

**Scriptures and Doctrine :: Which early church father's works can be trusted?****Which early church father's works can be trusted? - posted by carters (), on: 2011/7/30 3:16**

Hello,

I was reading through the discussion on this thread about the doctrines in churches. I found alot of it very confusing, but also interesting.

1. Does anyone have any straight forward, easy to understand information on which early church fathers were actually ok, which of their works can be trusted?
2. Alot of people talk about getting back to early church times...is it fair to say that we know alot more now based on historical evidence etc than what we knew back then...or is it fair to say that the further we got from Christ the worse it got in terms of pure doctrine.
3. When did infant baptism actually begin and why did it come about?
4. Another thought I had today was about clothing and accessories in our modern times (not immodest clothes just the general way today us women dress...completely less covering than even 30 years ago (and jewellery common place)...is it ok for us to accept the changes and dress modesty in modern times or should we go back to how things were...and then how far back do we go?
5. Were there 2 Clements?? Which one is the safe one?

Thanks
Through Him only
Sherid (female)

Re: Which early church father's works can be trusted? - posted by savannah, on: 2011/7/30 6:02

Question asked by Sherid -

"When did infant baptism actually begin and why did it come about?"

Here are just a few thoughts on this matter:

"From patristic evidence, immersion, aspersion, or affusion would all seem to have been acceptable....from quite early times, the rite of baptism was variously administered..."

"The earliest baptistery that we presently know of is one which is found in the catacombs of Pontianus. It provides some evidence about the mode of baptism. The baptistery is hewn from the rock and measures 4.8 feet long by 3 feet wide by 3.5 feet deep. How is this significant? It is obviously too small for immersion. Above the baptistery is a fresco which depicts the Lord standing in the Jordan River, and the Holy Spirit descending in the form of a dove. In the picture, John is baptizing Jesus by pouring water on his head!"(New International Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology).

"No one is free from defilement, not even a day-old child. That is why there is in the Church a tradition, received from the apostles, in accordance with which baptism is conferred on little children. The guardians of the holy mysteries know that at every man enters this world with a defilement which must be cleansed by water and the Spirit. That is why this body is called "body of sin," not that the soul already has another body, a body that has sinned... but because the soul has been placed in this body of sin and humiliation. He thus shows that by its birth in the flesh every soul contracts a stain of sin and iniquity.... Why should baptism for remission of sins be administered, as is the practice of the Church, even to little children? Undoubtedly, if in little children there was nothing that needs forbearance and pardon, the grace of baptism would be superfluous." - Origen (185-254 A.D.)

"Infants are baptized for the remission of sins. What sins? Whenever have they sinned? In fact, of course, never. And yet: 'No one is free from defilement.' (Job 14:4) But defilement is only put away by the mystery of baptism. That is the reason why infants too are baptized." - Origen

"For what is sin? Could a child who has only just been born commit a sin? And yet he has sin for which it is commanded to offer a sacrifice, as Job 14:4ff and Psalm 51:5-7 show. For this reason the Church received from the Apostles the tradition to administer baptism to the children also. For the men to whom the secrets of divine mysteries had been entrusted knew that in everyone there were genuine sinful defilements, which had to be washed away with water and the Spirit." - Origen

"And first baptize the little ones; and if they can speak for themselves, they shall do so; if not, their parents or other relatives shall speak for them." - Hippolytus' (170-236 A.D.)

"Should we wait until the eighth day as did the Jews in circumcision? No, the child should be baptized as soon as it is born." -Cyprian (215 - 258)

The 66 bishops of the Council of Carthage in 254 agreed and said: "We ought not hinder any person from Baptism and the grace of God..... especially infants. . . those newly born."

There is not one Early Church Father(excepting Tertullian) who denies or even questions the validity of infant baptism. It was in no locality and at no time viewed as something that was created after New Testament times.

Tertullian (160 - 215) Tertullian embraced Montanism in 207. Montanism denied the total corruption and sinfulness of human nature. Otherwise known as original sin.

"Sinfulness begins at the puberty, of the soul, that is about the fourteenth year of life and it drives man out of the paradise of innocence." - Tertullian

I'd recommend you do your own research. Above all, study His Word, pray, and live in the Light of His Presence.

Also consider:

“I will not let water baptism be the rule, the door, the bolt, the bar, or the wall of division between the righteous and the righteous, between Christian and fellow Christian.” John Bunyan (credobaptist - believers baptism)

“Though they (believer baptists) may differ from us in some things of less moment, we are obliged not only to forbear but also to communion with them. For who shall refuse those whom Christ hath received. This and no other is the rule of our evangelical love. To require more is an unwarrantable imposition on their consciences.” John Owen (paedobaptist - infant baptism)

Re: Which early church father's works can be trusted? - posted by mguldner (), on: 2011/7/30 6:21

Sister,

Test every spirit with the Word of God, in other words Pick the meat throw away the bones. I also HIGHLY recommend the book "The Pilgrim Church" by E.H. Broadbent if you haven't already read it, at times it is boring unless you LOVE history but it gives you an incredibly accurate history of THE Church rather than a historical church organization. E H Broadbent dedicated his entire life to the History of the True Historical Church, the book is relatively cheap on Amazon, I think I got a hardback copy for 17 maybe?

