



Seek The Old Paths

“Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths. . . and walk therein”
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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“LET’S RE-WRITE THE BIBLE”

Randy Kea

The above sentiment is not anything new. In fact, as soon as you open the Bible and start reading it, you read the account in Genesis 3 where Satan, through the instrumentality of the subtle serpent, re-writes the word of God in order to deceive and lead astray Mother Eve.

In Genesis 2:16-17 the first recorded revelation of God to man is: *“And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”* In Genesis 3:1,4 the arch enemy of mankind comes to Eve and re-writes the word of God. Satan puts a question mark in the mind of Eve about the reliability of God’s word, and in addition, he changes the word of God: *“Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?...and the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die.”*

Satan modifies the word of God (re-writes) which results in the spiritual destruction of Adam and Eve. They died spiritually that day (separation from God) and they began to die physically that day (separation from the tree of life). Although no one else is responsible for the personal sins of Adam and Eve, all of humanity continues to suffer the consequences of their sin because we are born into a world dominated by sin and we suffer physical death as well (Rom. 5:12; 1

John 2:15-17; 5:19). Jesus says that Satan continues to rob man of the Word of God: *“those by the wayside are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved”* (Luke 8:12).

OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLE

Another example of re-writing God’s Word is Jeroboam. Just prior to the death of Solomon (because of his apostasy and idolatry) the Lord said to him, *“forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father’s sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant’s sake, and for Jerusalem’s sake which I have chosen”* (1 Kings 11:11-13).

JEROBOAM

Upon the death of Solomon the kingdom divided. Rehoboam would retain the Southern Kingdom which included Benjamin, Judah, and Jerusalem. However, Jeroboam became king over the northern ten tribes. When all of this takes place, Jeroboam became concerned that the northern kingdom would return to the house of David in Jerusalem. He believed the people would turn back to Rehoboam as they would return to Jerusalem to do sacrifice. To keep the ten tribes

loyal to him he re-wrote God’s Word by:

1. Changing their *God*. He “made two calves” (1 Kings 12:28).
2. Changing their *place of worship*. “He made an house of high places” (1 Kings 12:31).
3. Changing the *feasts*. “He ordained a feast in the eighth month” (1 Kings 12:32)
4. Changing the *altar*. “He offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel (1 Kings 12:33).

Note: the text says all of this “he devised in his own heart” (1 Kings 12:33). **Essentially, he rewrote the Word of God!**

JESUS

Jesus condemned the religious leaders of His day for re-writing the Bible (the Law of Moses). Matthew and Mark both record the Lord’s rebuke to the Pharisees (Matt. 15:1-14; Mark 7:1-19). In these accounts Jesus shows the error of holding to human tradition above the authority of the Word of God: *“for laying aside the commandment of God ye hold the tradition of men”* (Mark 7:8); *“but in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men”* (Matt. 15:9); *“thus have you made the commandment of none effect by your tradition”* (Matt. 15:6). Clearly then, Jesus will not accept those who re-write the Bible!

THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS

Paul wrote of respecting the au-

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Re-write The Bible...



Editorial...

MANY THINGS SAVE SINNERS, PRAYER IS NOT ONE OF THEM #2

Garland M. Robinson

I refer you to the first installment of this series in last month's issue (June). Denominationalism cannot bring themselves to depart from their beloved doctrine of Calvinism that demands man's salvation is only received by God's grace/faith alone. They claim man has no part, no role, in being saved except to just "believe." But even their doctrine of "faith only" demands that man does have role in being saved — man must "do something" (believe) in order to be saved.

Let's be honest. Can't we think for ourselves? Must we depend on others to tell us what we are to believe and practice? Can't we read and understand what the Bible teaches and not be corrupted by those who tell us we can't understand it? If "we" can't understand it, then how can "they" understand it? Paul said that when we read the Scriptures we can understand (Eph. 3:4).

