

Scriptures and Doctrine :: The Distractions and Worship of Theology

The Distractions and Worship of Theology , on: 2017/4/3 8:36

I remember seeing a Christmas card years ago which had this saying,

...The Word did not become a philosophy or a theology or a concept to be discussed debated or pondered.

But the Word became a Person to be followed, loved and enjoyed...

During my 15 or so years in Calvinism. I forgot that Jesus had called me into a relationship with Him. About 2 or 3 years into the simplicity and beauty of the Jesus movement some brethren thought I needed to be discipled. They said I needed to grow. Their idea of growth was to introduce me to the 5 Points of Calvinism. Thus, my walk with Christ revolved around the 5 Canons of Dort. I would fellowship with brethren whose idea of spirituality were the theological books they had on their book shelves. We would proudly say that we were steeped in the theology of the Puritans. Many times we would say with pride we studied at the feet of the Puritan divines.

In the few times that I would look at the scriptures. The verses out of 2 Corinthians 11:3 would bring conviction to my heart,

... But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ...

This is what Calvinistic theology did to me. For 15 or more here it led me away from the simplicity and purity of a devotional relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. It was only by the grace and love of Jesus that I had to fight my way back to something of my first love for Him that I had during the Jesus movement.

Theology destroyed my first love for Him. For me, theology became a head trip. And my heart was left cold devoid of a love for Jesus.

Jesus warned the Pharisees in John 5:39-40,

... You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life, it is these that testify about Me and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.

One could almost see the Pharisees with their pointers, reading the Torah from right to left. Perusing over every word. And yet failing to see the fulfillment of the Torah standing right in front of them. Failing to see their Messiah, who fulfilled over 300 plus prophecies of the Old Testament. Failing to come to Him, the Living Word who would give them life. The Pharisee saw that their life was bound up in the Old Testament scriptures.

Yet very little has changed since the days of the Pharisees. We in evangelicalism have our Pharisees. They are called evangelical theologians. They write books about theology. They do systematic studies. They do scripture, exposition and exegesis. We elevate the professional theologian and clergyman. as a mediator to stand between us and God to break open the Word.

In the chapel at Reformed Seminary there is this 9 foot tall pulpit. It must be mounted from either side by a steep flight of stairs. The brother, who was given me a tour of the seminary, said that the pulpit symbolized the exalted Word of God. And those who sat in the chapel were to give attention to the person who broke open the word of God. This is the best pictorial representation I can see of the worship of theology. Of the worship of those theologians who stand as mediator between God and man. We accuse the Catholics of having the priest stand between them and God. Yet we have our own traditions in our own Protestant background. We exalt the Calvinistic or evangelical pastor who is trained in scripture exposition as one who must break open the word of God. The evangelical pastor stands as mediator between God and man.

In the midst of all of this, I have to ask what has happened to the simplicity and purity of devotion to Jesus? What has happened to a simple, beautiful relationship with Him? Did Jesus ever mean for His New Testament to be turned into a th

eology textbook? Did Jesus ever mean for men to write books about His New Testament? Did Jesus ever mean for men to stand as teachers between God and men? That only such men trained by seminarians were capable of teaching the word of God to ordinary individuals?

I have to ask what has happened to the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit? I do not mean the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit as vested in theologians? But the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit as Him revealing truth to humble hearts who seek Him.

We love to echo the cry of the Reformation of Sola Scriptura. But there must be a caveat attached to that. Sola Scriptura as only taught by the professional evangelical theologian. In our cry of Sola Scriptura, we have forgotten about the priesthood of the believer. That is that every person who has a relationship with Jesus Christ is capable of taking the scriptures and discerning truth of the Lord Jesus Christ as taught by the Holy Spirit.

I fear that the worship of theology has replaced the worship of Jesus. I fear that the professional theologian has replaced the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit.

These are simply my thoughts.

Bro Blaine

Re: The Distractions and Worship of Theology - posted by docs (), on: 2017/4/3 8:47

So a innocent remark or two from me about the controversy in some quarters that surrounds penal substitution becomes a broadside against theology or a supposed worship of it. The worship of theology or the word was absolutely light years away from my thinking as I made a few brief remarks that I thought might be interesting and generate a few remarks. It's amazing how folks can take simple things and run with them. My my!

Re: The Distractions and Worship of Theology - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2017/4/3 9:36

Brother Blaine,

I agree with you that because men love their own opinions more than the teaching of the Holy Spirit illuminating the scriptures that these endless discussions on theology have drawn many away from the pure devotion to Jesus Christ to the eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Re: - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2017/4/3 10:23

He is the Word. "In the beginning was the Word", and the meaning of that designation is just this, that God has made Himself intelligible to us in a Person, not in a book. God has not first of all written a book, although we have the Bible. God has written a Person. In one of his little booklets, Dr. A. B. Simpson has this illustration, or illustrates this thing in this way. He says that on one occasion he saw the Constitution of the United States written, and it was written on a parchment. He was near to it, and could read all the details of the Constitution of the United States. But as he stood back from that parchment, some yards off, all he could see was the head of George Washington there on the parchment. Then he drew near again and saw the Constitution was so written in light and shadow as to take the shape of the head of George Washington. That is it. God has written the revelation of Himself, but it is in the Person of His Son, the Headship of the Lord Jesus, and you cannot have the constitution of heaven, except in the Person, and the constitution of heaven is the Person in the shape of God's Son.

