

## ATTACKS ON HERMENEUTICS, #2

This is the second in a series on reviewing the sermon by a brother who has come out adamantly against the “traditional” *Three-fold Process* (Command, Approved Example and Implication) of understanding scripture. This brother takes issue with this, and maintains that we should only look for “principles” (after the “gospel” is accepted and salvation is enjoyed), and that doctrines do not matter. To establish this concept, he makes a difference between “gospel” and “doctrine.” He declares that the **gospel** saves and **doctrine** comes after, for indoctrination, etc.. This position was advocated by liberal brethren in generations past, and proven to be false. We intend to show the fallacy of such a position in this writing.

The word “gospel” (noun) is from the Greek word *evangelion*, meaning “the good news.” The word “doctrine” (noun) is generally from the Greek word *didache*, meaning “teaching.” The two words are used interchangeably in scripture, and either can be used to define “good news” or “teaching.” The “sayings” of Jesus are indeed doctrine. Nearing the end of the sermon on the mount, Jesus stated that the one who “hears” and “does” His “sayings” is a wise man. When He finished the sermon, Matthew records that the people were astonished at His “doctrine.” This “doctrine” was **not** delivered to the “saints” to quarrel over after they obeyed the “gospel”, but given to people who were **not** Christians. Would not this sermon be classified as “gospel?” It was indeed “good news.” Now let's look at a few passages where the word “gospel” or “doctrine” is used, and **see** if our brother's “inference” is correct.

First, look at Acts 13:12, which states, “*Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the **doctrine** of the Lord.*” Here is the case where the “word” (v. 5) was “preached”, which was the “word of God” (v. 7), which is “**doctrine**” v. 12. A man who was an unbeliever, came to be a believer upon hearing the word of the Lord. It is not called the “gospel” in this context, but is called “doctrine”. Was Paul merely preaching “doctrine” to these unbelievers, and not preaching the “gospel?” He was preaching in the synagogue (v. 5), which did **not** consist of those who had already obeyed the gospel. According to Acts 17:1-3, it was Paul's practice to preach about Jesus in the synagogues, but the Holy Spirit tells us that what Paul preached was “doctrine.”

Second, look at Rom. 1:15. Paul writes to “saints” (v. 7), who had become such by obeying “doctrine” (6:17), and they had “obeyed” such in becoming saints. Did not Paul know that “doctrine” was for believers only, and he should not have wanted to preach the “gospel” unto them? They already had the gospel, so why was Paul wanting to preach it unto them? Yet, he wrote, “*So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the **gospel** to you that are at Rome also.*”

Third, look at Rom. 16:17. Paul writes, “*Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the **doctrine** which you have learned; and avoid them.*” What we learn from this passage is that “doctrine” is important, and it does matter what we teach and believe, for those who teach contrary to what they had already been taught were to be avoided. Whatever “teaching” we receive absolutely **must** be in accordance from the “a to z of the entire new testament.” The Roman saints had “learned” the gospel when they became saints, and now Paul referred to the “doctrine” they had learned, and even wanted to go to Rome and teach them the gospel (more doctrine).

Fourth, Paul dealt with “doctrine” in 1 Cor. 14. Yet, he had already said that he desired to know nothing among them save Jesus and Him crucified (1 Cor.2:2). Virtually all Paul wrote about would **not** be classified as “gospel” according to the brother whose sermon we are reviewing, but “doctrine.” Did Paul get mixed up, and teach doctrine

when he only wanted them to know the gospel? Surely not!

Fifth, in Gal. 2:14, Paul wrote that Peter *“walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel”* when he hypocritically when he separated himself from the Gentiles and showed respect of persons. What part of the “gospel” (good news of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus) had Peter violated?

Sixth, the Hebrew writer refers to the “doctrine of Christ” (6:1), and then turns right around and tells his readers that some of the foundational things (such as repentance, etc.) are **doctrine**. He specifically included “baptism” (v. 2), which our brother would have made it a part of the “gospel” that one obeys in being saved (though he probably would not use the word “obeys.”)

Seventh, we look at 2 Tim. 3:16, 17. *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”* Note the order: (1) Doctrine, (2) Reproof, (3) Correction, and **then** (4) Instruction in righteousness. When Peter preached the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus in Acts 2, he was preaching the “doctrine”, which in turn “reproved” the Jews as they were pricked in their hearts, and they corrected their lives by repentance and baptism, and were **then** (after having already obeyed doctrine, or the gospel) were guided by the scripture unto maturity in good works. The entire conversion process begins with the doctrine of Christ.

Eighth, we look at 2 John 9, which reads, *“Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the **doctrine** of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the **doctrine** of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.”* Our brother tells us that the “doctrine” of this passage has to do with the incarnation of Jesus, which the deceivers were denying. He states that we must be true to the “gospel” (the incarnation), and yet John does not use the word “gospel”, but uses “doctrine.” Our brother states that “doctrine” does not refer to doctrines that might cut one off from God (for doctrine would not do that—according to his sermon), but turning against the “incarnation” would cut one off from God. He says that “doctrine of Christ” refers to the doctrine that Jesus came in the flesh, was crucified, buried and resurrected—or it is the doctrine **about** Christ, and **not** something that Jesus or His apostles taught that would be classified as “doctrine.” Our brother is selective in what “doctrine” means. There are several reasons for rejecting this invalid conclusion.

1<sup>st</sup>, we reject this because John has been talking about “the truth” (v. 1, 2,3) and “walking in truth” according to “a commandment from the Father” (v. 4), and that we are to “love one another” (v. 5), and “walk after his commandments” (v. 6). Incidentally, our brother states one of the major things we are to do after obeying the gospel, is to love one another. He classifies that as “doctrine” in his sermon, and it **is**. However, John classifies it as part of “doctrine” in 2 John 9, as he addresses those who have already accepted the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. We must “love” before we even begin to keep God's commandments (John 14:15; 1 John 5:3).

2<sup>nd</sup>, the “doctrine of Christ” needs to be considered with other parallel passages in the use of “of” (tou in Greek). To speak of the “doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees” in Matt. 16:6, 11, 12), was **not** referring to the doctrine **about** the Pharisees and Sadducees, but their **teaching**. To speak of the “doctrines of devils” (1 Tim. 4:1) was **not** speaking of the teaching **about** demons, but teachings that would spring from the prince of demons. To speak about the “love of God” does not mean we are to speak **about** God, but the teaching of what God's love has done for us (John 3:16). True, the Bible says God is love, but to say we receive the love of God is to define what love does.

3<sup>rd</sup>, the original language of John refutes the idea that 1 John 9 is talking exclusively about the “incarnation” of Jesus. True, it might include such, if Jesus taught

such, but the language tells us that the “doctrine of Christ” relates to what He **taught**. The word “doctrine” is in the dative case, followed by “of” (Gr. του). This article is in the genitive case, meaning “**what belongs to whom.**” The “what” is the teaching, and the “whom” is Christ. So, it is the doctrine Christ taught, and that which His apostles taught by inspiration in the rest of the scripture. Paul declared that what He taught, were the commandments of the Lord (1 Cor. 14:37). Christ **has** a doctrine. Matt. 7:28 refers to “his doctrine.” In John 7:16, He spoke of “my doctrine.”

May God help us to be open minded and sincerely concerned about the truth of God's word. Our next article will be about “twisting the scripture.”

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