The Scriptures clearly tell us that we are to "rightly divide the word" (2 Tim. 2:15). That is, we are to handle it correctly. We do not make it say something it doesn't say. We approach the Bible with the understanding that it can be understood; and, that the common man can understand it. There are no contradictions in the Bible. Every passage coincides and complements every other passage. If we apply an interpretation in one place that makes it contradict another place, we've missed it. We must go back and dig deeper. The Bible is in perfect harmony when it is examined carefully and accurately.

Even a casual study of the Scriptures plainly shows there are "many things" involved in order for man to be saved from his sins. No one thing by itself reveals all there is to "know" or to "do." Shall we leave out anything that God says and commands? Not if we want to be saved — not if we want to be pleasing to God and be counted faithful in his sight.

Last month we mentioned that God's part is his **LOVE, GRACE, MERCY** and Christ's shed **BLOOD** being essential for man's salvation. On man's part is his **FAITH** in the Lord (Heb. 11:6; John 8:24) and his **OBEDIENT** response to being **BORN AGAIN**, "born of water and of the Spirit" (John 3:3,5). However, Calvinists don't like the "water" part. They don't know what to do with it because it doesn't fit "their" belief — it contradicts it! In desperation, they say the water is one's birth from their mother's womb. But that is impossible because Jesus is not talking about our first birth. He's talking about our second birth — being "born again." Our second birth involves both "water" AND "the Spirit" (John 3:5). The word "and" links water and Spirit together. You can't have one without the other. God joined water and Spirit together, Calvinists separate them by many years!

What more is involved on man's part that is essential to be saved?

The GOSPEL — but not the Gospel alone. "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the *gospel* which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; **By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain**" (1 Cor. 15:1-2). "For I am not ashamed of the *gospel* of Christ: for **IT is the power of God unto salvation** to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of **preaching to save them that believe**" (1 Cor. 1:18,21).

The Gospel is the "good news" of Jesus' redeeming sacrifice he made on the cross in the offering of himself

for the remission of sins (Matt. 26:28; Heb. 9:12,14). **God calls all men to be saved — by the Gospel** (2 Thess. 2:14). The Gospel message is to be broadcast around the world until Jesus' return to bring the world to an end (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16). It is **IMPOSSIBLE** for sinners to be saved without first hearing the Gospel. Jesus said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, **And they shall all be taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father cometh unto me**" (John 6:44-45). Men hear and learn by means of the Gospel! **God can't save those who don't hear, learn and obey.** Faith that saves is a faith that results in one's *repentance* of their sins (Luke 13:3,5), *confessing* faith in the Christ (Rom. 10:9-10), and being *immersed* into water "for the forgiveness of sins" (Acts 2:38). Masses of people have been persuaded by false teachers to NOT believe what Peter told the crowd on Pentecost to do to be saved. When many in the audience cried out and asked what to do to be saved, Peter's answer was "**repent and be baptized...for the forgiveness of sins**" (Acts 2:38). Gullible souls accept what men say about water baptism and refuse to believe what the Holy Spirit said. Jesus himself made it so plain that even children can understand it. The Lord's words are, "**he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved**" (Mark 16:16). Denominations say, "he that believeth and is NOT baptized shall be saved." The word "not" has been added! Which do you believe and accept, the words of Jesus or the words of men (Satan)?

WORDS — but not by words only. Cornelius was told to "...call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; Who shall tell thee **WORDS, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved**" (Acts 11:14). The inspired James tells us: "Receive with meekness the engrafted **WORD, which is able to SAVE your souls. But be ye DOERS of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he**

was” (James 1:21-25). “Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, **IF** ye continue in my **WORD**, **THEN** are ye my disciples indeed and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31-32). If it were not for the Word we would not know of God’s will for us and what to do to be saved from our sins. No wonder the Psalmist said, “how sweet are thy **words** unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through thy **precepts** I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way. Thy **word** is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. ... O how I thy **law**! it is my meditation all the day” (Psalm 119:103-105,97).

WORKS — but not works only. James 2:21-24, “Was not Abraham our father **justified by works**, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and **by works was faith made perfect**? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that **by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.**” Obviously, the works spoken of here are not works of merit. Man is not saved by “works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Titus 2:5; cf. John 3:5).