This is only an affirmation of things. I do trust you will take hold of the fact stated and go to the Lord with this. Do not ask for light as some thing; ask for a fuller knowledge of the Lord Jesus. That is the way, for that is the only living way to know Him: and remember God always keeps the knowledge of Himself in Christ bound up with practical situations. That cuts both ways. We have to be in the situation. The Holy Spirit will bring us, if we are in His hand, into the situation which will make necessary a new knowledge of the Lord. That is one side. The other side is that, if we are in a situation which is a very hard and a very difficult one, we are in the very position to ask for a revelation of the Lord.

T. Austin Sparks

Re: The Distractions and Worship of Theology - posted by savannah, on: 2017/4/3 11:41

Men who didn't...

- 1) forget that Jesus had called them into a relationship with Him.
- 2) get led away from the simplicity and purity of a devotional relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 3) Let theology destroy their first love for Him.
- 4) Let theology become a head trip.
- 5) Let their heart grow cold devoid of a love for Jesus.

Arthur W. Pink: 1886-1952
Augustus Toplady: 1740-1778 (author of "Rock Of Ages" and other hymns)
Benjamin Keach: 1640-1704
B.H. Carroll: 1843-1914
Charles Spurgeon: 1834-1892
Francis Schaeffer: 1912-1984
George Mueller: 1805-1898
George Whitefield: 1714-1770
J.C. Ryle: 1816-1900
J.P. Boyce: 1827-1888
John Bunyan: 1628-1688 (author of "Pilgrim's Progress")
John L. Dagg: 1794-1884
John Foxe: 1516-1587 (author of "Book Of Martyrs")
John Gill: 1697-1771
John Knox: 1513-1572
John Newton: 1725-1807 (wrote the hymn "Amazing Grace")
John Owen: 1616-1683
Jonathan Edwards: 1703-1758
Martyn Lloyd-Jones: 1834-1892
Martin Luther
Matthew Henry: 1662-1712
Roger Williams: 1603-1683
William Carey: 1761-1834 (missionary)
William Wilberforce: 1759-1833 (slavery abolitionist)
Paul Washer
David Platt
D.A. Carson
D. James Kennedy
James Montgomery Boice
John Piper
Albert Mohler
Voddie Bauchman
Wayne Grudem

As one man said, "I became a theologian that I might be a better pastor."

The above men mentioned above are only a few of many. And they're not named to become objects of worship.

But we are to give honor(not worship)to whom honor is due. We are to recognize the gifts God has given each, and give thanks to God.

And as for the many other questions in your post, they deserve answers as well. Answers that only each individual can give after examining themselves, and God illuminating them lest they deceive their own selves.

Our experience is, SIMPLY, our experience. It is NOT the rule!

So many people, so many experiences! An experience, whether yours or mine, is not an argument. It IS SIMPLY an experience.

Some experiences are good and right, some are not.

"The foundation of God stands firm, He knows them that are His"

Re: - posted by Martyr (), on: 2017/4/3 12:38

Men who didn't search the bible for systematic thoughts and doctrines but instead walked in life in the truth of Christ and by His guiding in their day to day life and in His wisdom not limited by the bible but confirmed by it:

Peter
John
Andrew
Bartholomew
Philip
James (lesser)
James (greater)
Thaddeus
Matthew
Thomas
Judas (not iscariot)
Paul
Stephen
Silas
Bananas
Apollos

Etc.

A little leaven leavens the whole lump. Let's look back to the rock from which we were hewn, which is Christ and, as the scriptures attest, the apostles he set forth to teach whose writings we have. It seems risky to cite anyone but those whom Christ and the apostles attested to. Who says Spurgeon walked in the fullness of Christ? For me I don't know but I can see a stark difference between his teachings and those of Paul's. Spurgeon (just picking on him because he's very well known) spent a great deal of time trying to decipher Paul's writings rather than walking as Paul walked. Not that he's a false teacher or bad but why quote and cite men such as him and not rather listen to what Christ and those who were taught by him instead of men who, however well meaning, may have unintentionally been deceived by the 1900 years that have had a chance to distort Christianity. Unless you believe it's been continued and preserved regardless of man's faults in which case I would recommend joining the Catholic church who do have a distinct and true lineage harkening back to the church of the apostles. The way is narrow and few there be that find it.

Re: - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2017/4/3 14:11

A.W. Tozer hits at what is at the root of the problem of men that worship the dead letter of the law without the Holy Spirit. They idolize their own human reasoning without being led by the only guide (Holy Spirit) that can give us illumination and understanding of the scriptures.

