

## “Do You Have The Lord?”

Tim Haile

Over the years I have been asked this question many times. The question is scriptural and good, but I fear that it is often answered *apart from* any consideration of the Scriptures. This results in many people affirming to “have the Lord” when they know nothing of what the relationship involves or requires. If we intend to use a Bible phrase, we should use it consistent with its biblical context. Let us see how the phrase is defined in Scripture.

John wrote, “*He who has the Son has life; he who has not the Son of God has not life*” (1 John 5:12). John here speaks of the necessity of one *having Christ* in order to have life. According to the very next verse, the “life” of which he speaks is *eternal life*. So, the act or condition of *having Christ* or “having the Lord” is a connected to salvation. I have observed that most people who use the expression do make this connection. The question is *how* is it connected? What must one do in order to rightly claim that he “has” the Lord? The same apostle tells us in his next letter:

“*Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God; he who abides in the doctrine has both the Father and the Son*” (2 John 9, NASB).

John affirms that one “has” the Father and the Son provided that he doesn’t go beyond the doctrine of Christ, and provided that he “abides” or remains in that doctrine [or “teaching”]. The New King James says, “*Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ...*” The Greek word that is translated “transgress” means to “progress” or “advance” beyond a certain point or limit. In this case, the warning is against progressing beyond the framework of the doctrine of Christ. Religious *progressivism* is, by very definition, sinful. We must respect Christ’s authority as it is expressed in His teaching. This passage is telling us that in order to *have God* one must receive, respect and apply the teaching of Christ in his life. To ask someone if he “has the Lord” is tantamount to asking him if he “abides in the doctrine of Christ?”

We still haven’t explained what it means to “have” the Lord. John explained this in 1 John 1:3, when he said, “*That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have*

***fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.***” John continues to discuss the matter of *fellowship* with God through verse 7. One “has the Lord” by having *fellowship with* the Lord. Verses 5 and 6 explain how one cannot walk in darkness (sin) and retain his fellowship with God. This compares to the first part of 2 John 9 where John speaks of “transgression.” One does not *have the Lord* if he transgresses. John then speaks in verse 7 of the necessity of “walking in the light” in order to retain fellowship with God. “Light” is truth. The “walking in the light” of 1 John 1:7 is synonymous with the “walking in the truth” of 2 John 4 and 3 John 3 and 4. Since God’s word is truth (Jn. 17:17), the *walking in the light* of 1 John 7 is synonymous with the *abiding in the doctrine* of 2 John 9. John’s writings serve as their own commentary. “Having” the Lord is equal to “having fellowship” with the Lord.

John also speaks of one’s “knowing God” in describing that person’s relationship with God. He taught that in order to “know God” one must “keep” God’s “commandments” and walk in the footsteps of Christ (1 John 2:3-6; 5:2, 3). Thus, fellowship with God is contingent upon one’s *obedience to God* and upon one’s *faithful continuance in the doctrine of Christ*.

### Conclusion

What we learn from the above passages and parallels is that one “has the Lord” when he *obeys the commandments* of the Lord and when he *abides in the teaching* of the Lord. One does not have the Lord if he transgresses and refuses to abide in His teaching. What does this say about the popular theory that one may “have the Lord” while refusing to obey the Lord or respect His doctrine? Quite simply, that the theory is wholly unbiblical. So, dear reader, *do you have the Lord?* You don’t have Him if you have unpardoned transgressions, if you have not obeyed the Lord’s commands, and if you have refused to limit your actions to what is authorized by the doctrine of Christ. Sins are remitted through belief, confession, repentance and baptism (Acts 10:43; Mark 16:16; Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 2:38). Faithfulness is maintained by careful attention to, and continuance in, what is authorized by Christ in the gospel (Colossians 3:17). Do these things and you can honestly say that you “have the Lord.” Refusal or failure will result in your having **not** God! The choice is yours.

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