRODUCTION:

- A. The religious world today is filled with individuals and churches who have no regard for God's way
- B. How do I know this? Because they have substituted their ways for God's ways. Not only in the physical relationships but also in spiritual relationships
- C. Let's notice again the concepts which we dealt with this morning and relate them to our relationship to Christ and His church. I realize that physical relationships have spiritual connotations and consequences, but I want to look at these concepts in a different light

DISCUSSION:

I. NO SUBSTITUTE FOR BEING MARRIED TO CHRIST 2Cor 11:2; 1Cor 4:15; Rom 7:4

- A. Marriage is a commitment to each other
 - 1. Christ promised "I will never leave thee" Heb 13:5 as quoted from Deut 31:6,8; see also Matt 28:20
 - 2. We then make a commitment to serve Christ - repentance: turning from sins (our ways) to Christ - confession: acknowledge Christ as Lord - becoming a member of the church (his bride) through baptism
- B. Married to Christ, we wear his name Acts 4:12; 11:26 - recognize him as master and are faithful all our lives
- C. There is not acceptable substitute for this arrangement - It is of God.

II. NO SUBSTITUTE FOR THE FAMILY OF GOD 1Tim 3:15; Heb 3:6; 2:11; Gal 4:7

- A. This interdependency of the family relationship is something for which no substitute can be found
- B. This family is place for training; discipline; feeding; caring; loving; etc
 - 1. In dealing with discipline, Paul wrote to the local congregation 1Cor 1:2,10-13; 5:1-7; 2Cor 2:4-8
 - 2. Edification takes place in the local congregation Eph 4:12-16; Tit 1:5,13; Rom 14:19 (college cannot take the place of the church)
- C. Without the proper family life we suffer spiritually

III. NO SUBSTITUTE FOR DISCIPLINE Heb 12:6, 7

- A. It is God ordained and therefore cannot be substituted
- B. "Discipline" used once Job 36:10 means chastisement or instructions

- C. Note Webster's definition "Training that corrects, molds, or perfects the mental faculties or moral character", "punishment", "control gained by enforcing obedience or order."
- D. Word "chasten" is used in scripture and means essentially the same
- E. It involves strengthening of character - in this case spiritual character
- F. Note again the discussion in Heb 12 - results in V.11
- G. Also involves self-discipline or self-control 2Pet 1:6
- H. Even punitive discipline has no substitute - it must be practiced in accordance to God's instructions 2Thess 3:6, 14-15

IV. NO SUBSTITUTE FOR WORK 1Cor 15:58

- A. Three keys to success: WORK - WORK - WORK
 - 1. Man has tried all kinds of "quick growth schemes"
 - 2. None have every really worked - they may seem to work for a while, but not in the long run
- B. We are obligated to work
 - 1. Urgency of our work Jhn 9:4
 - 2. Do it with our might Eccl 9:10
 - 3. Work with all of our ability Matt 25:14-30
- C. Our work must be WITH God 2Cor 6:1
 - 1. Work together 1Cor 3:6-11
 - 2. No neutrality Matt 12:30
 - 3. Cannot quit working 1Cor 15:58

CONCLUSION:

- A. Certainly, these are not all the concepts we could discuss However, these should be sufficient to show that God accepts no substitutes for His ways
- B. We must realize that God's ways are higher than our way and His thought than our thoughts Isa 55:8,9
- C. Either we are married to Christ or we are lost eternally
- D. Either we are in God's family (the church) or we are lost (in Satan's family)
- E. Either we are exercising discipline on ourselves and each other or we will be lost
- F. Either I am working for and with God or for and with the devil Matt 12:30
- G. Do you find yourself trying to substitute for God's way? If so, then you must realize that it won't work, you must do things God's way!