Spirit-Taught

"A man can receive nothing." That is the burden of the Bible. Whatever men may think of human reason God takes a low view of it. "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" Man's reason is a fine instrument and useful within its field. It is a gift of God and God does not hesitate to appeal to it, as when He cries to Israel, "Come now, and let us reason together." The inability of human reason as an organ of divine knowledge arises not from its own weakness but from its unfittedness for the task by its own nature. It was not given as an organ by which to know God.

The doctrine of the inability of the human mind and the need for divine illumination is so fully developed in the New Testament that it is nothing short of astonishing that we should have gone so far astray about the whole thing. Fundamentalism has stood aloof from the liberal in self-conscious superiority and has on its own part fallen into error, the error of textualism, which is simply orthodoxy without the Holy Spirit. Everywhere among conservatives we find persons who are Bible-taught but not Spirit-taught. They conceive truth to be something that they can grasp with the mind. If a man hold to the fundamentals of the Christian faith, he is thought to possess divine truth. But it does not follow. There is no truth apart from the Spirit. The most brilliant intellect may be imbecilic when confronted with the mysteries of God. For a man to understand revealed truth requires an act of God equal to the original act that inspired the text.

Re: defeatist reasoning - posted by savannah, on: 2017/4/3 14:22

"It seems risky to cite anyone but those whom Christ and the apostles attested to."

Why bother reading anything anyone posts on this forum. Why am I bothering reading anything you've just written. You then go on to say this regarding Spurgeon,

"I can see a stark difference between his teachings and those of Paul's."

Apparently, what you see Paul teaching, differs from what Spurgeon saw Paul teaching. So you do adhere to a teaching. Unless all you do is quote Scripture, and make no comment or explanation at all.

You then say,

"Surgeon spent a great deal of time trying to decipher Paul's writings rather than walking as Paul walked."

How do you know this! Were you there?

Do you read no book but the Bible? Do you not listen to anyone preach or teach from the Word of God?

If you do, you're not living according your own words in this post.

Re: , on: 2017/4/3 14:43

Powerful, penetrating words from our brother Richard Wurmbrand...

...The Bible is a wonderful book. It is the truth about the Truth. It is not the Truth. A sermon taken from the Bible can be a wonderful thing to hear. It is the truth about the truth about the truth. But it is not the truth. There have been many books written about the things contained in the Bible. I have written some myself. They can be quite wonderful to read. They are the truth about the truth about truth about the Truth. But they are NOT the Truth. Only Jesus Christ is the Truth. Sometimes the Truth can be drowned in a multitude of words...

I believe our dear brother in Christ has best summarized what I am so pitifully trying to convey in this thread.

Bro Blaine

Re: Your false assumptions - posted by docs (), on: 2017/4/3 14:57

/I believe our dear brother in Christ has best summarized what I am so pitifully trying to convey in this thread./

Besides using the penal substitution thread to insert your own obvious disdain for theology which had nothing to do with the original OP in that thread you have thrown a kind of one size fits all accusatory blanket over any and all theologians. You falsely assume that all theologians have succumbed to reliance on their own minds etc and have jettisoned any reliance on the Holy Spirit and worship theology. It's an urban myth in the church. What a disservice to repeat it.

A former Pharisee can be unwittingly prideful that he's not caught in the pride of the Pharisees anymore.

Re: - posted by Martyr (), on: 2017/4/3 14:59

Paul walked and moved in the Spirit of freedom and life. He was not bound by exegetical bible studies. If you read Paul's letters it is not an exegetical statement, he described and taught spiritual realities, not doctrines. Most of what Paul said in his letters are not quotes from the bible (the old testament) because that was not the binding law on his heart not was it even his guide. He moved and walked in the spirit of freedom, the fullness of the what the old testament was moving towards.

In regards to spurgeon I know he spent most of his time deciphering the bible because all of his sermons (I have many collections) are exegetical sermons based around a certain biblical text. We do not see Paul doing that all that much (although he did cite it when appropriate.) Isn't that peculiar? Almost as if he received extra biblical revelation which was not extra biblical but was a reality and living word that could not come from study alone but from moving and walking in truth.

The teaching I adhere to is the truth of Christ. Christ is truth and only in and through him can any scripture be seen in the truth. Of course now we come to "Well you say this is truth but I say this is truth," this is inevitable. But the way is narrow and few there be that find it.

If you want to search the scriptures to find the things that belong to Christ go ahead, they are certainly an invaluable aid but I submit once more that the totality of Christ and His finished work are found within and without the pages of the bible. And how could it be otherwise? Did the one who created all things mask himself from being found in those things limiting himself to 66 books (73 books??)

I have read many many books and have come to the conclusion of the author of ecclesiastics that there is much weariness in it. So yes I read only the bible. Is that bad? I have the words of Christ and those who knew him. And even those do not bind me nor do I scour them to try to tie them together. Who would do such a thing? We have four varied gospels and miscellaneous letters. There are differences and this is okay because the truth from them is in Christ and they point to him. Does the bible bear testimony of itself or does it bear testimony of He who is in our hearts and indeed in all of creation? Through him all things were made and in him all things hold together.

