

Words Of Grace Seasoned With Salt

October 2015

False Assumptions

Many theories and doctrines people assume to be true today are in fact false. They assume they are true because of their wide acceptance and their longevity. People assume that if a large number of people believe a theory or a doctrine, then it must be true. They assume that if a theory or doctrine has been taught for many years, then it must be true. They reason; how can it be false if so many people have believed it for so many years? But, when it comes to Bible doctrine it is not safe to assume anything is true just because many people believe it's true. It is not wise to assume a doctrine is true just because it has been preached for many years. For many years many people sincerely believed the earth was flat. They said it was a "scientific fact" and very few questioned it. They actually believed that if they sailed too far out into the sea they would fall off the earth and be eaten by sea monsters. But, even though the majority believed this theory for many years, they were wrong.

What is true of so called "science" is true in the religious world. Certain doctrines and theories that have been preached from the pulpit for many years are in reality wrong. But, the folks sitting in the pews assume they are true because so many people believe they are true and because of how long and loud they have been preached. They cannot conceive in their minds how a doctrine or theory can be wrong when they see so many people advocating it and so many preachers teaching it as fact. To many Christians the wide acceptance and longevity of a doctrine makes it true. But, this is not a safe guide to follow when discerning truth. Most of us would not buy a used car from a man just because he says it is in "perfect condition". We would not take his word for it. We would exam the car closely. We would test drive and prove the car by listening to the motor. In the church we should treat every doctrine and theory the same way. We should never believe any doctrine or religious theory without first proving it and testing.

1 Thessalonians 5:21 says: ***Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.***

To prove all things is to test and try all things to be sure they are true. We should carefully examine everything we are asked to believe from the pulpit. We should not believe a doctrine or theory is true just because we like the one who teaches it. We should not believe it because of how zealous it is preached or how loud it is preached. The volume of a man's voice does not make what he is saying true. We should not believe it because the majority believes it. We are not to assume any doctrine or theory is true, because of how long or how many years it has been preached.

We should never park our brains at the front door of the church before we enter. We should never disregard the sound reasoning of our minds. We should never be persuaded to believe anything because of the education or affluence of the one who teaches it. If a man has letters behind his name and has written many books, people just assume he must be teaching the truth. But, this is a false assumption, because some of the worst heresies in the church have been promoted by learned men who wrote many books. We should never believe anything just because of the charisma and charm of the one who teaches it. Charming personalities do not make anything true.

We are to prove all things, test all things and try all things before we believe anything. What is the standard to judge all things by? The ultimate, infallible standard is the word of God. It alone determines what is true and false and right and wrong. It makes that very claim in 2 Timothy 3:16 which says: ***All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.***

Notice the claims the Bible makes of itself:

The scriptures are profitable for doctrine; doctrine is teaching what is true.

The scriptures are profitable for correction; correction corrects what is false.

The scriptures are profitable for instruction in righteousness; instruction in righteousness is instruction in right living and conduct.

The scriptures are profitable for reproof; reproof is reproofing and rebuking bad behavior and conduct.

The scriptures are the final authority when it comes to defining true doctrine and exposing false doctrine. The scriptures are the final authority when it comes to defining what is morally right and what is morally wrong. The word of God is the infallible guide to follow in all matters of faith and conduct. And when we hear someone teach a doctrine or religious theory we should test and try it and compare it with the word of God before we believe it or reject it.

When Paul preached the gospel or any doctrine, he never told his audience to take his word for it. He encouraged them to test and try and compare what he said with the word of God. For example in Acts 17:10-12 it says: ***And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.***

There are three statements to take notice of in these verses.

(1) They received the word with all readiness of mind.

They were not a closed minded people. Even though they were Jews who had been under the law all their lives and were firmly established in the doctrines of the law, they were willing to hear the gospel preached by Paul even though it was different from what they had been taught all their lives. They gave the word of God a fair hearing. The Jews in Berea were not like the other Jews who shut their ears to the gospel, because it was different from what they heard all their lives.

(2) They searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

The scriptures they searched were the Old Testament Scriptures Paul preached from concerning the sacrificial death and resurrection of Christ. Acts 17:2-3 says: ***And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.*** Even though Paul was a great apostle and had all the signs and credentials of an apostle, they did not take his word for anything he said until they first searched the scriptures to see if what he was saying was true or not. They did not believe what he said or reject what he said until they first compared

what he said with the scriptures. They were noble and wise by searching the scriptures first before they believed anything they heard. This is what a good Berean does today.