The Holy Spirit (through the pen of James) uses **Abraham** as an example of how “faith” and “works” go hand-in-hand. One is no good (by itself) without the other. While Romans 4 shows **HOW** Abraham was justified — by **faith** (apart or separate from works of merit (works of the law, works of the law of Moses); James 2 shows **WHEN** Abraham was justified — **by works (obedience)**. His faith was not counted to his credit until he offered Isaac as God commanded. He was justified by “faith” when he “worked.” Will anyone dare say Paul and James are not in harmony? Some do! They don’t know how to handle what James says so they often dismiss the book of James by saying it should not be in the Bible!

The Holy Spirit gives another example in James 2:25 to show how “faith” and “works” go together and cannot be separated. “Likewise also

(like Abraham, v.21) was not **Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?**” Hebrews 11:31 says, “By **faith** the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, **when** she had received the spies with peace.” **Rahab** was justified before God by **FAITH, WHEN** she hid the spies (Joshua 2:4-16).

Why do men accept Romans 4 and reject James 2? Why don’t they accept James 2 and reject Romans 4? It can’t be explained except that they refuse to believe ALL that the Bible teaches on the vital subject of salvation. They have their mind made up and they will not believe God’s divine word. They are like those in Isaiah’s day. Isaiah 30:9-10, “This is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD: Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits.” Also, like those in Jeremiah’s day we read, “Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, **We will not walk therein.** Also I set watchmen over you, saying, Harken to the sound of the trumpet. **But they said, We will not harken**” (Jer. 6:16-17).

A vast number of people are willfully ignorant of the Scriptures and fail to see the connection between faith and works. The works by which man is justified are works of obedience. Jesus said, “why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and **DO NOT** the things which I say” (Luke 6:46). Multitudes scream at God and tell him they don’t have to obey him in order to be saved! Their mind is made up and they blindly go to the Bible to prove it and fail miserably to “rightly divide the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).

Denominational preachers are so confused regarding the Scriptures that they twist, wrest, and distort them unto their own destruction (2 Peter 3:16). They do not want to see the harmony between faith and works. Salvation is NOT by faith alone, nor by works alone. It is by BOTH (Faith and Works) as Paul and James reveals. Faith is proven by works — obedience (James 2:22).

not love of the truth by itself. “And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the **love of the truth, that they might be saved**” (2 Thess. 2:10). “But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God” (John 3:21). “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness” (Rom. 1:18). “But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath” (Rom. 2:8). “Of his own will **begat he us with the word of truth**, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures” (James 1:18). “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11). “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Peter 1:22). We can’t just believe the truth and be saved, we must obey the truth. That’s how our souls are purified!

The Truth is essential. No one can be saved without it. “Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, **IF** ye continue in my word, **THEN** are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and **the truth shall make you free**” (John 8:31-32). The truth makes us free from the penalty of our sins because the knowledge of God’s will for sinful man (the New Testament) is the only way we know **what to BELIEVE and what to DO** in order to have forgiveness of our sins. If sinners do not “believe” they cannot be saved. And, if sinners do not “obey” (the Truth) they cannot be saved. A sinner cannot do one without the other and expect to be saved. BOTH are essential for salvation. The Lord only saves those who OBEY him (Heb. 5:9; Matt. 7:21). But man says NO — “faith only” is the way to salvation! That is a LIE (James 2:24)! Don’t let Satan convince you to not obey the truth. Three passages warn us of not obeying the truth (Rom. 2:8; Gal. 3:1; Gal. 5:7). Who will you believe, man or God?

LOVE OF THE TRUTH — but

More things that save next month.

Re-write The Bible...

(Continued from page 49)

thority of the Word of God and not tampering with it: “but we have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully” (2 Cor. 4:2); “for we are not as many, which corrupt (make merchandise of) the word of God” (2 Cor. 2:17). In Galatians chapter 1 the apostle Paul teaches that the troublemakers in religion are not those who stand for the truth, but are those who pervert the Word of God: “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ” (1:6-9). To my knowledge this is the only time in the Bible where God pronounces a double curse on something. There are other things that God curses, but re-writing the Bible resides under a double curse (anathema). Those who modify or alter God’s Word perish under the curse!