Also here is a link to an online version of it for free if you just want to peruse the section of History you are wondering about.

<http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks10/1000351h.html>

I hope this helps :)

God Bless,
Matthew

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Which early church father's works can be trusted?

Re: , on: 2011/7/30 7:39

You do have to be careful with the church fathers. You have to remember that the church was in the development stage in the 1st century. Depending on the location of the church and how much exposure they had to the apostles you may well find some odd theology among all of them. Doesn't make them false teachers, it just means that they were still trying to figure out what it was that Jesus taught.

People tend to think that the 1st century church was the purest form of the church. Not so! There were many issues, which is why several councils were called... to pray and figure it all out.

For instance, I have an appreciation for Augustine. But there are points on which I strongly disagree with him.

I heard a preacher say this weekend that he gets asked all the time to recommend books. He said "I always recommend Genesis... and then Exodus... and then..."

Books are great, but if it is not scripture you need to use discernment. You need to know your Bible so well that you will immediately know if some other book you are reading is off on some doctrine.

Krispy

Re: - posted by mguldner (), on: 2011/7/30 7:55

Quote:
-----Books are great, but if it is not scripture you need to use discernment. You need to know your Bible so well that you will immediately know if some other book you are reading is off on some doctrine.

This is definitely true, I would also advise even if you know your bible your not immune. My dad use to be really bad at knowing his bible but then reading some guys with wonky doctrine.

I was reading a book about bible study and the author suggested a no brainer move Read the bible as you would read a book, meaning avoid hopping around to much, its story with a beginning middle and end, you wouldn't skip around a regular book would you. :)

I personally haven't gotten into the church fathers because I feel I lack discernment and knowledge to avoid the wonky theology some of them may have, actually here lately I haven't even picked up a commentary. Just a bunch of notecards , a pen, and my bible.

Re: , on: 2011/7/30 8:16

Quote:
-----I was reading a book about bible study and the author suggested a no brainer move Read the bible as you would read a book, meaning avoid hopping around to much, its story with a beginning middle and end, you wouldn't skip around a regular book would you. :)

Yes, there is much truth in that statement. (starting to sound like a mutual admiration society meeting up in here!)

I dont want to start some debate about Calvinism, but once I understood Reformed Theology and accepted it as Biblical. .. it literally unlocked the Bible to me in so many ways. Once you understand God is completely and utterly sovereign over everything, and you understand that He has a plan that has been in place since the beginning of time to the very end of it... you almost have to read the Bible in an expository way! It just makes sense, and you begin to see that Genesis 1: 1 is linked to Matthew chapter 18, and Psalm 64 is linked to II Peter chapter 1... and so on and so forth.

Our pastor is always saying to us that expository preaching is the best preaching. Topical preaching is ok some of the time, but if all you get is a steady diet of topical preaching then really all you are getting is the pastor's opinion.

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Which early church father's works can be trusted?

Much truth in that.

By the way, while true that we must know our Bible well to avoid doctrinal pitfalls... we must not make it sound as if avoiding doctrinal pitfalls is completely up to us. No, the Holy Spirit has been promised to us to teach us all things and lead us into all truth. So know your Bible well, and be in tune with the Holy Spirit.

Krispy

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/7/30 8:25

mguldner wrote:

"actually here lately I haven't even picked up a commentary. Just a bunch of notecards, a pen, and my bible."

I agree. When this becomes your method of Bible Study, you will not need a commentary! Lots cheaper, too!

BTW, you do want to add prayer to this list of Bible study 'tools'.

Be blessed!

Re: - posted by mguldner (), on: 2011/7/30 8:34

Of course prayer, it would be like kicking a brick wall without prayer :)

Re: - posted by mguldner (), on: 2011/7/30 8:54

Quote:
-----Our pastor is always saying to us that expository preaching is the best preaching. Topical preaching is ok some of the time, but if all you get is a steady diet of topical preaching then really all you are getting is the pastor's opinion.

But, but, but topical is easier to write a sermon for ;) Actually when I preach its often from a topical standpoint and at times I will pick one major section of scripture to talk about. I have been working on the expository preaching, I looked at 2 Samuel and found one running theme God's grace and mercy towards David. I basically read 2 Samuel through that lens now.

Re: , on: 2011/7/30 13:12

If there is any such thing as the early church fathers, then they are the ones that wrote the NT, the inerrant Word of God. It's not "can they be trusted", but can the Holy Spirit be trusted.

Any other writings by others are just writings. They may be annotated, but they are not inspired scripture.

God does not call men, "early church fathers". Men do.

We have one Father, all else are brethren.

Julius

Thank you - posted by carters (), on: 2011/7/31 19:21

Thank you all for your advice.

