

Studies in the Scriptures

Book, Chapter & Verse

Did you know that the *chapter and verse divisions* in our Bibles were not always there? History tells us that chapter divisions were added to Bibles in approximately 1382 and the verse divisions were put in around 1560. This is certainly helpful in locating particular passages of Scripture. Imagine trying to do so without the chapter and verse divisions that exist! Also, with the advent of "computer Bibles" and even programs that will load into Palm Pilots, we really have great access to God's Word and should be able to give book, chapter and verse with ease when discussing religious matters today.

When Jesus Christ was tempted by the Devil (please read Matthew 4) our Lord responded to each temptation with, "*It is written...*" As we strive to be like Christ, we should take the same approach in our lives when we are tempted to sin. I am afraid that, generally speaking, we don't spend enough time reading and studying God's Word, and therefore cannot give an "*It is written...*" as we should. Colossians 3:17 teaches us that whatever we do in *word* (our speech) or in *deed* (our actions), we should do by the authority of God. This authority can only properly come by our having "book, chapter and verse" for what we do (i.e. Biblical authorization coming either through *specific* authority or *generic* authority). I challenge us all to read and study God's Word more!

This raises a very important issue. Many people today do not believe that we *must* have Bible authority for all that we believe, teach and practice in religious matters. Is this true? The Scriptures tell us the answer to this vital question. Passages such as Col. 3:17 and 2 John 9 teach the essentiality for having a "thus says the Lord" authorizing our religious actions. I Peter 4:11 states, "*If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God...*"

Let's resolve to be like our Lord in this matter and be ready to give an answer from God's Word for what we teach and practice. As I Peter 3:15 teaches, "*But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.*"

Thanks for reading. - by Mark J. Ward (markjward@yahoo.com)

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