

The Circuit Rider

Published By

Covenant of Grace Ministries

2704 Fairway Drive

Greensboro, NC 27408

Burley W. Moore—Bible Teacher

e-mail: burleymoore@juno.com

Phone (336) 292-2408

Volume 1, Number 1

July

Summer 2006

THE TEACHER'S TEXT

“THE IMPORTANCE OF SOUND DOCTRINE”

“WHOM SHALL HE TEACH KNOWLEDGE? AND WHOM SHALL HE MAKE TO UNDERSTAND DOCTRINE? THEM THAT ARE WEANED FROM THE MILK, AND DRAWN FROM THE BREASTS. FOR PRECEPT MUST BE UPON PRECEPT, PRECEPT UPON PRECEPT, LINE UPON LINE, LINE UPON LINE; HERE A LITTLE, AND THERE A LITTLE: FOR WITH STAMMERING LIPS AND ANOTHER TONGUE WILL HE SPEAK TO THIS PEOPLE.”
ISAIAH 28:9-11 (KJV)

Chapters twenty-eight through thirty-three of Isaiah deals with the judgment of God against Israel. God had dealt patiently with them by sending prophets to preach to them, but they turned from the way of righteousness to idolatry. Instead of accepting and heeding the truth of God, they followed the mere traditions of men. As a result, God promised to “speak to this people ... with” the “stammering lips and another tongue” of a foreign invading nation. Since Israel refused to gain a “knowledge” of God and to “understand doctrine” (the message of the prophets of God), the Lord promised to get their attention through the conquering enemy nation of the Assyrians. In other words, God would “teach” them by disaster what they refused to learn in times of peace. The same is true today with the Israel of God. There are times when God must chasten His children (Heb. 12:5-11) when they refuse to “judge” (I Cor. 11:31-32) the sin that creeps into their lives.

God’s desire has always been for His people, “the elect” (Col. 3:12), to grow in grace and mature spiritually just as a baby would do physically (I Cor. 3:1-2). When a baby gradually develops, he can be “weaned from” his mother’s “milk” to solid food. Likewise, spiritual development is a slow process that takes place over a period of time. There’s no such thing as a quick fix spiritually where one can take a crash course on how to become a full grown believer overnight. There is no one-day seminar or two-week course of study that can give you

everything you need to experience victorious Christian living. It takes a daily growing in grace by learning how to practice “the word of the Lord ... precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little” (Isa. 28:13). Personally, after over forty years of studying God’s Word, I feel like I know so very little with so much more to learn. I can honestly say that I hunger for the Word of God greater today than ever before in my life!

Our text, presents three things concerning the subject of “sound doctrine”, as I borrow that phrase from the inspired writings of the apostle Paul. First, the questions are asked, “whom shall he teach knowledge? And whom shall he make to understand doctrine?” Secondly, the questions are answered by saying, “them that are weaned from the milk”. Thirdly, the process of learning “doctrine” is described to be “precept (commandment, ordinance, oracle) upon precept; line (measuring tool) upon line ... here a little (small quantity), and there a little”.

A “knowledge” of Bible “doctrine” and the application of it to our lives is of surpassing value in the sight of God. Doctrinal ignorance is a shame for any child of God who has been saved for any length of time. Professing to know Christ, but remaining unteachable or unwilling to learn truth, is cause to actually question one’s personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Entering into a genuine personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior should give a person a spiritual appetite for God that he never had before. Such a person should have a desire to “rightly” divide “the word of truth” (II Tim. 2:15) through a “study” of “sound doctrine” (I Tim. 1:10, II Tim. 4:3).

Let’s look at several things pertaining to this subject of “doctrine”, first of which is THE DEFINITION OF DOCTRINE. There are several Hebrew and Greek words that are translated, "doctrine", some 51 times in the KJV of the Bible. In the Old Testament, there are three different Hebrew words and in the New Testament, there are four different Greek words that can refer to “doctrine”. All of these words refer to learning, teaching, instructing, tidings, news, message, correction, precepts, or to that which is taught. For this reason, you find the word “doctrine” translated differently in various versions, but it does not change the truth nor does it alter the meaning of the passage. The Hebrew word found in our text, is Shemawah, meaning, “message”. Verse nine of our text; can literally be translated to read, “Whom shall He teach knowledge? And to whom shall He explain the message? Those weaned from milk, those moving from breasts.” God has always used His called out and gifted servants (Eph. 4:11-15) to deliver the “message” of doctrinal truth and the mark of a growing Christian will be their hunger to receive it.