Fantastic! We are definitely into expository teaching. I like the statement about which books to recommend ;)

I also liked,

"God does not call men, "early church fathers". Men do. We have one Father, all else are brethren."

I really enjoyed the church doctrines/denominations thread. I have come out and had my eyes opened just over a year ago from the extreme Pentecostalism movement...it was very tricky as part of the deception I bought into was "soaking" and focusing on the feelings inside (which I can only describe as the self-consciousness BAD stuff...cut long story short...I ended up being deceived by another spirit.

So...for a while last year I had to stay away from everything except the Bible and I had to be VERY careful even in my prayer life, that I wasn't focusing on "that" feeling...I had to be very very careful. So denominations and what doctrines people believe was very important to us to keep ourselves pure and away from all deception.

Fast forward to now and I have a proper foundation now, and am able to recognise when I need to flee and from what.

I saw the early church fathers mentioned a lot on that thread and I knew a little up to now that some had some heretical teaching. It is difficult to accept someone's work when they ended up going in a very bad heretical direction. I guess this may have been the case with Tertullian.

Tertullian wrote a very interesting article called 'Women's apparel'. Has anyone read this (with discernment of course:)? I thought it was interesting regarding the culture of how women were treated and what modesty looked like back then.

Does anyone know anything about this article of his? Was this thinking pretty common back then? It is shocking to read now as a woman myself. There are some pretty strong comments about why women are pretty much the weaker creation.

Through Him only
Sherid

Re: Thank you - posted by ArtB (), on: 2011/8/6 22:30

by carters on 2011/7/31 16:21:46

"It is shocking to read now as a woman myself. There are some pretty strong comments about why women are pretty much the weaker creation.

Through Him only
Sherid"

The only difference between a male and a female is the body we inhabit while living on Earth in the flesh.

Lk 20:34-36

34 Jesus said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; for they cannot even die any more, because they are like angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection."

From the above, I believe we are spirits who inhabit a body, probably at conception. Though our body may be male or female, we are still a spirit inhabiting and operating the machine called a human body. It seems to me that it is the body that will impose either male traits on us if it is a male body, or female traits if it is a female body.

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Which early church father's works can be trusted?

I kinda like that part about how 'we cannot even die anymore'.

Re: Which early church father's works can be trusted? - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/8/11 18:26

Sherid, I reread your post and as a female perhaps I should comment on this question: "is it ok for us to accept the changes and dress modesty in modern times or should we go back to how things were...and then how far back do we go?"

When one gets to discussing dress on a public forum, things can get unpleasant because we all come from different cultures. So, it is with trepidation that I will attempt to answer your question although my earlier post should lead you to the answer - that of seeking the LORD.

Sometimes I do wish the NT would be specific in exactly how one should dress. In the OT there were some laws given, like no cross dressing - men wearing women's clothes and women wearing men's. Leviticus 18 contains a lot of inspiration on how God regarded the human body, in how it was not to be exposed to others. Some folks today will declare these principles do not apply to moderns because we live under grace. True, we live under grace, but are not given the freedom or license to put a stumbling block in another's way. So then, how then should one dress?

We do not find any NT scripture detailing that this principle of dress was ever changed. Perhaps if you study this scripture with the ones in 1 Timothy 2 and with the help of your husband, you can arrive at an understanding of what the LORD would have you do. Remember, you will have to personally answer to Him - He will be your enabler.

God bless.

Re: , on: 2011/8/12 1:03

Biblically, how a woman dresses should never become heated. Modesty is modesty. I remember a discussion about "shame-facedness" as well.

1Ti 2:9, 10 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

G127 αιδώς aidōs ahee-doce'

Perhaps from G1 (as a negative particle) and G1492 (through the idea of downcast eyes); bashfulness, that is, (towards men), modesty or (towards God) awe: - reverence, shamefacedness.

This same word translated as "shamefacedness" is translated as "Reverence" in this verse -

Heb 12:28,29 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire.

I love that word "Reverence".

Most of what is written to woman, refers back to the verses about the "angels" ...

Isa 6:2 Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

1Co 11:10 For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Which early church father's works can be trusted?

Having that reverence for GOD and walking in that fear of GOD brings nothing but respect from men and never lust.

It's a heart condition and not just the modest apparel that keeps a woman a Proverbs 31 woman.

I've met women from the southern "holiness" crowd with the long hair, long dresses, no make-up and no jewelry but the women were hard and cold as stone, because their outward presentation was only under some form of legalism that would only make them 'appear' holy, whose demeanor shouted "holier than thou" but that attitude produced such hatred in their hearts and seen in their eyes for anyone who didn't look like them, and that reverence that comes from knowing Him couldn't be seen through that hatred.

So it's not just the way a woman dresses, though it includes that, but it's that reverence for GOD that causes shamefacedness before men, that men really pick up on, with the modesty in dress.

That's the inward beauty that Peter spoke of and the beauty of the reverence that the angels have - Isa 6:3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory.

Amen, GOD Bless.