

YE DO ERR, NOT KNOWING THE SCRIPTURES: PART 2

Matthew 22:26-33

I. INTRODUCTION: I

1. We continue our series of lessons with the general theme of “grow[ing] in the grace and knowledge of the Lord.” (2 Pet. 3:18)
2. **2** If you were to take a religious survey, you would quickly find many people have a lot of wrong impressions concerning what the Bible teaches on a wide variety of subjects.
3. Jesus often dealt with false teachers and false teaching; He commented on the reason for religious error as He dealt with the Sadducees in Matthew 22:23-33.
 - A. Religious error is nothing new (sects of the Jews).
 - B. The Sadducees were among the most learned men in Israel when it came to Judaism!
 - (1) But even religious leaders can be wrong! (Explain context; **Matt. 22:29**: “Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.”).
 - (2) Jesus condemned both those that taught religious error and those that followed religious error (**Matt. 15:14**: “Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.”).
4. To recognize religious error we must study God’s word! 2 Tim. 2:15
 - A. If we don’t study and learn God’s word we are easy prey for false teachers (Eph. 4:14).
 - B. False teaching comes from without (Acts 20:29) and within (Acts 20:30).

Acts 20:29-30: “For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.”
 - C. We must realize dealing with false teachers and false teaching is an important aspect of our spiritual warfare (**2 Cor. 10:3-5**: “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”; **Rom. 16:17-18**: “Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. 18 For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.”).
 - (1) We must come to grips with the fact that this spiritual war will not end in our lifetime.
 - (2) **Every generation must fight this battle! Judges 2:10-11**: “When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel. 11 Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals;”
 - (3) Only one way forj our battle against error to end in this lifetime: compromise with it!
5. The Bible is our only standard of truth (**Psa. 119:105**: “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Pet. 4:11; Col. 3:17; Rom. 4:3).
6. **3** Let us look briefly at several common religious errors.

II. DISCUSSION:

1. **4** Different religious names are of no consequence:

- A. In “Christendom” there are hundreds of different names used to refer to various churches and their members (Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, Pentecostal, etc.).
 - (1) To most people these different names make no difference. BTW: That’s an oxymoron. Different names by their very design are to make a difference!
 - (2) When discussing the name of the church their usual response is, “What’s in a name?”
 - (a) If there’s nothing in a name, how could we ever distinguish one thing from another?
 - (b) If I go into your bank and try to withdraw money from your account by signing my name will the teller say, “Sure, take all you want, after all...what’s in a name.”
 - (c) Who’s name is on your driver’s license? If you’re stopped by the police, try giving them a license that has another’s name on it! After all, “what’s in a name?”
- B. Don’t be fooled!! People that say, “There’s nothing in a name” really don’t believe it.
- C. And, even if they do believe it they “*do err, not knowing the scriptures*”.
- D. In the Bible the names of people, places and events had great meaning: “Abraham” (*father of a great multitude*), “Jerusalem” (*foundation of peace*), “Jesus” (*Jehovah is salvation*), “Immanuel” (*God with us*). A name says a lot!
- E. The Lord’s true church and His true people should only wear names He has given (e.g., those names expressing Christ’s ownership; I Cor. 2:9-13; Acts 20:28; Rom. 16:16; Acts 11:26).
- F. The Bible condemns those wearing man-made names instead of Christ’s name (**I Cor. 1:10-13**: “*Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11 For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe’s household, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now I say this, that each of you says, “I am of Paul,” or “I am of Apollos,” or “I am of Cephas,” or “I am of Christ.” 13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?*”).
- G. If we are going to “*speak as the oracles of God*” (I Pet. 4:11) we must use only Bible names for the church and for God’s people. It does make a difference!

2. **5** Premillennialism:

- A. Premillennialism has a variety of different points to it and there are many versions. ******But regardless of the “flavor” of premillennialism they all have these features in common:
 - (1) Christ’s return is very imminent (they all speculate about it despite 2 Pet. 3:10).
 - (2) Jesus secretly returns earth, and “raptures” the saints (Rev. 1:7).
 - (3) The “Great Tribulation” lasts for seven years (church has been “rapture”; Holy Spirit no longer directly operating, etc.)(misinterpretation of destruction of Jerusalem in Matt. 24).
 - (4) Christ returns to earth and defeats Satan in the battle of Armageddon, thus ending the great tribulation that afflicts the world (I Thess. 4:17).
 - (5) Jesus will then set up God’s kingdom on earth, He will rule the earth from Jerusalem for 1000 years in an utopian society (Col. 1:13).
 - (6) Final judgment (Rev. 20:11-15).
- B. **6** There’s only one thing wrong with the doctrine of “premillennialism”; it’s not true. Those that believe it “*do err, not knowing the scriptures*”.
- C. At its heart, premillennialism is mistaken about the kingdom of God.