Please pardon any typos, I'm typing on my phone

Re: - posted by yuehan, on: 2017/4/3 15:08

Just wondering out loud...

What are you guys trying to communicate to Docs?

He simply wanted to discuss the meaning of the atonement. How are you helping him towards that goal?

What are you trying to achieve here with your writings?

Re: yuehan - posted by Martyr (), on: 2017/4/3 15:11

The meaning of the atonement is found in Christ, not through analysis of the scriptures.

Re: - posted by yuehan, on: 2017/4/3 15:16

Martyr,

It is Christ who illuminates Scripture. The Word of God often chooses to work through His Word.

Also - every person I've met who loved the Lord Jesus loved His Word.

Anyway, what are you trying to achieve through your replies to Docs?

Re: , on: 2017/4/3 15:34

...Sometimes the Truth can be drowned in a multitude of words...

This is what I am communicating. Jesus who is the Truth can be lost in words of truth.

Bro Blaine

Re: What you communicated - posted by docs (), on: 2017/4/3 15:45

What you communicated was a prideful one size fits all disdain for theologians and theology.

Re: - posted by docs (), on: 2017/4/3 15:49

/The meaning of the atonement is found in Christ, not through analysis of the scriptures./

Can Christ speak to you through His written word? If Christ Himself spoke to you about the meaning of His atonement could you then go to Scripture and find the same words and meaning?

Re: - posted by Martyr (), on: 2017/4/3 16:03

My disdain is for the act of elevating the scriptures to the level of Lord and seeking in them eternal life. It is subtle. Jesus upbraided the Pharisees for it. My disdain is for those who turn the bible into doctrines and precepts and live by those rather than living by the Spirit of Truth.

The Word points to Him whom I love and that is why it is invaluable and precious to me. It is profitable for correction, reproof, rebuke and as a guide when taken in subjection with the Spirit of God, so yes yuehan we are in agreement on that. But it is not "How God speaks" as if He only had one means. The God who made the mouth is not void of one Himself.

The law was imperfect. The New Testament expresses it. Yet don't you consider it to be the word of God? Did God speak or create imperfection? The sacrificial system was imperfect, did God ordain something imperfect? If you take the every word is 100% true then you do not judge the bible with righteous judgement. Those who search it to form a complete doctrine miss that to which it points.

My point with that is this, the scriptures need to be taken and viewed in the revelation of Christ. Going back to the atonement you are not going to find it spelled out for you in the bible. The bible wasn't meant for that. Paul didn't hand out his letters and say "Here study these and find out about Christ." No he would go into a city with the power of God and in His wisdom speak words not of doctrines or explanations but of the sword of Truth which pierces the hearts of those who hear.

"Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God". It is not the bible that causes a person to hear. It is the Spirit of God, the word of God which is Christ. As it says, let him who has ears to hear listen

I would also like to point out how often in Paul's letters he urges us to read our bibles. I guarantee you in any one sermon in this website you will hear that exhortation more than in the entire new testament. The word was simply not the apostles focus, the Word was.

Re: The Distractions and Worship of Theology - posted by passerby, on: 2017/4/3 16:05

Does the scripture prohibit religion? Do we really have to hate theology?

"Simplicity and purity of our devotional relationship to Christ" _ This is a beautiful statement but what really is the biblical teaching and implementation of our devotion and relationship to Christ?

I guess we should be careful of too much analogy of our relationship to God with human affairs. Romanticization of which is sacred will not bring us closer to God, but may bury us in humanist agenda and anarchistic mess.

Re: The Distractions and Worship of Theology - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2017/4/3 16:07

I find this interesting:

"In the chapel at Reformed Seminary there is this 9 foot tall pulpit. It must be mounted from either side by a steep flight of stairs. The brother, who was given me a tour of the seminary, said that the pulpit symbolized the exalted Word of God. And those who sat in the chapel were to give attention to the person who broke open the word of God. This is the best pictorial representation I can see of the worship of theology. Of the worship of those theologians who stand as mediator between God and man. We accuse the Catholics of having the priest stand between them and God. Yet we have our own traditions in our own Protestant background. We exalt the Calvinistic or evangelical pastor who is trained in scripture exposition as one who must break open the word of God. The evangelical pastor stands as mediator between God and man."

I have been told this is one issue the early Anabaptist taught against: the elevation of the pastor above the people. Since they believed in the priesthood of the Believer they believed the pastor should not be on an elevated platform as you described.

I agree with your article. It is unnerving to me when I challenge someone on some Biblical issue they will say, "I have to go ask my pastor about it." They never assume the clear reading of the WORD as being authoritative.

Sandra

Re: - posted by docs (), on: 2017/4/3 16:09

/Going back to the atonement you are not going to find it spelled out for you in the bible. The bible wasn't meant for that./

???

Re: - posted by Martyr (), on: 2017/4/3 16:11

Quote:
----- Can Christ speak to you through His written word? If Christ Himself spoke to you about the meaning of His atonement could you then go to Scripture and find the same words and meaning?