(3) *Therefore many of them believed*

Once they were convinced by the scriptures that what Paul said was true, then and only then they believed it. Even though they had never heard the gospel and even though it was different from what they heard all their lives and even though it was contrary to what they believed, they still believed it once they were convinced it was true by the scriptures.

The Bereans were wise for they never assumed a doctrine like the gospel was true just because a great man like Paul preached it. The scriptures convinced them to believe the gospel. They put Paul's preaching and doctrine to the test of the scriptures and once they saw it was true, then they believed it.

There are not many "Bereans" in the church today. Sad to say most people believe what they believe because the majority believes it. They believe what they believe because of how long it has been preached. They believe what they believe because of the power in which it is presented to them or the charisma of the one who taught them or how it makes them feel. People love "feel good doctrines" and theories that require no sacrifice or suffering on their part.

In these studies, we will exam a number of doctrines and theories people assume to be true, but are not. Many of these doctrines and theories have been preached and believed by many people for many years and they are never questioned or put to the test of the scriptures to see if they are right or wrong.

False Assumptions Of The Old Testament Scriptures

Christians today have a number of false assumptions about the Old Testament Scriptures. For example; many Christians assume that church doctrine today is not found in the Old Testament. They say it's found only in the books of the New Testament: Matthew through Revelation. There are others who narrow it down to just the Pauline epistles. They say the only books we should base church doctrine on today are Paul's epistles only. For example, in the Scofield Bible he wrote a note at the bottom of Ephesians 3 which reads: *That in Paul's writings alone is found the doctrine, position, walk and destiny of the church.*

He did not say that doctrine for the church is found in Paul's epistles. He wrote, in Paul's epistles ALONE is found the doctrine for the church. That is an assumption on the part of Scofield and many people today assume it's true. Some religious organizations include Scofield's note in their doctrinal statements.

But, we ask the question that everyone should ask: What saith the scriptures? The answer is 2 Timothy 3:16 which reads:

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

Paul did not say that Matthew through Revelation is the only books for doctrine today. He did not say his epistles are the only books for doctrine today. He said all scripture is profitable for doctrine. All scripture is profitable for reproof. All scripture is profitable for correction and all scripture is profitable for instruction in righteousness.

When Paul said, all scripture is profitable for doctrine, he meant what he said and that includes what is called the Old Testament and Paul proves this is so for the following reasons.

(a) He quotes the Old Testament 150-200 times in his epistles. If doctrine for the church is not found in the Old Testament like some people assume why did Paul quote it over and over again? If the Old Testament is not for doctrine today like many assume wouldn't it be misleading for Paul to quote it so many times in his epistles?

(b) In his epistles he uses the expression "as it is written" 33 times referring to the Old Testament scriptures. Again this shows us that Paul never led anyone to believe that doctrine for the church is found only in his epistles or the New Testament books. If that were so he did not practice what he preached.

© There is at least 55 major church doctrines based directly upon the Old Testament scriptures in Paul's epistles. (Send for list)

(d) Paul preached from the Old Testament Scriptures throughout his ministry.

In Acts 26:22 when Paul stood before King Agrippa he summed up his preaching ministry from the time he was saved till then. He said: ***Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come.***

When Paul preached to the Jews in the synagogues and the gentiles outside he always preached to them from Moses and the Prophets. Take the time to read, Acts 17:2-3, Acts 17:11, and Acts 28:23.

You can see from these verses that it is a serious mistake to assume that doctrine for the church is found only in Paul's epistles or only in the New Testament books of Matthew through Revelation. This assumption misleads people and gives them the idea that the Old Testament is off limits to the church and has nothing to say to the church when the truth is: ALL scripture is profitable for doctrine

(e) Some of the most important doctrines of the church are found in the Old Testament Scriptures and the Four Gospels.

In your Bible study take the time to read the following doctrines of the church found in the New Testament and the verses they are based upon in the Old Testament. I think you will be amazed.

The Gospel of the Church

Compare 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 with Isaiah 53. When Paul and the other apostles preached the gospel they preached it according to the scriptures. What scriptures? The Old Testament scriptures such as Isaiah 53.

The Justification of the Church

Compare Romans 4:1-3 with Genesis 15:5-6. Also compare Romans 1:17 with Habakkuk 2:4.