- (1) The kingdom is not future, but is already in existence! Rev. 1:9: *"I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ,"* (Matt. 16:18-19; Mk. 9:1; Acts 2:47; Col. 1:13)
- (2) Christ's kingdom is not a material kingdom! Jn. 18:36; **Lk. 17:20-21**: *"The kingdom of God does not come with observation; 21 nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."*; Acts 1:6

D. Premillennialism is mistaken about the second coming of Christ.

- (1) Does anyone know when Christ will come again? **Mk. 13:32**: *"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."*
- (2) His coming will be "unannounced" (**2 Pet. 3:10**: *"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up."*).
- (3) The supposed signs of His coming that are preached today refer to the destruction of Jerusalem that took place in 70 AD (Matt. 24; Jesus gives at least 20 "signs" that will precede the destruction of Jerusalem, but no signs of Judgment Day, Matt. 24:36.).
- (4) When Christ comes again, what will happen to the earth?
 - (a) 2 Pet. 3:10 How can he set up a kingdom on the earth if it's destroyed?
 - (b) Christ will not set foot on earth ever again! **1 Thess. 4:15-18**: *"For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words."*
- (5) When Christ comes again, judgment will take place; all will either go to heaven or to hell:

Matt. 25:31-34: *"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. 33 And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:'"*

Matt. 25:41: *"Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:'"*

Matt. 25:46: *"And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."*

2 Thess. 1:7-10: *"and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, 8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, 10 when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed."*

E. Premillennialism tries to make the book of Revelation literal, when it was written in symbolic language about events *"which must shortly take place"*; at the time of writing, at the close of the first century (Rev. 1:1).

3. **7** Miracles and spiritual gifts:

- A. Some believe God is still working miracles (esp. tongue speaking, healing; Mk. 16:17; 1 Cor. 12:1-11) as He did in the first century.
- B. The doctrine that “God is still working miracles” is not true. Those that believe it “*do err, not knowing the scriptures*”.
- C. Those that believe this false doctrine do not understand the purpose of miracles.
 - (1) Apostle’s miracles were to reveal and confirm the Word they preached: **Mk. 16:15-20; Heb. 2:3-4; Phil. 2:25-27**
 - (2) Miracles served as “badges of authority” to show the apostles were truly inspired of God and preaching the truth (**2 Cor. 12:12**: “*Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.*”).
 - (3) Spiritual gifts were to guide the church (**1 Cor. 14:12**: “*...spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church...*”) and could only be given by the laying on of the apostle’s hands (**Acts 8:5, 12, 14-18**).
- D. Miracles were only temporary until the completion of the written Word (**1 Cor. 13:8-10**). The “perfect” does not refer to Christ (Christ is a “he” not a “that”), but to the completed, revealed knowledge of God—the Bible (Jas. 1:25; Jude 3).
- E. In the first century, the Word of God was in parts (**1 Cor. 13:9-10**: “*For we know in part and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.*”). But, different men were inspired to reveal “all truth” (Jn. 16:13).
 - (1) The truth could not be established by looking it up in the NT, for it wasn’t written yet. Thus, miracles were needed to guide the early church until the NT was completed.
 - (2) When the NT was completed, at the close of the first century, miracles ceased for their purpose had been served and taken over by the written word—the NT (**1 Cor. 13:8**: “*Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.*”; **Jude 3**: “*...contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.*”).
- F. God does still heal and work today! However, He does so through natural means (i.e., providence), not miraculous.