The Apostle Peter uses an interesting word to address this issue. In Second Peter 3 he uses the word “wrest” to describe the sin of tampering with scripture: “and account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable **wrest**, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction” (2 Peter 3:15-16). The word wrest has the meaning to “wrench or torture on the rack, i.e. pervert.”

Many sound Gospel preachers through the years have emphasized the danger of “adding to” or “taking away” from God’s Word by pointing out that this warning is found at the beginning of the Bible, at the middle of the Bible, and at the end of the Bible. Here are the verses:

Deut. 4:2, “ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you;

Prov. 30:6 “add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and

thou be found a liar;

Rev. 22:18-19, “if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

EXAMPLES OF MAN RE-WRITING THE BIBLE

1. The Bible says one church (Matt. 16:18). Man says many churches.

2. The Bible sanctions one religious body (Eph. 4:4-6). Man says there are many acceptable religious bodies.

3. The Bible says Christ has all authority (Matt. 28:18). Man says authority is invested in the Pope, creeds, manuals, etc.

4. The Bible says wear the name Christian (1 Peter 4:16). Man says wear names that glorify man, systems, or doctrines.

5. The Bible says there is one Gospel (Gal. 1:6-9). Man says there are many religious messages.

6. The Bible says sound doctrine is essential (2 Tim. 1:13). Man says doctrine is unimportant, just be sincere.

7. The Bible says all Christians are priests (1 Peter 2:9). Man says only a few are priests: clergy, laity, etc.

8. The Bible says there is a plurality of elders (pastors, bishops, overseers) over each congregation (Acts 20:17). Man says one pastor over one church.

9. The Bible says faith without works is dead (James 2:14-26; Rom. 1:5). Man says “faith only.”

10. The Bible says one can fall from grace (Gal. 5:4). Man says no one can fall from grace.

11. The Bible says partake of the Lord’s supper on the first day of the week (Acts 2:42; 20:7). Man says it’s according to custom, quarterly, annually, etc.

12. The Bible says baptism is immersion (Rom. 6:1-4; Col. 2:12). Man says sprinkling or pouring.

13. The Bible says obey the Gospel (2 Thess. 1:6-9; Acts 22:16). Man says pray the sinner’s prayer.

14. The Bible says water baptism is for penitent believers (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). Man says baptism is for infants.

15. The Bible says baptism is essential to salvation (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21). Man says faith alone saves.

16. Under the New Testament, the Bible says verbal and vocal music (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Man says mechanical instruments, clapping, stomping, etc.

These 16 points are all examples from denominational churches and preachers. However, many churches and preachers in the church of Christ have taken the liberty to rewrite the Bible to accommodate their thinking and practice. Notice these four examples:

1. The Bible says worship is in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). Many however, rewrite the Bible to allow every kind of unauthorized activity in worship: instrumental music, clapping, humming, praying to Jesus and the Holy Spirit, etc.

2. The Bible says fornication is the only cause for a divorce and remarriage (Matt. 5:32; 19:9). However, many in the church rewrite the Bible and allow adultery for any cause or that these verses only apply to Christians. Those in such marriages are “living” in adultery (Col. 3:5-7). Adulterers do not go to heaven (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

3. The Bible says to not fellowship those in error (Eph. 5:11; 2 John 9-11). This is rewritten to include joint participation with denominations in their work and worship.

4. The Bible says not to forsake the assembling of the church (Heb. 10:24-31; cf. 1 Cor. 11:20; 14:23). This is rewritten to include only the Sunday morning service where the Lord’s supper is observed.

CONCLUSION

I would be remiss if I did not add to these comments the pervasive fatal danger of modern versions and translations of the Bible. From the *Revised Standard Version* through the *New International Version* and even beyond, examples can be multiplied where men have sought to re-write the Word of God by producing faulty translations. There has never been a time when Satan and his cohorts have not sought to re-write the Word of God whether it be through translations, creeds, commentaries, or false teachers.