Justification by faith is one of the great doctrines of the church and it is based upon the justification of Abraham in Genesis 15 and what Habakkuk the prophet wrote in Habakkuk 2:4.

The Righteousness of the Church

Compare Romans 4:6-8 with Psalms 32:1-2.

One of the great blessings of the church is the imputed righteousness of God and it's based upon what David said in the Psalms.

The Spirit of the Church

Compare Galatians 3:14 with Proverbs 1:23, Isaiah 32:15, 44:3, 59:21, Ezekiel 11:19, 36:26, 37:14, Joel 2:28-29.

The New Covenant of the Church

Compare 1 Corinthians 11:25 and 2 Corinthians 3:6 and Hebrews chapters 8-11 with Jeremiah 31:31-34. Christ and Paul were ministers of the New Covenant and we partake of its spiritual promises today, especially the once for all sacrifice of the New Covenant. The Lord's Supper is also a memorial the New Covenant.

The Inheritance of the Church

Compare 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, 1 Corinthians 15:50, Galatians 5:21, Ephesians 5:5, Colossians 1:13, 1 Thessalonians 2:12 and 2 Thessalonians 1:5 with all of the Prophets and the Psalms.

Throughout the New Testament the kingdom of God is called the inheritance of the church. It is the final destiny of the church and the kingdom of God is prophesied by all the Prophets and the Psalms.

The Hope of The Church

In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul wrote about the coming of Christ and the resurrection of the church and he plainly says that when the church is resurrected at Christ's coming two Old Testament prophecies will come to pass. Compare 1 Corinthians 15:54-55 with Isaiah 25:8 and Hosea 13:14.

The Spiritual Promises of The Church

In Romans 15:27 Paul wrote: ***For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their (Israel's) spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.***

Gentile believers in the church partake of the spiritual promises God made to Israel and they are all found in the Old Testament scriptures.

The Salvation of Heathen Gentiles In The Church

Compare Galatians 3:8 with Genesis 22:18. Paul identifies the seed, the nations and the blessing of Genesis 22:18. The seed is Christ. The nations are heathen gentiles. The blessing is justification by faith.

The Gifts of The Church

Compare Ephesians 4:8-12 with Psalms 68:18. God gave the church the men of Ephesians 4:11 as gifts in fulfillment of Psalms 68:18

The Judgment of the Church

Compare Romans 14:10-12 with Isaiah 45:23. This judgment of the church was prophesied by the Prophets

The Apostle of the Church

Compare Isaiah 49:6 with Acts 13:47. God promised to send light and salvation to the gentiles to the ends of the earth through Christ. This prophecy was fulfilled by Christ, but not in person, but by proxy. Paul fulfilled this prophecy in Christ's stead.

What you have read is a sampling of church doctrines that are based upon the Old Testament scriptures.

A false assumption many have is that the Old Testament or Old Covenant is the first 39 books of the Bible.

When we say the words "Old Testament" most people automatically assume it is the books of Genesis through Malachi. But is this true? When put to the test of the scriptures this assumption proves to be false. The Old Testament or Old Covenant is not the first 39 books of the Bible.

For example; Jesus separated the Old Testament or Old Covenant from the Prophets and the Psalms. In Luke 24:44 Jesus said unto the apostles concerning his death:

These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of

Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.

The Lord clearly separated the Law or Old Testament from the books the Prophets wrote and the book of Psalms. The books the Prophets wrote are not Law books. The Psalms is not a Law book. The Law which is the Old Testament or Covenant is confined to what God gave Moses on Mount Sinai. God called Moses to come up into Mount Sinai and there he gave him the Law or Old Covenant.

Deuteronomy 31:24-26 says: ***And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, That Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee.***

The Law of Moses which is the Old Testament or Old Covenant is not the first 39 books of the Bible. It was confined to a single book Moses wrote that he placed in the sides of the Ark of the Covenant.

When he finished writing the law in a book the Lord said to him: ***Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God.***

That single book contained the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. These are the true Old Testament or Old Covenant books. Moses did not place the first 39 books of the Bible in the sides of the Ark. They were not even written. He placed a single book he wrote that contained the laws God gave him on Mount Sinai.

The Old Testament law was written in a book years before the prophets and Psalms were written. Therefore, the books of the Prophets and the book of Psalms are not Law books. They were written many years after the Law or Old Covenant was written by Moses. The true definition of the Old Testament or Old Covenant is the book Moses wrote that contained the laws God gave him on Mount Sinai that he placed on the side of the Ark of the Covenant in the tabernacle he built. This is why the Lord was careful to separate the law or Old Covenant book Moses wrote from the books the prophets wrote and the book of Psalms the largest book in the Bible.