4. **8** Observe special religious holidays:

- A. Many “churches” have special services at Christmas and Easter or other occasions.
- B. The “observance of special religious holidays” is not authorized by God’s word. Those that practice such “*do err, not knowing the scriptures*”.
- C. The church must worship only as instructed by Christ (Matt. 15:9). The worship consists of communion (1 Cor. 11:23-26; Acts 20:7), giving of our means (1 Cor. 16:1-2), teaching (preaching) (Acts 2:42), prayer (Acts 2:42) and singing (Eph. 5:19). Every Sunday is the same!!
- D. We have no authority to observe Christmas (a Catholic tradition) as the birthday of Christ.
 - (1) We don’t even know when Christ was born, plus we have no command, approved example, or necessary conclusion that the first century disciples ever observed Christmas.
 - (2) Impossible since Christmas did not come into existence until sometime in the 4th century as a Christian substitute for pagan celebrations of the winter solstice.

- E. The death of Christ is to be remembered each Sunday by partaking of the Lord's supper (1 Cor. 11:26; Acts 20:7). Easter is a celebration of Christ's resurrection, not His death. Plus, again, we have no command, approved example, or necessary conclusion that the first century disciples ever observed Easter (word "Easter" in Acts 12:4 in KJV from *pascha*, 28 other times translated as "passover"; 1 Pet. 4:11).
- F. In observing religious days, most churches include activities that are not found in the Bible as acts of worship (Easter egg hunts, Santa Claus, Easter bunny, etc.). Don't people see how that trivializes His birth and death?
- G. The Bible very specifically condemns the observance of such "holy days" (**Gal. 4:10-11**: "You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.").

5. **9** Use of religious titles:

- A. Most "churches" have a special title for their preacher, i.e., pastor, reverend, bishop, father, etc.
- B. The use of "religious titles" is not taught in the Bible. Those that use them "*do err, not knowing the scriptures*".
- C. The terms "bishop" and "pastor" refer to elders in the church, not preachers (**1 Pet. 5:1-2**).
 - (1) "Shepherd the flock" means to "feed" or "pastor" it—that's an elder's job!
 - (2) "[S]erving as overseers" means to take the oversight of the flock, bishops are "overseers"—an elder's job!
 - (3) All three terms (elder, bishop, pastor) are synonyms (**Acts 20:17, 28**).
- D. The term "reverend" is found only one time in the Bible (**Psa. 111:9**: "He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name."). Whose name is reverend? God's! This term is NEVER used of preachers!
- E. There is no "clergy-laity" distinction in the Bible. Read Matt. 23:8-10...in the religious sense are we to "call anyone on earth your father"? **Matt. 23:8-9**: "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. 9 And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven." (KJV)
- F. God does not approve of "titles"! **Job 32:21-22**: "Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man. 22 For I know not to give flattering titles; in so doing my maker would soon take me away." (KJV)

6. **10** Baptism not essential to salvation:

- A. Though most "churches" practice some form of baptism, most of them do not believe nor teach that baptism is a necessary to be saved.
 - (1) Most believe that salvation comes at the point of faith.
 - (2) Baptism just shows others God has already saved you—"outward sign of an inward grace."
- B. The doctrine that "baptism is not essential to being saved" is not true. Those that believe such "*do err, not knowing the scriptures*".
- C. The Bible teaches baptism is essential to salvation even though it is but one of the things God requires of us to be saved.
 - (1) Who shall be saved? **Mk. 16:16**: "He that believeth **and** is baptized shall be saved;" ("and" is a coordinating conjunction, cf. **Matt. 19:21**: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come follow me.")

- (2) How does one put on Christ? **Gal. 3:27:** *“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”*
- (3) How does one have his sins forgiven? Acts 2:38; 22:16
- D. Baptism is only one step in God’s plan of salvation, but it is the culminating step of faith at which point our past sins are forgiven, we get into Christ, and we are saved and added to His church (1 Cor. 12:13; Acts 2:37-38, 41, 47).
- E. Let’s consider one more important passage concerning the importance of baptism (Rom. 6:3-6, 17-18; 1 Pet. 3:21).
- F. This is why denominational baptism is not valid. One must understand what they are doing to be baptized properly.

III. CONCLUSION: !!

- 1. We must learn to not just swallow everything we hear some preacher or church say (1 Jn. 4:1; 1 Pet. 4:11); even if they have “church of Christ” on the signboard!
- 2. If we follow religious error, we will be lost by disobeying God! **2 Thess. 2:10-12:** *“and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, 12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”*
- 3. **12** Let us continually check our beliefs by the word of God (Acts 17:11) to insure they are right and to keep us from error.
- 4. Let us diligently study God’s word so we are able to discern truth from error (2 Tim. 2:15).

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