

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RIGHT TEACHINGS AND UNDERSTANDING**

If our eyes are fixed on Jesus, a second implication follows in our Christian lives: right teachings and understanding. Wrong teachings creep in when our focus on the Lord Jesus becomes blurred and distorted.

### **ACCEPT BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE AND REVELATION**

From the early days of church history, various individuals had questioned the person of the Lord Jesus and His work on Calvary. We know clearly that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man. Yet there had been those, using human logic and reasoning, who queried how Jesus could be fully God and fully man at the same time. The Gnostics, who held the view that all material is evil, claimed that God, being Spirit, could not possibly dwell in a human body.

We need to acknowledge that human logic is limited, and biblical revelation and perspective transcend human logic and reasoning. For example, we believe that God is one and yet He is three persons. The doctrine of the Trinity is accepted by all true Bible-believing Christians. Yet we know that if we apply human logic to understand this doctrine, we would be baffled and stumped. How can God be one and three persons at the same time?

There are those who cling to distorted teachings and understanding because they cannot reconcile their logic with the plain biblical perspective and revelation. As such, all scriptures are interpreted in a way that supports their own presuppositions and in line with their own human logic and reasoning.

*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

Isaiah 55: 8-9

We must humbly acknowledge this truth as we seek to understand God's revelations and ways. Let us accept biblical revelation and perspective as they stand even though our human logic cannot comprehend them. For we know that the secret things belong to the Lord God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever.

## **REJECT FALSE TEACHINGS**

The teachings of Gnosticism penetrated the early church and apostles like Paul and John in particular sought to combat these wrong teachings.

*Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist – he denies the Father and the Son. No one who denies*

*the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.*

1 John 2: 22-23

Whether it be Gnosticism or other forms of teachings, if there is denial that Jesus is the Christ, the spirit behind such teachings is the spirit of the antichrist and has to be rejected rigorously by God's people. Beware of those who claim that Jesus is not fully God and fully man even though they may use the scriptures and be apparently effective in their so called ministry. We must realise that the evil one himself was able to quote scriptures in the temptation scene of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 4.

The right biblical approach is to teach truth which comes forth from the proper study of the Bible rather than to use scriptures to support one's own novel ideas, however impressive these ideas may seem to be. Someone wisely said that you can use scriptures to support virtually any idea if you quote them out of context and in a manner that ignore other parts of scriptures which contradict your idea. Imagine the damage that can take place when such a distorted approach is used by an influential leader who commands much respect and popularity among his followers. Many a heresy begins in this manner and let us not conclude that when scriptures are used and quoted that everything is in order.

If we do not allow the language of scriptures to speak to us in context but try to make the text fit our own novel

ideas, then the meaning of any word in any part of the Bible depends on man's interpretation which can change according to whatever ideas are in fashion or in the forefront of our own speculation.

### **BEWARE LEST THE GIFTS BECOME MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE GIVER**

When the eyes are no longer firmly fixed on Jesus, the gifts can become more important than the Giver. Believers become rather obsessed with the gifts of the Spirit to the point that the Giver is not given the proper place and honour due to Him. In such a context, the Lord Jesus is not magnified and glorified in the various meetings. Instead, individuals and "spectacular gifts" take centre-stage. We must realise that when God is not the primary focus in our lives and ministry, then everything else becomes out of focus. The Holy Spirit's main ministry is to glorify Jesus Christ and to point the believers to Him and not to put Himself personally in the limelight. We need to bear this in mind when we evaluate whether a ministry is Christ-centred and whether the focus on Jesus Christ, His person, His work and His glory has been compromised.

### **THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS WAS ONCE FOR ALL AND COMPLETE**

When certain ones seem to suggest that Christ's sacrifice is not sufficient and that we need some other extra experiences and superior knowledge in our Christian lives – beware! Such an approach often causes division in the

church with some claiming that they are more spiritual than others or that others lack spiritually. This also compromises the gospel of the Lord Jesus.

*...But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgement, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.*

Hebrews 9: 26(b)-28

*Because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.*

Hebrews 10: 14

Scriptures make it clear that Christ's sacrifice was once for all and complete. Any attempt to discredit this truth is unacceptable and dishonouring to God. In the last days, God has spoken to us *by His Son* (Hebrews 1: 1-2). Any message from any person that is not consistent with what is spoken to us *by His Son* is to be rejected.

We need to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus such that we may not be led astray to the wrong teachings and understanding. We must keep our focus right.

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