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THE TRUTH, THE WHOLE TRUTH, AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH!

Johnny O. Trail

While Jesus was on trial, Pilate asked a question that was rhetorical in nature. John 18:37-38 says *“Pilate therefore said to Him, Are You a king then? Jesus answered, You say **rightly** that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice. Pilate said to Him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, I find no fault in Him at all.”*

Pilate’s question was based on political considerations against a backdrop in Judea that was continually changing. Pilate was sent into the region by the Roman Empire to quell the unrest that had impacted the area. In four decades, the temple and the city of Jerusalem would be laid waste by the Roman General Titus and his forces.

People in all ages and various walks of life have played loosely with the truth. Pilate was not the first politician nor would he be the last to twist, bend, brake, and destroy the truth. The truth is valuable to God and those who strive to follow Him. Proverbs 23:23 says, *“Buy the truth, and do not sell it, Also wisdom and instruction and understanding.”*

One could cite many examples of people who redefine what the truth is. Just recently, **Katherine Maher**, the new CEO of National Public Radio (NPR), was recently interviewed about her view of the “truth.” For a moment consider a quote from her:

[O]ur most tricky disagreements [regarding religion and politics in the context JOT], seeking the truth and seeking to convince others of the truth might not be the right place to start. In fact, our reverence for the truth might be a distraction that’s getting in the way of finding common ground and getting things done. Now, that is not to say that the truth doesn’t exist, nor is it to say that the truth isn’t important. ... I think if I were to really

ask you to think about this, one of the things that we could all acknowledge is that part of the reason we have such glorious chronicles to the human experience in all forms of culture is because we acknowledge there are many different truths. ... I’m certain that the truth exists for you and probably for the person sitting next to you. But this may not be the same truth. This is because the truth of the matter is very often for many people. What happens when we merge facts about the world with our beliefs about the world, So we all have different truths. They’re based on things like where we come from, how we were raised, and how other people perceive us. ([https://www.iheartradio.com/podcast/867-verdict-with-ted-cruz-56253661/episode/biden-ignores-anti-semitism-npr-ceo-has-171332424/.](https://www.iheartradio.com/podcast/867-verdict-with-ted-cruz-56253661/episode/biden-ignores-anti-semitism-npr-ceo-has-171332424/))

Postmodernists have a truly warped view of what truth is. One commentator called the following discourse “absolute garbage.” (ibid)

Regardless of what postmodernists say, one can arrive at the objective, revealed truth. We can understand the truth and apply it to our lives. We can know what we must do to have eternal life. John 8:31-32: *“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, [then] are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”* The promise of the Master is that we can absolutely know the truth from God and that truth will make His people “free.” To say we cannot know the truth, turns God into a liar and makes salvation and morality an unobtainable goal!

God’s word provides the truth for one to examine, study, and confirm the sayings and teachings of others. In John 17:17 Jesus prayed, *“Sanctify them by thy truth. Thy word is truth.”* If we revere God, we will have a reverence for the truth and seek it for our lives — unlike what the CEO of NPR said.

The idea of “many different truths” is the problem humankind has wres-

tled with from the beginning of time. There was God’s truth, Satan’s partial truth, and humanity’s ability to choose (Gen. 3:1-7). Just like Adam and Eve failed by listening to Satan, we fail by making decisions separate from God’s guidance.

The idea of “many different truths” has created a polytheistic, pagan world. The only God and the only means of being saved is through Jesus Christ. This is an undeniable truth that a postmodern world rejects. First John 2:21-23 says, *“I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.”*

Departures from biblical truth will cause people to be eternally lost. The inspired writers understood this and warned first century Christians about those who would corrupt sound doctrine. 2 Peter 2:1-3 says: *“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.”*

The truth matters! Regardless of how people discount it and pervert it, the truth will set people free from the bondage of sin and death. The truth will dispel false teachings and set people on a correct pathway, biblically speaking. The truth is important; and, essential.