Christ will give wisdom to anyone who asks. In this wisdom (who is Christ) yes you can understand Christ's parables, Paul's writings, Peter's, etc. It is the Spirit who gives life the flesh profits nothing.

So to answer your question more directly, yes you would look in the Scriptures and see the Apostles and Christ talking about it and understand it. Isn't that how it was supposed to be? He who has ears to hear is an often repeated phrase by Christ for a reason. The Gospel is a mystery, it cannot be found in plain sight because its substance is of spirit not letter and it cannot be put into it. Hence the reason Paul never did. Praise God that he has hid these things from the wise and

has REVEALED them to little children. The Gospel, the teachings of Christ are spirit and they are true.

Re: - posted by Martyr (), on: 2017/4/3 16:14

Quote:

----- /Going back to the atonement you are not going to find it spelled out for you in the bible. The bible wasn't meant for that./

???

Please read my most current post I answer this. The things of God are not written plainly, they are hid. You won't find it spelled out because that's not how Christ does it, hence the parables. It is spiritual in nature, not physical like the letter of the law. To bring it back into that is to go backwards and to go back to bondage (See Galatians.)

Re: Talking in circles bro - posted by docs (), on: 2017/4/3 16:27

/yes you would look in the Scriptures and see the Apostles and Christ talking about it and understand it. Isn't that how it was supposed to be?/

But you just said you won't find the meaning of the atonement in the scriptures because the Bible wasn't meant for that.

Now you say if you ask or wisdom from Christ He will give it to you and reveal the meaning of the atonement in the scriptures so we can understand it.

The Bible is not just a physical letter either. It's the God breathed word of God and is therefore spiritual in nature - spirit and life.

Re: Sandra , on: 2017/4/3 16:34

...Since they believed in the priesthood of the Believer they believed the pastor should not be on an elevated platform as you described...

Sister, I believe Michael Sattler told his dear wife Marguerite that every man and every woman must become a priest. Our brother Michael meaning that every believer with access to the Bible can discern truth as taught by the spirit into their hearts.

Bro Blaine

Re: - posted by Martyr (), on: 2017/4/3 16:46

Docs I did not contradict myself you are missing my meaning. Since you do not understand I would be contradicting myself to try to further explain it.

Re: - posted by docs (), on: 2017/4/3 17:28

You wrote,

/Going back to the atonement you are not going to find it spelled out for you in the bible. The bible wasn't meant for that./

I then asked,

/Can Christ speak to you through His written word? If Christ Himself spoke to you about the meaning of His atonement could you then go to Scripture and find the same words and meaning?/

To which you replied,

/Christ will give wisdom to anyone who asks. In this wisdom (who is Christ) yes you can understand Christs parables, Pauls writings, Peters, etc. It is the Spirit who gives life the flesh profits nothing.

So to answer your question more directly, yes you would look in the Scriptures and see the Apostles and Christ talking about it and understand it. Isn't that how it was supposed to be?/

If as you say the meaning of the atonement is not in the Bible and can't be found there then why would Christ give you wisdom so as to find the meaning in the scriptures? You have plain and simply contradicted yourself.

Now you say you didn't contradict yourself but if you try and explain it any further you will contradict yourself. I don't really know what is going on here but God bless you and thanks for the conversation.

Blessings to you.

Re: His Were the Apostles Trained?, on: 2017/4/3 18:05

Acts 4:13

Now, as they observe the confidence of Peter and John and understood they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.

Peter and John were not seminary graduates. In other words, they could not say as Paul that they had studied at the feet of a leading rabbinical scholar of their day. Although Peter and John did not command academic credentials. The Jewish theologians recognized that they had been with Jesus.

One must wonder what type of theological training did they receive walking with the Son of God? It was not an academic classroom training where the apostles were taught how to exegete scriptures. Although the apostles walked with Jesus in a practical "how to". That is how to become fishers of men. Although in other words, the apostles walked with Jesus in relationship. Seeing Him minister to people. Although His ministry being done in love. Although the apostles through the power of the Spirit learned to do as Jesus did.

The same men who walked with Jesus and did ministry as He did. The same man have left us with some of the most profound truths about Jesus. Although These truths are contained and what we call the New Testament. Although These spiritual truths were not learned in an academic classroom. They were learned through a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ by His Holy Spirit.

Peter, John, and the other apostles also moved in Holy Ghost power. Although Indeed, by todays standards. They were untrained theologians. But upon the rock of Christ, they became the foundation of what we call the New Testament church.

Today, we have a radical departure in how evangelical pastors are trained. Although It is called a seminary model. The model is based upon the Jewish model of Jesus day. In the days of Jesus, if anyone wanted to be a teacher of the Torah. They had to be trained in the temple model. Thus, an Torah student would sit at the feet of a leading Jewish scholar to learn the Torah.