Anything that is taught can rightfully be called “doctrine” which can include SECULAR as well as SACRED subjects. In order for something to be “taught”, there must be a teacher to “teach” it or a messenger to deliver the “message”. Scripture records a time when Jesus, “went into Capernaum; and ... on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught. And they were astonished at his doctrine” (Mk. 1:21-22). At the close of the sermon on the mount, it’s recorded that “the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes” (Matt. 7:28-29). The Sanhedrin accused Peter and John of filling all “Jerusalem with” their “doctrine” (Acts 5:28). God gifts different individuals

in the Church to expound the “word of the Lord” to the external “ear” (Rev. 2:7,11,17,29, 3:6,13,22), but only the “Holy Spirit” can actually “teach” (Jh. 14:26) it to the INTERNAL “ear”. The “Holy Spirit” is the divine unseen teacher of spiritual “truth” and since He is the third person of the Godhead, it goes without saying that He cannot lie and will always “teach” only “sound doctrine”. If there is such a thing as “sound doctrine”, then it only stands to reason that there exists false doctrine. Paul warned the Ephesian believers to beware of the “wolves” (Acts 20:29) that would creep into the assembly and Peter warned of those who would teach “false” doctrine (II Pet. 2:1). Anything that is not Bible based and not inspired of the “Holy Spirit” is unsound and false! For that reason, Holy Scripture is the measuring rod in our study of “precept upon precept”. In our study of God’s Word, we must compare Scripture with Scripture in systematic fashion because God will never contradict His Word.

Now, that we have established the fact that there is such a thing as false doctrine, let’s look at the DANGER OF FALSE DOCTRINE. History is filled with stories of people who have been lured into trouble by false doctrine. A madman named Hitler indoctrinated multitudes of youth in Germany. Lenin, Marx, and Stalin propagated a doctrine called Communism, which enslaved at one time, over half of the world’s population. Some who are reading this will recall that over 900 religious zealots, many years ago, followed a false spiritual leader in Jonestown, Guyana; who led them to join together in a mass suicide.

Error in doctrine will produce error in judgment, conduct, lifestyle, and behavior. Biblical error can be just as devastating as physical error. First John 4:6 admonishes us to know the difference between “the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error”. We are to “believe NOT every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (I Jh. 4:1). There are some people who would argue that it doesn’t matter what one believes just so long as he is sincere, but is that what the Bible says? Apply that kind of reasoning to mathematics or science and see what happens. The next time you go to make a purchase at the store, just try to convince the cashier that two \$5.00 bills equals \$15.00 and see what happens. Scripture warns against false doctrine and how it will get worse and lead into a time of much apostasy in the realm of Christendom (Jude). If there is false doctrine, then there must be false teachers and the only way to detect the false from the true is to “understand doctrine” (understand the message) that is supernaturally taught to our hearts by the indwelling “Holy Spirit”.

God has raised up in the Church those teachers who have been commissioned with the DUTY TO PREACH SOUND DOCTRINE. Paul told Timothy to “preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (II Tim.4:2-4). Regardless of what modern scholars and Bible critics say, the need for “sound doctrine” will never become outmoded (Titus 1:9, 2:1). Some are departing from “sound doctrine” in an attempt to please everybody and offend nobody. Some are departing “sound doctrine” for the sake of drawing numbers through entertainment and being seeker-sensitive. Some merely consider “sound doctrine” to be

narrow-minded bigotry and out of style. Let me say, loud and clear, that “sound doctrine” is so important because it is the means whereby believers can mature in the faith (I Tim. 4:6,16, II Tim. 3:16). Without being taught “sound doctrine”, we’ll be malnourished Christians and stagnate in spiritual growth. Unless we’re properly equipped with “sound doctrine”, we’ll be ill equipped to serve the Lord Jesus.

Last of all, hopefully, the true Believer will have a **DESIRE TO LEARN SOUND DOCTRINE**. Only those who are “weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts” will thirst for “sound doctrine” (I Pet. 2:2). It’s only natural that a new born Believer begins with the “milk of the word”, but God expects him to graduate to a diet of spiritual “meat” (Heb. 5:13-14). Those who are unable “to understand doctrine” are those who advance beyond the stage of spiritual infancy. “Sound doctrine” is learned by having a heart and hunger for God (Prov. 2:1-5, II Tim. 2:15). Without an obedient heart, our quest for spiritual “knowledge” will be in vain. A true hunger and thirst for “truth” is a work of the “Holy Spirit” that will result in bringing honor and glory to Jesus Christ.