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LOVE FOR THE TRUTH

James W. Boyd

*When we love the truth we will search for it where it can be found
— in the word of God, the Bible.*

Second Thessalonians 2:10, “*And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.*” This is descriptive of the lost who, because of unrighteousness, do not love the truth and therefore will not be saved; at least in that condition.

We need a clear understanding what we are to love. There is truth in many areas such as medicine, geography, history, etc. We want truth in every area, but especially truth regarding the soul. We are admonished to love a certain truth. Notice the list:

- 1) The truth of God (Rom. 1:25);
- 2) The truth of Christ (2 Cor. 11:10);
- 3) The word of God (John 17:17);
- 4) The truth of the gospel (Gal. 2:5);
- 5) the truth that Jesus personified (John 14:6);
- 6) All the commandments of God (Psalm 119:151).

THE NECESSITY OF KNOWLEDGE

Can we love truth unless we know what the truth is? We can want the truth but we cannot love what we have never heard just as we cannot believe having never heard. We need knowledge of the truth before we can love it. Some contend nobody can know the truth and they know that such a contention is the truth! Can you imagine that? Some even say there is no such thing as truth and even if there is we cannot ever know what it is. They say trying to discover the truth is like looking for a black cat in a dark room that is not even there anyway. How do they know that is true? Where did they learn that?

But we can know the truth (John 8:32). There were those in New Testament times who knew the truth (2 John 1). Some were walking in truth (3 John 4). How could this be said if nobody could know about truth?

The things God created are to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth (1

Tim. 4:3). Heb. 10:26 mentions those who willfully sinned even after knowing the truth. Not only can we know the truth but we can understand it (Eph. 3:1-5). A mystery is something that may not be known but can be known. The truth here is called the “mystery of Christ,” meaning, that the truth of Christ was once unknown because it was unrevealed but now it can be known because it has been revealed. It is no longer a mystery.

Just how much Biblical evidence does one need to refute this foolishness that we cannot know the truth? But the big question is: will we know it? When we do, will we love it? Many learn it and come to know it but never love it.

MOTIVE

What is our motive for knowing the truth? The truth can set us free from the Law of Moses (Rom. 7). It set us free from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8). It grants to us liberty in Christ (John 8:32). Are not these reasons enough for us to love the truth?

In addition, it is by the truth that the heart is purified (1 Peter 1:22). We are sanctified, set apart, made holy, by the truth (John 17:17). We are saved by the word of truth (James 1:21). Peter went to the house of Cornelius to preach the Gospel to them. Cornelius had been told they would be saved by the words Peter spoke (Acts 11:14). Peter’s preaching enabled them to hear the word of the Gospel, believe, obey and be saved (Acts 15:7).

The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16). We want to be saved from sin, but there is no salvation apart from hearing, believing and obeying the truth (Acts 18:8). There is no “new birth” without being begotten and we are begotten by the word (1 Peter 1:3). How much more motivation does a person need or expect to have a love for the truth?

Everyone, however, does not love the truth as is evident from our opening text and as we can observe in daily

living. Preaching the truth can even make enemies (Gal. 4:16). Some turn their ears away from the truth (2 Tim. 4:4). James 3:14 says that some do what is unthinkable but do it anyway; that is, lie against the truth. Some in Galatia to whom Paul wrote were not walking uprightly according to the truth (Gal. 2:14).

LOVE IN ATTITUDE AND ACTION

Love is an emotion and an attitude that demonstrates itself by word and deed. How do we know we love the truth? This is something that considers the heart of man. If we love the truth we will believe and obey it. We will never exchange the truth for a lie. Proverbs 23:23 says, “*Buy the truth and sell it not.*” We will strive to live harmoniously with the truth. Loving the truth is the result of a deliberate choice. Living the truth is also a choice. Those of our opening text neither loved nor lived the truth.

When we love the truth we will search for it where it can be found — in the word of God, the Bible. Like the noble Bereans, we will search the Scriptures daily. We will consider truth the most valuable commodity to possess. We will receive the truth as did those on Pentecost. Paul told the brethren in Thessalonica, “*But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through the sanctification and belief of the truth*” (2 Thess. 2:13). We will be of the disposition that once truth is established, we will accept it and hold to it.