Today, if someone feels a call to the pastorate. Although They will find a leading evangelical seminary and sit at the feet of theologians. Although Is this what God ever intended for his New Testament church?

in restricted nations, where persecution make a western theological education, all but impossible. Those who pastor are often called by the Holy Spirit. to shepherd small congregations. Although These pastors are often blessed if they have a portion, if not the whole New Testament. Often the training they receive is what they glean from the Holy Spirit in the reading His word. And the application of that word in the fires of persecution. Although If these pastors are blessed, they may try to go

to a short discipling conference of a few days. But then must return to shepherd, their congregation in the shadow of the cross. Â I might add these pastors with little or no theological education do move in. Holy Ghost power. Often the miracles we hear about come from the persecuted church. Â Somehow these pastors never got the memo that God stopped working in signs and wonders after the first century.

These brothers do not have time to engage in theological discussions. As often, they are living out a theology of persecution and martyrdom in doing ministry for Jesus.

Again there is a radical departure. from how the early apostles were trained. And how leaders of churches are trained in the west today.

One wonders? Â Yes, we are blessed with a whole canon of scripture. Yes, we have various commentaries and systematic theologies. But, I ask, where is the power of the Holy Spirit that Peter and John had?

Simply my thoughts.

Bro Blaine

Re: - posted by docs (), on: 2017/4/3 18:20

You can also become prideful about not being one of what you consider the prideful educated seminary types.

Re: assumptions - posted by savannah, on: 2017/4/3 18:59

The epitamy of pride wreaks in many posts in this thread. The indictment being made is that the men in the list in one of my previous posts, didn't walk with Jesus, were not in touch with the spirit, were merely studious men, who missed Jesus Himself. Unlike ya'll, who are claiming to have ascended to that enlightened understanding of the mysteries hidden in the Word.

None of the men listed, nor myself, consider the faith to be an exercise in academics. Jesus Himself is our passion, and the One Whom we worship. He Alone is Life!

Do not speak against one another, brothers. The one speaking against his brother or judging his brother speaks against the Law and judges the Law. But if you judge the Law, you are not a doer of the Law, but a judge. There is one Lawgiver and Judge, the One being able to save and to destroy. But who are you judging another? James 4:11,12

Re: , on: 2017/4/3 19:09

But the fact still remains that the early apostles were not seminary trained by today's standards. But they walked with Jesus and moved in Holy Ghost power.

Do we see men such as Peter and John coming out of American seminaries, moving in the same power that they moved in? I think the answer to that would be a resounding, NO. Was it not Leonard Ravenhill who call seminaries, cemeteries?

Bro Blaine

Re: savannah - posted by Martyr (), on: 2017/4/3 19:09

I never declared these men to be void of the life of Christ. I say they have been contaminated by doctrines of men that do not align with what Paul or the apostles or Christ taught. I did not draw a line and did not say anything you have lyingly accused me of saying. You made up all of those statements and put them in my mouth. Very well they did the same to Christ.

It's not black and white, I'm not doubting these men love Christ and yearn for the truth. I'm not saying they aren't saved or the Christ doesn't have a hold on them.

As for the scripture you quoted The spiritual man judges all things. We are told repeatedly to discern and judge and test and try.

Re: contaminated you say - posted by savannah, on: 2017/4/3 19:52

"I say they have been contaminated by doctrines of men that do not align with what Paul or the apostles or Christ taught."
"

Yes, you say!

They have been contaminated...but not you!

Of course, they don't align... but you align!

My guess is that you're younger in years...say younger than brother Paul.

Re: - posted by Martyr (), on: 2017/4/3 20:14

I don't know how old Paul Washer is but Paul told Timothy not to let anyone despise him for his youth and he was younger than I am. I make no claim to be perfect, I only claim to see that something has gone terribly wrong with Christianity over the past two thousand years and that Jesus has been gracious enough to grant me vision of that, at least in part now, I do not know.

For a website dedicated to revival, a website dedicated to the idea that there's something wrong with modern Christianity, you guys sure to cling to that which is broken.

You have still not addressed the fact that you openly lied about my assertions, completely fabricating words and insinuations I never put forth. To say there is corruption in something is completely different from what you are saying I put forth.

Re: - posted by docs (), on: 2017/4/3 20:38

/Going back to the atonement you are not going to find it spelled out for you in the bible. The bible wasn't meant for that./

If you are inclined, can you discuss your view on this a bit further.

/"I say they have been contaminated by doctrines of men that do not align with what Paul or the apostles or Christ taught."
."/

Which doctrines do you believe these to be? Please feel free to elaborate.

Re: your own words - posted by savannah, on: 2017/4/3 20:46

"I say they have been contaminated by doctrines of men..."

Note "disdain is for those" in your next quote;

"My disdain is for the act of elevating the scriptures to the level of Lord and seeking in them eternal life. It is subtle. Jesus upbraided the Pharisees for it. My disdain is for those who turn the bible into doctrines and precepts and live by those rather than living by the Spirit of Truth"

Note "instead" in your next quote;

"Men who didn't search the bible for systematic thoughts and doctrines but instead walked in life in the truth of Christ and by His guiding in their day to day life and in His wisdom not limited by the bible but confirmed by it"

"...why quote and cite men such as him and not rather listen to what Christ and those who were taught by him instead of men who, however well meaning, may have unintentionally been deceived..."

