

Simply Christ

Gospel Newsletter

Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ

September 24, 2019

Religious Theories

A few years ago, I was speaking with a man of God who is also a cherished friend. He was saying something that seemed very unscriptural, so I interjected “...but Peter said...” Before I could finish, he spoke out strongly saying, “I know what Peter said, but I have done my research!” I thought, “How could this man of God so easily discard God’s word in exchange for his research?” In the issue at hand, it was not only what Peter had spoken, but what Jesus and Paul also said. How does a minister get to the place that the word of God carries so little weight in what they believe and preach? Doesn’t it still matter what the word of God actually says?

There are two vital factors to “*rightly dividing*” the word of God. The first is simply “What does the scripture say?” The other is to recognize what the scripture DOES NOT SAY. When we attempt to fill in what the scripture does not say, we have to make assumptions. These such doctrines are sometimes called theories. It is important for all of us to recognize that although we may believe something with all our heart, if the scripture does not clearly state it, from a scriptural standpoint IT IS A THEORY! Some of these theories “**may be true,**” but we must know that which the scripture specifically says, “**IS TRUE!**” One is an assumption of truth; the other is the truth! A problem arises when these contradict each other. When this happens, one must be discarded. Which should

we discard? That which “may be true,” or that which IS TRUE? Let us look at some conflicts between traditional doctrinal theories and the record of God’s word.

Theory: The blood of Jesus covers sin.

It is true the scripture tells us that “*charity will cover the multitude of sins*” I Peter 4:8. David also, describing his own repentance and the forgiveness he found after turning from and confessing his sin Psalms 32:1-5, spoke of the blessedness of the man whose sins are covered. Yet there is not a single verse of scripture in the Bible that says the blood of Jesus covers sin. Here is what the scripture does say about the blood of Jesus: The blood **sanctifies** the people. Hebrews 13:12. The blood **cleanses** from all sin and unrighteousness. I John 1:7, 9. The blood **washes** us from our sin. Revelation 1:5. The blood **makes us perfect** (complete) in every good work to do his will. Hebrews 13:20-21. The blood **purges** our conscience from dead works. Hebrews 9:14. The scripture is loud and clear concerning the work of the blood of Jesus Christ, yet people cling to the assumption that it covers sin, which theory is not mentioned even once by the Lord or his Apostles.

Theory: Jesus died to take the penalty for our sins.

This theory certainly has a beautiful and powerful emotional grip on the minds of many, but there is actually no scriptural foundation for it at all. Some point to the words “*the chastisement of our peace was upon him*” Isaiah 53:5, but one would have to make some enormous assumptions to declare this means he died to take the penalty for sin. Jesus and the apostles never presented the gospel that way. They always

presented Jesus' sufferings as that which delivers us from sin and Satan. Peter quoted Isaiah 53 when he wrote, "*Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, **that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed***" | Peter 2:24. John said Jesus is "*...the Lamb of God that **takes away the sin of the world***" John 1:29, and Paul says he "*...gave himself for our sins, **that he might deliver us from this present evil world.***" Galatians 1:4. The book of Hebrews confirms these things, saying, "*...he appeared **to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.***" Hebrews 9:26. Where does any writer in the Bible say Christ died to take a penalty? Christ did not die to take your penalty; he died to take away your sin! John 1:29.

Theory: Jesus died to pay a debt we owed for our sins.

Where in all the Bible does the scripture speak of Jesus paying a sin debt or God demanding a payment? In the one parable that speaks of a paying a debt, it was the evil servant who demanded payment, as contrasted with the Lord who freely forgave the debt. Matthew 18:23-35. If a person is forgiven a debt, the debt is not paid, otherwise forgiveness is not forgiveness. John said, "*...he is faithful and just to **forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.***" | John 1:9. God certainly forgives your sins when you come to Christ, but the blood of Christ washes it out of your heart and nature!

Theory: Jesus' sinless life is imputed to the believer.

Many times when "*justification by faith*" is mentioned, this statement follows, "*Jesus lived a perfect life so you don't have to, and his perfect*

life is credited to you when you put your faith in Him." As much as anything I have ever heard, this teaching qualifies for what Paul calls a fable. Not even one verse of scripture in the entire Bible comes close to saying such a thing.

Theory: Jesus' righteousness is imputed to the believer.

This is one of those teachings you hear so often that it just feels like the truth, but I have never found a scripture that says the righteousness of Jesus Christ is imputed to us. People use Abraham's experience to attempt to prove this, but remember, Abraham *"died in faith, not having received the promises ...God having provided some better thing for us..."* Hebrews 11: 13, 40. Abraham's *"justification"* was not the same as our salvation! Abraham's discovery about faith was that *"believing God"*, and not religious works, is what qualifies you to receive the promises of God. Paul then used Abraham's experience to show there is something God cherishes more in those who approach him than being a Jew, or being circumcised, or doing religious works. Anyone can come to God if they will believe the gospel record God gave of His Son! Believing the gospel is the *"righteousness of faith"* by which any person, anywhere, can approach God. Yet the person who is brought into Christ is not just *"counted as righteous."* They are in fact *"made righteous."* The Bible says, *"...so by the obedience of one shall many be **made righteous.**"* Romans 5:19. Christ is not our righteousness because he is imputed to us, but because he lives in us and fills us with righteousness!

It may seem wise to some for me not to write about beliefs which are cherished by so many. Yet

these teachings have become great blinders upon the eyes of the people. They cannot see the truth of Christ because they are hypnotized by religious fables. There are certainly people of God who may believe some of the things I mentioned above, but there are many, many more people who are held captive by sin in their heart, mind, and nature, thinking their sins are covered, their penalty is paid, and God sees them as having the righteousness of Christ. It is for their sake that I write these things. Because if they never know the truth, how will they ever be free?