Like the early Christians, we will be willing to suffer for the truth. Many of them gave their lives for the truth. “*Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute, and say all manner of evil against you, for my sake*” (Matt. 5:11). Suffering for the truth has been the history of Christians. We can expect persecution (2 Tim. 3:12).

Along with that, we will have a strong desire to proclaim the truth to others that they also might be saved.

Concern for the souls of others is a characteristic of Christians. We will never be ashamed of truth even as we live in a skeptical and wicked world that is hostile to the truth. We will speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15).

FINALLY, BUT NOT THE LEAST

When we love the truth we will defend the truth. There have always been those who attack the truth. Such

exists now and will exist until the Lord comes again. Jude 3 urges that we contend earnestly for the faith. Paul was set for the defense of the Gospel (Phil. 1:17). Some will wrest, twist, malign and misrepresent the truth. Error cannot be tolerated because “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (1 Cor. 5:6). Error will take away the church, salvation, heaven, not only for us but for those loved ones who follow after us.

We have different abilities and capacities for defending the truth and there are different weapons. Not everyone is skillful with every weapon. But we must resign ourselves to fight for the truth because that is the will of God. The psalmist wrote, “O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day” (Psalm 119:97).

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DOES THE NAME MATTER?

Recently someone told me they thought it didn't matter what a church called itself as long as they worshipped correctly. Is this true according to the Bible? Could a church call itself any name and be acceptable to God as long as they worship correctly? Let's consider for a moment why it does matter what the church calls itself. In fact, just like worshipping God correctly is essential, going by what the rest of the Bible says about the church is also essential. Notice why this is true.

The name of the church is important because the Bible tells us not to “add to” or “take away from” God's Word (Rev. 22:18-19). If the name of a church is not found in the Bible, we would be adding to God's Word. If the name is found in the Bible and we choose to call it by something not found in the Bible, we would be taking away from it.

The name of the church is important because the Bible specifically tells us not to go beyond what is written (1 Cor. 4:6). If the name of a church is not found in Scripture we are going “beyond what is written.”

The name of the church is important because we are to do everything by the authority of Christ, who is the Head of the church (Col. 3:17; Matt. 28:18; Eph. 1:22-23). Whatever God, Christ or the Holy Spirit referred to the church as, is what we should refer to it as.

The name of the church is important because the name we call the church should only bring honor and glory to God, Christ or the Holy Spirit not men (1 Cor. 10:31). If the church is called the church of Mark or Mark's church, who is that bringing honor to?

The name of the church is important because the Jesus died for and shed His blood for His church (Acts 20:28). The act of Jesus dying on the cross purchased the church. Since it was his blood that paid the price for the church, it should wear His name (Matt. 16:18).

The name of the church is important because the name shows ownership and the Lord as the builder and founder of the church is the only one who has the right to be owner of the church (Matt. 16:13-18).

The name of the church is important because the church is the Bride of Christ and as His bride, it should wear His name (Eph. 5:22-31).

The name of the church is important because we are only to speak as the oracles of God (1 Peter 4:11). Here are the names the Bible refers to the church as:

- 1) Jesus said, “I will build my church” (Matt. 16:13-18). Thus, it is the church of Jesus or the church of Christ.
- 2) It is referred to as the church of the Lord (Acts 20:28).
- 3) It is referred to as the church of God (1 Cor. 1:1-2; Gal. 1:13)
- 4) It is referred to as the church of the Living God (1 Tim. 3:15).
- 5) It is referred to as the church of Christ (Rom. 16:16; Gal. 1:22).
- 6) It is referred to as the church of the firstborn, which is another name for Jesus (Heb. 12:23; Col. 1:15-19; Rom. 8:29).

The name of the church is important because calling the church by men's names or denominational names is specifically and explicitly condemned in Scripture (1 Cor. 1:10-13).

Friend, a careful study of the

Scripture helps us to see that what we call the church really does matter. We need to call the church by names that are found in Scripture and that brings honor and glory to God, not men.

May God help us to glorify the church Jesus died for in everything we say and do!

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