Note "rather than" in your next quote;

"Who says Spurgeon walked in the fullness of Christ? For me I don't know but I can see a stark difference between his teachings and those of Paul's. Spurgeon spent a great deal of time trying to decipher Paul's writings rather than walking as Paul walked."

A theologian said, "Doctrine is not a matter of the tongue, but of the life."

I am certainly not clinging to that which is broken. Another indictment you make.

Re: - posted by Martyr (), on: 2017/4/3 20:50

Not with doctrines, with doctrine. To further clarify the need to have a fixed definition for every theological idea in the bible. I'm not calling anyone a false prophet, a bad teacher, or void of the truth. I come across strong I realise that. But I do believe the examination and classification of the scriptures that is done today is not how Jesus, Paul or the disciples saw, viewed or used the scriptures and that to do so is detrimental and does not point to Christ who is the living word. I'm not even saying their theology is WRONG in the sense of being incorrect, I'm saying there is more than right or wrong and that is Christ. Peter was used mightily by God still thinking he couldn't eat pork. Peter was used by God full of hypocrisy, distinguishing between the Jews and the Greeks.

Like it or not the Christian religion is mystical, spooky, otherworldly. I use those terms because spiritual has seemingly lost its meaning. You cannot spell out the mysteries of the Christian religion, if so then we would have a law that justifies but now we are delivered and brought into the knowledge of Christ by Christ! Against such there is no law, no writing or teaching spelled out but it is given to those by the Spirit of God to those whom seek truth.

This is what I meant by the atonement is in the bible but you won't read about it. Nothing is spelled out, it is hidden. That was God's plan for thousands of years, the prophets before Christ attested to it and marveled. So what is the authority? Christ is. Where? Within. It's a scary thing to not have a visible authority. Israel feared so they got Saul. The Catholic church got the pope and the protestants have the bible. But I see more chaos among them than those who are bound by Christ and the truth and dare not betray either.

Is God the author of confusion?

Re: - posted by Martyr (), on: 2017/4/3 20:55

I am certainly not clinging to that which is broken. Another indictment you make.

If you also believe the church needs a revival, then you admit it is not where it should be. Yet here you are defending the theology and the usefulness of systematic theology both of which are used by the church you claim needs revival. I assert that this is part of the problem, you disagree. So I say you are clinging to that which is broken (defending a Christianity you claim doesn't work).

Re: Reading about the atonement in the Bible - posted by docs (), on: 2017/4/3 21:29

If the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Hebrews 9:13-14)

Having just read that verse, I feel as I have just read about the atonement in the Bible and understand it.

Re: - posted by Martyr (), on: 2017/4/3 21:33

Amen!

Re: - posted by Martyr (), on: 2017/4/3 21:38

Brother, let me ask you a question that may help clear up the confusion between us. I don't mean this to be derogatory or to start an argument only to help you understand my point. You say from that verse you read and understand the atonement. Very well. Did you experience it from reading that verse as well?

Re: , on: 2017/4/4 0:20

I haven't read all the posts in depth but I'm grieved about the discussions in some threads. To me it looks more like some "personality clashes" rather than Christ centered, God honoring studies. May I briefly share some thoughts and Scriptures, will try and keep it short.

1 Corinthians 3v5 What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? They are servants through whom you believed, as the Lord has assigned to each his role. 6I planted the seed and Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. 7So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.â€

We keep a record of preachers and their "doctrines" their degrees, their achievements etc. Example: Spurgeon had "this theology", or George Mueller was a "something-ist", etc. But I don't believe the Lord keeps such a record in the Book of Life!

I don't think George Mueller should be remembered for his "theology" rather for his faith and what God could do through him !

Genesis 15:6 And Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD counted him as righteous because of his faith.

Hebrews 11 "By faith..."

Revelation 3:21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

"Trust and obey, for thereâ€™s no other way
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey..."

Re: Thank you markuskiwi - posted by docs (), on: 2017/4/4 4:22

I receive your admonition.

I just don't believe that ministers and servants of the Lord who may hold degrees have necessarily done a disservice to themselves by studying the word in a formal setting. Nor do I believe not having done so disqualifies someone from effective service. God can and does use both.

I also don't believe that the meaning of the atonement cannot be found in the pages of the Bible or that the Bible does not openly speak of it. I admit that it bothers me to hear things like that and a certain amount of objectivity may have been lost.

Servants of the Lord will be remembered more for their faith more than their theology but their theology can surely be interesting and edifying.

You mentioned Christ centered God honoring studies. I can receive that.

"Now the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart, a good conscience and sincere faith." (1 Timothy 1:5)

Now that is good doctrine.

Thank you.

