

Four Pillars: Doctrine 3 – Rightly Dividing Scripture

The 4 Pillars

Acts 2:42 - And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' **doctrine** and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

A Biblical Admonition

2 Tim 2:15-18 - Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. ESV

Discussion Questions:

- 1) In order not to be ashamed, what must we rightly, or correctly, handle?
- 2) If we can rightly handle it, doesn't this imply we can also wrongly handle it?

John 8:31-32 - To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. 32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

We MUST know the truth in order to truly be free, and that means we must rightly handle it...

Proper Hermeneutics & Exegesis

Hermeneutics - the branch of knowledge that deals with interpretation, especially of the Bible or literary texts.

Exegesis - critical explanation or interpretation of a text, especially of scripture.

These are just fancy ways of saying this is how we interpret scripture. However, if we get these wrong, we could find ourselves believing and even teaching false doctrine...

Proper Biblical Hierarchy:

Matt 26:28 - For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. KJV

Testament - NT:1242 - diatheke (dee-ath-ay'-kay); from NT:1303; properly, a disposition, i.e. (specially) a contract (especially a devisory will): KJV - covenant, testament.

Heb 9:15-20 - For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance — now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant. 16 In the case of a will, it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it, 17 because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living. 18 This is why even the first covenant was not put into effect without blood. 19 When Moses had proclaimed every commandment of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people. 20 He said, "This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep."

Heb 8:13 - By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.

Discussion:

- 1) Christ instituted a new covenant or testament when He died on the cross
- 2) Hebrews likens it to a legal contract: we were once under the contract of the OT, and now that Jesus has died, He ushered in a new contract, which is the NT
- 3) This does not mean the OT is useless for us, but rather that our doctrines are based on the NT, not the OT
- 4) Any doctrines in the OT, must be re-established in the NT for them to apply to the church
- 5) Indeed, all the essential doctrines from the OT that apply to the church are reiterated in the NT scriptures

Proper New Testament Hierarchy:

Matt 16:18 - And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

Luke 24:47 - And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. KJV

Rom 1:7 - To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints:

Eph 1:1 - Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus:

1 Cor 1:2 - To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ — their Lord and ours:

Discussion:

- 1) The gospels (Mt, Mk, Lk, Jn) all point toward a specific time when Jesus would begin the church
- 2) The epistles (Rom through Jude) all point back to people and churches that were already established
- 3) The thing that both the gospels and epistles point to is the Book of Acts (see accompanying PDF)
- 4) Acts is where the church begins (Acts 2) and where things started “in Jerusalem” per the end of the gospels
- 5) Acts is where the churches and people whom the epistles are written to were established
- 6) Acts is where we can see the church in action and where we can learn how we’re supposed to operate today
- 7) The gospels give us the mind and heart of Jesus, His teachings, His work, and how He operated
- 8) The epistles give us the marching orders, rules and regulations, and doctrines of the original church

Action Items

- 1) Understand the necessity to properly study and understand scripture
- 2) Three important “rules” to follow are: a) scripture is infallible and has no contradictions or errors, b) we establish doctrine by scripture alone, c) we must use all of scripture to establish doctrine, not just specific passages, key verses, or items out of context
- 3) Know that it takes a lot of work and effort to really understand and know scripture. This is why God places teachers within the body of Christ, to help us
- 4) Remember, no teacher gives us an excuse not to know scripture for ourselves
- 5) We must avoid teaching doctrines that we have not studied out for ourselves. Simply taking someone else’s notes or outlines and re-teaching them to others can get us into trouble if they happened to be wrong
- 6) Scripture trumps doctrines of men, organizations, & tradition every time, it alone is our foundation for doctrine