

# The Word of Truth

Neil Girrard

Jesus rebuked the devil: “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” (Mt. 4:4) The devil had just laid before Jesus the temptation to use His divine power to transform rocks into bread as a solution for His hunger after having fasted for forty days. (Mt. 4:2-3) Jesus’ answer to this temptation holds many things we would do well to consider.

Jesus relied on the rightly applied *written* word of God to refute the devil’s temptation. Today, as was true in the days of the first preaching of the new covenant (see 2 Pet. 3:16, 2 Tim. 2:16-18, etc.), there are those who twist and distort the meanings of the Scriptures to satisfy some inner bent or urge of their own. But Jesus, as Paul would later instruct Timothy to do, had already presented Himself to God and was able, in the moment of crisis, to correctly handle (or “rightly divide”) the word of truth. (see 2 Tim. 2:15) There would be almost no end to the list of Scriptures one could make of the various distortions that are currently taught as “truth” in today’s “Christian” religious marketplace. If we are to safely persevere to the end of all this deception (see Mt. 24:4, 13), we must acquire this same ability to correctly handle and rightly divide the word of truth.

Many people today have acquired religious knowledge and information from many sources. Indeed there is a virtual smorgasbord of sources available ranging from multiple translations of the Scriptures to tomes of dictionaries, encyclopedias and commentaries on the Scriptures to multiplied hundreds of teachers and preachers who put forth their understandings by way of the internet, television, radio and their tape or podcast “ministry.” What is often overlooked is that this creates at least three distinct hazards.

The first hazard is that after having gleaned from so many sources, we have a “mixed bag” of ideas. Some of what we know and believe is truth, some is error and yet more is some strange mixture of truth and error. Because we have presented ourselves to men and not to God, our ability to correctly handle and rightly divide the word of truth is deficient and we will cling to our errors and mixtures with as much religious zeal as we cling to any truths we might possess. Even more sinister in all this is the truth that wherever we place our faith onto a lie or an error – and this becomes even more applicable to those lies or errors that touch upon the more important matters of life and faith – the demonic gains a foothold into our thinking, our soul, our life. If we persistently cling to our errors and distortions of the word of truth, in the end we will be like the Jews who in their ignorant zeal “for God” crucified the Christ and persecuted His messengers and disciples. (see Rom. 10:2, Mt. 27:25, 2 Cor. 11:26, etc.)

The second hazard is that, by relying on so many sources, we will never discern the source of our knowledge. Our “mixed bag” holds things we’ve learned from God, from men and even from demons. When we first come to know God, there is a place for teachers to instruct us in the elementary teachings of Christ and God. But the first and most important thing we need to be learning is to hear God for ourselves! (Jn. 10:27, 1 Jn. 2:27, Heb. 8:10, etc.) It is severely distorted for any follower of Christ, after years of exposure to Christ, God and the Bible, to still “feed” from the “breast” of some man’s teaching and preaching “ministry.” (see Heb. 5:12-14) Anyone who does this will swallow that man’s teaching without question whether that be genuinely divine truth, human error or demonic deception designed to destroy and divert one’s faith and obedience away from Christ and God.

The third hazard is that by picking and choosing which source we like most and which “truths” we will accept and keep, we are practicing what the New Testament calls lawlessness. The Greek word is *anomia* [458] and it simply means “no law.” Since we have been delivered from the law (Gal. 3:10, etc.), one would not expect *anomia* - “no law” – to be such a serious

matter. But we find that those who practice *anomia* are rejected by Christ on the last day (Mt. 7:23) and *anomia* has no fellowship (unity, commonality) with the righteousness of God. (2 Cor. 6:14) *Anomia* is best summed up in the description given of the Israelites during the days of the judges – “In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” (Jdgs. 21:25) The failure to submit to Christ as actual and literal king over one’s life results in our having to choose and follow and obey that “theology” or philosophical beliefs that are right in our own eyes. This is directly in contrast with God’s righteousness which can be simply summed up as that which is right and true in God’s eyes.

We gain life from “every word that comes from the mouth of God.” (Mt. 4:4) The same cannot be said for every word that comes from the mouths of men. While some life-giving sustenance can be transmitted when words that originally came from God are repeated by men, the true source of our life is God and what He is saying to us. When we insert a man between ourselves and God – or worse, when we allow the demonic to gain some foothold between us and God – the result can only be distortion and disruption. The “milk” upon which we begin our new life in Christ – the teachings of other men must soon give way to the “meat” we receive from God Himself. Anything else is a distortion of the way of following Christ and God and may well prove to be only a deadly deception engineered by the enemy of our souls who seeks to devour and destroy us. (1 Pet. 5:8, etc.)

One who has acquired a “mixed bag” of “theology,” or one who is not certain that all of his spiritual knowledge comes from God, or one who is unsure that that all his choices of what is right, true and good should set *all* of his spiritual knowledge on God’s “altar” and wait until God begins to restore it. Such a one will find indeed that God is faithful and able to preserve his soul even in a time of intellectual flux and change as such a “sacrifice” will cause. The end result will be a deepened grasp on those things which were truth, a purification of those things which were deceptively false and a rejection of anything that was completely in error.

John wrote, “Everyone who has this hope [of being resurrected in His likeness] purifies himself just as He is pure.” (1 Jn. 3:3) And Paul wrote, “Since we have these promises [that God will be our Father and we His sons and daughters], dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.” (2 Cor. 7:1)

If we will not surrender to God our spiritual knowledge, our “theology,” then we have no right to expect Him to fulfill the promises He makes to those who obey and follow Him wherever He leads. If we will not allow Him to be King and God over our beliefs, we can only practice lawlessness. That this condition of lawlessness (choosing which “theology” and beliefs are right in our own eyes) prevails is a sign of Christ’s soon return (Mt. 24:12, 2 Ths. 2:3) and should stand as an encouragement to Christ’s genuine followers to press on and persevere to the end – an end which is closer now than ever before.

Let he who has ears hear.

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