What We Should Learn From This

When we base doctrine today on the writings of the Prophets we are not “putting people under the law” for the Prophets are not Law books.

For too long Christians have branded the first 39 books of the Bible as all Law books and so when someone bases doctrine on them today they say, you are putting people under the law. And for years many Christians don't even read them much less base doctrine on them.

But, Christ and all the Apostles based church doctrine on them. You just read 12 major church doctrines based upon what the Prophets wrote and the Psalms. Therefore, when we base church doctrine on the Prophets and Psalms we are not putting people under the law, for they are not Law books.

When we base church doctrine on the writings of the Prophets and the Psalms we are not wrongly dividing the word of truth as some suppose.

Many people today say all doctrine for the church is based upon the books of Matthew through Revelation or Romans through Philemon only. And they say if you go outside of those books for doctrine you are not quote; “rightly dividing the word of truth”. But, what these people ignore is that many of the doctrines found in Mathew through Revelation are based upon the writings of the Prophets and the Psalms. Paul quotes them 150-200 times in his epistles alone. If basing doctrine outside of Matthew through Revelation is “wrongly dividing the word of truth”, then every New Testament writer is guilty, for they all based New Testament doctrine on the Prophets and Psalms. Those who rightly divide the word of truth make the same divisions God makes. God did not divide the doctrines of the church from the Prophets or the Psalms as many today.

Church doctrine is not confined to the 27 books of the New Testament, but includes the writings of the Prophets and the Psalms.

If all scripture is profitable for doctrine this of course includes the writings of the Prophets and the Psalms. So the well which we draw doctrine from is greatly expanded. Our source of doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness is not limited to the books of Matthew through Revelation, but includes the writings of the Prophets and the Psalms which were a source of doctrine for Paul and all the Apostles in the New Testament.

Some of the mysteries of the New Testament are found in the Old Testament.

When Christians read the mysteries found in the New Testament they assume they are not found in the Old Testament. To most Christians all the mysteries of the New Testament were hidden from the Old Testament writers and that is why they are called mysteries. But, this is a false assumption, for the mysteries of the New Testament are not a secret because they are not written down in the Old Testament. Many truths and doctrines were written down in the Old Testament, but remained a mystery and a secret until God chose to reveal them. In other words; a doctrine can be a mystery even though it is written down in the Old Testament.

For example; In Luke 18:31-34 Jesus Christ told the Apostles that He would be put to death, but rise again, yet what he said to them was a mystery. It was not a mystery because it was not written down in the Old Testament. Christ's death, burial, and resurrection were all prophesied and written down in the Old Testament Scriptures. Why was it a mystery? Because it was hid from them. Luke 18:34 says; ***And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.***

It was in the Old Testament, but they could not see it or understand it because God kept it hidden from them. A doctrine like Christ's sacrificial death was mystery even though it was written down in the Old Testament. It is a mystery because God for his own reasons chooses to keep it hidden from the understanding of men. It stays a mystery until he chooses the right time, place or man to reveal it.

Later in Lk.24:44-46 it says that Christ; ***opened their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day.***

When He opened their understanding they were able to see in Luke 24 what was hidden from them and a mystery to them in Luke 18. The fact of his death and resurrection was foretold in the scriptures of the Prophets, but remained a mystery until God opened their understanding to see it.

The same is true of many of the doctrines found in Paul's epistles. Many of the doctrines in Paul's epistles are called mysteries, not because they were not written down prior to their revelation, but because God for his own reasons chose to keep them a secret prior to revealing them to Paul.

What was written in the Prophets and Psalms is not all written to Israel or about Israel, but to the church and gentiles in the church.

The following verses prove beyond a doubt that what the Prophets wrote not only pertained to Israel, but to gentiles in the church under grace.

Romans 15:8-12: ***Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: (many stop reading here but keep reading) And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.***

And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.

These verses alone refute the false assumption that every book written before Matthew was written to and for Israel only. These are all quotes from the Old Testament and they prophecy of the salvation of gentiles in the church today. They were all fulfilled in Paul's gentile ministry according to Acts 26:22-23. See Psalms.18:49, Deuteronomy 32:43, Psalms. 117:1, Isaiah 11:10.

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