Re: - posted by docs (), on: 2017/4/4 4:48

/Brother, let me ask you a question that may help clear up the confusion between us. I don't mean this to be derogatory or to start an argument only to help you understand my point. You say from that verse you read and understand the atonement. Very well. Did you experience it from reading that verse as well?/

I meant that verse and others like it that pertain to the atonement is not hidden from believers or even non believers for that matter. The Bible speaks openly and plainly about the atonement and in many places. That which once was hidden has now been openly revealed.

I don't know what the "it" is that I may or may not have experienced by reading that verse but it's probably best for me to just let things go at this point. I simply don't agree that the meaning of the atonement cannot be found in the Bible. It's pretty carefully dissected and broken down for us in the pages of the Bible especially the New Testament. There's no worship of the word involved in believing that. Christ Himself speaks to us through His written word.

The Bible is profitable for rebuke, instruction and doctrine. If a person perhaps does a word or passage study on a particular biblical subject and then tries to organize his findings a bit isn't doing a thing wrong in my opinion. Pity a church without any foundational doctrine to help guide it.

That the meaning of the atonement cannot be found in the pages of the Bible because the Bible wasn't written for that is something I can never agree to. It doesn't matter if you then say of you ask God for wisdom He will show you what is hidden. One thing for sure that is not hidden in the Bible is the meaning of the atonement. Christ Himself would direct you to His written word even as He is the living word. I consider the words of the Bible to be living words. There is nothing spooky or hyper spiritual about that.

I think I'll leave it at that for now and won't be carrying on any further. I would urge you to get with other members of the body of Christ whom you trust and respect and perhaps submit or present some of your views to them. Input from the rest of the body never hurts.

Thank you and blessings.

Re: , on: 2017/4/4 9:32

...Dr. A. B. Simpson has this illustration, or illustrates this thing in this way. He says that on one occasion he saw the Constitution of the United States written, and it was written on a parchment. He was near to it, and could read all the details of the Constitution of the United States. But as he stood back from that parchment, some yards off, all he could see was the head of George Washington there on the parchment. Then he drew near again and saw the Constitution was so written in light and shadow as to take the shape of the head of George Washington. That is it. God has written the revelation of Himself, but it is in the Person of His Son, the Headship of the Lord Jesus, and you cannot have the constitution of heaven, except in the Person, and the constitution of heaven is the Person in the shape of God's Son...

It would seem based on the illustration above by A.B. Simpson we are called into relationship with a person. The person is Jesus. Again, I think of the Christmas card that soon.,

...The word did not become a philosophy or theology or a concept (and I might add a book) to be discussed, debated or pondered. But the Word became a Person to be followed, loved and enjoyed...

We read in Genesis 5:23-24,

...Enoch lived sixty-five years and became the father of Methuselah. Then Enoch walked with God three hundred years after he became the father of Methuselah and he had other sons and daughters. So all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty-five years, not walked with God and he was not for God took him...

The book of Hebrews commenting on the above passage says,

... By faith, Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death, and he was not found because God took him up for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up for he was pleasing to God...

Was Enoch walking with a theological construct or was Enoch walking with a person? We can only presuppose that Enoch was walking with Jesus in His preincarnate state. Mind you. There were no Bibles in Enoch's day. We can only presuppose that he had an experience with the Lord Jesus Christ. Or perhaps it was revelations of God in dreams and visions. But the text does tell us he walked with God. And this was not in theological concepts or abstracts. But presumably in a relationship with the living Christ, the living Word of God.

In an earlier post, I mentioned that. Peter and John had been with Jesus. The theological leaders of their day saw that the early apostles had walked in relationship to the Son of God. And that Jesus was living in their hearts by the Holy Spirit. Also, they were moving in the power of the Holy Spirit. Again, no theology could produce the apostolic power of the Holy Ghost. Only through being in a relationship with Jesus, could they know the true power of God working in their hearts.

God has called us into a personal relationship with a Person. This person is the Truth. And his name is Jesus.

Bro Blaine

Re: - posted by docs (), on: 2017/4/4 10:20

So bear,

If one for instance is curious say about sanctification (or any biblical subject) and they do a study of it in the Bible and make an attempt to organize their findings a bit and then maybe present them to others for their mutual edification is that wrong? Should pastors not study a few books outside of the Bible to see what others have to say about a subject they are considering speaking on? There weren't Bibles in Enoch's day but there is one today and it is a fairly large corpus that even the early church didn't have.

Why do you act like saying we are called to a relationship with the person of Christ and not theology or books is something people don't understand? Give us a break bro. That's not news or a revelation to anyone even the people who have written books.

Try the end results of the charismatic movement for a movement that used to express the ill conceived mantra that we don't need doctrine or theology we just need Jesus. What caused it to so far off the rails and end up an embarrassment to

the entire body of Christ?

Do you plan on reading any books from here on out? Has your disdain for theology ended up with you walking in the power of God like Peter and Paul and the early church? If these fancy theologians are full of knowledge but minus the power of God are you walking in this power? Come on bro. I would urge you to quit hammering good people.

Blessings to you and I appreciate your concern for the persecuted church.

Peace.