

The Wednesday Word, April 18, 2018: No, No, No, No! (Part 4)

No Authority but the Word of God.

“The grass withers, the flower fades: but the word of our God shall stand forever” (Isaiah 40:8).

The scriptures of the Old and New Testaments principally teach what we are to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of us. Simply speaking, we do not accept doctrines and practices which cannot be established in the Word of God.

Would that some charismatic preachers I’ve heard held to this maxim. Their practices are simply nuts. I have searched in vain to discover the scriptural authority for their ghoulish habit of lying on graves thus soaking up the anointing of dead ministers. That and any number of weird non-biblical practices such as angel dust, honey angels, soakings and the like must be rejected. Why? They are not authorized by the Scriptures.

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Not only so but the Scriptures and not even the creeds, are the sole and sufficient rule of faith and duty. Creeds must always bow in submission to the Scripture. In addition, every ecclesiastical pronouncement that comes from the Bishop of Rome must be weighed against the teaching of the Bible.

If I can make a statement here without being accused of hate speech, the Roman Catholic Communion officially holds to ‘scripture + tradition’ as the basis of authority for faith and practice. Indeed, they go farther than that for, since the infallibility decree of 1870, they hold that the final seat of authority in all matters of faith is the Pope (when he speaks ex-cathedra). He incorrectly claims to be the source of authority for faith and practice.

(Believers, however, on this point, side with Martin Luther who refused to be moved unless it could be shown that his teaching was contrary to the Bible. He boldly declared, “Here I take my stand; I can do no other; so, help me God.”)

But so what about Dr. Luther? Our Master, the Lord Jesus, proclaimed the inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture, for He said; “The scriptures cannot be broken” (John 10:35). He also declared that "Heaven and earth shall pass away—but My Words shall not pass away!" (Luke 21:33). Indeed, Jesus and the New Testament writers quote from the Old Testament some 295 times. They believed in the authority of the Word.

Despite this, many who claim to be followers of Christ side with the spirit of the age and approve gay marriage, abortion, and the likes. Baffling!

They could learn from Paul when he asks: “For what saith the scripture?” (Romans 4:3). Or be instructed by the Bereans who tested all things by Scripture (Acts 17:11).

As Believers, we hold to the authority of the Bible. It is clear, authoritative, and final. There is no need for some external source of authority whether Popes, creeds or worldly standards to explain everything. The litmus test is solely and only “What saith the Scriptures?” We have the Bible, we have the Holy Spirit, and we are as well able to understand the message of the Book as any who have lived from the demise of the apostles to this hour.

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The Bible is the Christian’s standard for his rule of life. Its truth never changes. The law of the Lord is perfect (Psalm 19:7). We cannot hold this truth too firmly. In refuting the errors of the Sadducees, Jesus said, “Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God” (Matthew 12:29). He also warned the Pharisees in Mark 7:13 that they were making the word of God of none effect through their tradition.

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In Proverbs 30:5-6 we read,

“Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add not unto his words, lest he reprove you, and you be found a liar.”

But contemporary society thinks it knows better than the Scriptures. With each passing year, modern thinking gets more and more out of step with the Bible. And some Christians buy into this and make excuses for the poor antiquated Book. But we dare not offer excuses for the Bible. It says what it says. It refuses to be tamed. Unlike us, the Bible won’t compromise. God says in Isaiah 55:8-9, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, ... For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

To those who pick and choose which Bible passages they want to believe, I would ask, have you been justified by faith?

You say, “Yes.”

But, by what authority do you say that?

“On the authority of the Word of God,” you reply.

But how do you know that the scriptures are authoritative? You reject much of what the word says about sin and immorality.

“Yes but the Bible is out of step on those matters,” you say.

How then do you know that it is accurate in matters of your salvation? Isn’t it time to stop picking and choosing which scriptures you want to believe?

As believers, we simply learn to rest on God’s unchanging word. God said it, that settled it. I believed it, that settled me!

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And that’s the Gospel Truth!