Why then, is there so much variation among Christian denominations and individual Christians? The reason could be due to such things as prejudice, limited capability, the lack of study in God’s Word, and failure to spiritually mature. Besides, most people are resistant to change and when they are programmed wrong, they are content to stay that way. But, there is also the possibility that an appeal to the flesh causes man to be blinded to God’s Word and he becomes comfortable in his spiritual ignorance. Unless the “Holy Spirit” becomes our divine teacher, we’ll never learn “sound doctrine”. God’s Word is a supernatural Book and it can only be revealed to us by His supernatural power. Without a prayerful, humble, unbiased, sincere, teachable, willing, and trusting heart, one cannot expect to learn “sound doctrine”. All Believers need to remember that in this life, while living in our mortal bodies, “we see through a glass darkly” (I Cor. 13:12) and there is no Christian who will have full understanding of all Biblical truth on this side of glory. Only as we spiritually grow and are taught by the “Holy Spirit” will we have more understanding of God’s Word. Some believers have grown more than others. Therefore, let us not fail to practice “love” for “the brethren” (I Jh. 3:14) even when we disagree over those matters that are not cardinal truths.

A study of “sound doctrine” is a “study” of **THEOLOGY**, which literally means a discourse concerning God. To “study” **THEOLOGY** is to study what God is accomplishing through all His works in dealing with fallen man. Biblical **THEOLOGY** consists in the facts of the Bible that have been crystallized into scriptural “doctrine”. It recognizes the inspired source from which the “doctrine” comes. The world is filled with a great deal of religious teachings, but “doctrine” that is not based on the **AUTHORITY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE** is not Biblical nor “sound”. I trust that those who read this have a hunger for “truth”. I remind you that Jesus said, He is “the truth” (Jh. 14:6), and that “the truth shall make you free” (Jh. 8:32).

ALLOW US TO INTRODUCE OURSELVES

As of June 30, 2006, Covenant of Grace Ministries filed its Articles of Incorporation with the North Carolina Secretary of State. Our first Board Meeting was held on July 13, 2006. This ministry exists today from a desire that was planted in my heart over thirty-eight years ago. At the time of getting organized, I was reminded by Jerry Stanley, one of my friends from the teenage years, of how Jerry and I dreamed of getting an evangelistic work started back in those “early days”. That work never materialized, but I did go on radio with a Christian broadcast, which lasted until shortly after Ann and I were married. I always had a love for radio, which is one of the reasons I went with the Bible Broadcasting Network in 1998 before being called, back into the pastorate. My original plan was to launch this ministry sometime after my 62nd birthday, but all of that changed when I met Brother Gerald Primm. Over four years ago, upon moving back to Greensboro, God allowed my path to cross with Brother Primm. We began meeting and discussing theology and one day, I shared with him my goal to someday begin a Radio Ministry of teaching God’s Word. He encouraged me not to wait, but to start earlier than I had planned. After seeking the will of God in this matter, I felt that now was the time to get things started. Now, that it’s done, I can see the wisdom in not waiting. It’s going to take some time to get things established in order to launch our radio ministry. There is equipment to purchase and the exploring of possible stations over which to broadcast. The name of the broadcast is yet to be determined, but our goal is to have the first Bible Study over radio within the next two or two and a half years. The number of stations and the time element for broadcast will depend upon cost and financial income.

Our Board of Directors includes myself, our son, Wilson, and daughter, Julie, as well as the two named brethren above, Jerry Stanley, and Gerald Primm. Julie and Wilson both live in Stanly County where I pastored for eight years. Brother Jerry pastors the New Salem Baptist Church in Culpeper, Virginia, and Brother Gerald is the retired pastor of Eller Memorial Baptist Church here in Greensboro. I am so appreciative of these Board Members who are willing to work with us to make possible COVENANT OF GRACE MINISTRIES.

You are receiving this edition of ***THE CIRCUIT RIDER***, our official publication that we plan to publish every quarter, in hopes that it will be a spiritual encouragement to you. We’ll be using both e-mail and regular mail for getting out this paper. If you DO NOT want to receive this publication, please FORGIVE us for the mailing. We do not want to offer you something that you do not want to receive. Just notify us by e-mail, by regular mail, or by phone, and we’ll remove your name from our mailing. Your partnership with us in this ministry is greatly appreciated. Please pray for us as the Lord brings us to you mind and heart that we may know and do God’s will.

Because of His Sovereign Grace,BWM