

WORLD VIDEO BIBLE SCHOOL

Fundamentals of the Faith

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LESSON #11 — THE EFFECTS OF FALSE DOCTRINE (PART 1)

And now we're in Roman numeral seven on our outline for this particular study, the importance of sound doctrine. In our last class we studied: What does God say on this subject? And we always want to start with that approach: What does God say? It's not important what I say, or any other man or woman says, but what does God say? And we've seen that He has made it very clear in His Word that sound doctrine is important.

We looked at: What is sound doctrine? We noticed that the word translated “sound” means “healthy, wholesome, not corrupted, true.” So that's what God wants us to teach. We also saw from 1 Timothy chapter 1, verses 10, and 11, that sound doctrine is defined as that which is according to the gospel of Christ, the New Testament, the faith, which was once for all delivered to the saints. So if something is different from that New Testament, it is not sound doctrine.

Today, we want to continue our study, and to look at this from another perspective. We want to see another reason why it's important to teach sound doctrine. And that reason is to examine some of the effects of false doctrine. The effects of false doctrine. How is it that false doctrine affects us in our daily lives? That's what we want to study by looking at the Scripture to determine some important points along those lines.

False doctrine, of course, is that which is the opposite of sound doctrine. That which is not according to the gospel, not according to the New Testament of Christ. We want to study three major effects of false doctrine. The first is that it destroys those who teach it. We don't want those people to be destroyed, who teach that which is false doctrine. But God makes it clear that if that's the choice that they make, then He has no alternative but to destroy them. We want to read several passages of Scripture, and make some comments on those passages of Scripture, to reinforce the fact that this point is taken from the Word of God.

Let's look first in the book of Galatians. In Galatians, the first chapter, verses 6 through 9. Galatians chapter 1, verses 6 through 9. Here the apostle Paul addresses those Christians in the region of Galatia in the first century. He said, “I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.”

Those are awfully strong words from Almighty God. Paul marveled, he was amazed, that those Christians in Galatia had obeyed the gospel, and now they had turned away from that gospel. They had begun to turn away from that gospel. He just couldn't believe that they had changed their mind so quickly. He said, “You have turned away so soon from Him who called you.” Who's he talking about there? He's talking about God. God had called those Christians out of a life of sin, into a life of obedience to the Lord. How did he make that calling? It wasn't

through some mysterious voice in the night, or some vision that He gave to them. Instead, in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, verse 14, we know that He called them by the gospel, the good news, that glad tidings of salvation through Jesus Christ. So he said, "God had called you but now you've turned away. You've begun to turn away from God who called you through that gospel."

And he said, "You've turned to another gospel." Literally, he's saying, to a different gospel, because there's only one that is acceptable: the New Testament of Jesus Christ. And he says at the beginning of verse number 7, in this context, he said, "This message that you've turned to, is not another gospel." That is, it is not a second acceptable gospel, because there's only one. "What you've turned to is a false message, a message not from God, but from man." He says, "There are some who want to trouble you, who want to plague you." How are they doing that, God? They were plaguing these Galatian Christians, by teaching something other than the gospel of Christ. He said that they want to pervert the gospel of Christ.

What does the word "pervert" mean? It means "to transform, or change into something of an entirely opposite nature." So these false teachers were coming in, and were changing the gospel of Christ. They were changing it from the good news of salvation, to bad news of condemnation, by adding to or taking away from the Word of God. And Paul says, "Even if we," that is, inspired apostles and prophets of Christ in the first century. "Even if we, or an angel from heaven come to you, and teach any other gospel than we've preached and taught to you, let him be accursed."

That's a very strong word. The word translated "accursed" means, "abominable, detestable, it's hateful." It's something that means, "devoted to God for destruction by Him." That's what God says the ultimate fate is of those who teach false doctrine, teach other than the New Testament of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. They are going to be devoted to God for destruction by Him. Now, we know that everything that God does, He does perfectly. And if He is going to destroy these people perfectly, we know that He's going to do a very good job of it. And we know that from other passages of Scripture, that destruction will be in the form of being separated from God for eternity, in the flaming fires of hell (2 Thessalonians chapter 1, verses 7 through 9).

So Paul was saying to them, "I don't care who it is who comes to you, if it's me, another apostle, a Prophet, or even one who is an angel comes from heaven. If they preach something different than I've preach to you, then let them be accursed." And he goes on and repeats his point in verse 9, by saying that, "If anyone comes to you, and preaches any other gospel than that which you have received from Me, let him be accursed." Let him be devoted to God for destruction by God.

Now, with that passage in mind alone, we wouldn't have to go any further in our study of the Scriptures to see that false doctrine is something that is horrible in the mind of God. It ought to be something that we want to avoid at all costs. We want to never teach or preach that which is false, that which is contrary to the New Testament of Christ, because it destroys those who teach and preach that false doctrine. So Galatians chapter 1, verses 6 through 9, is a very strong passage, a warning from God: do not teach that which is contrary to sound doctrine. Do not change the gospel in any way. Do not pervert it. Do not twist it or distort it.

Because if you do, “I,” God says, “am going to destroy you. You are going to spend eternity separated from Me, in the flames of hell.”

Now, with that kind of passage in mind, how is it that we have people in the religious world, and even unfortunately, and sadly, in the Lord's body, who say, “Doctrine is not important? It doesn't make any difference what you believe or teach or practice. You just try to do the best you can”? That's not what this verse says. That's not what God is saying to us in this passage, and other passages of Scripture. God says, “Doctrine is important.” It is so important, that if we're wrong, and don't repent, that we'll lose eternal salvation, for our participation in it, or our teaching of it.

And let's look at another verse on this subject. This is not the only passage in God's Word which gives us that message. Let's turn to 2 Peter, chapter 2, verse 1. 2 Peter, chapter 2 and verse 1. Here, Peter, by the inspiration of God, said to us, “But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.” So, what does Peter do? Peter refers back to the Old Testament times. And he says, he makes a statement of fact that none could deny, who were familiar with the Old Testament. He said there were false prophets back in those times. And we can read the pages of the Old Testament and see that that's absolutely correct. There were those who did not speak by God's authority, who twisted and changed and perverted God's Word. Peter says, “Just as certain as that is, it is certain that there will be false teachers among you.” Then why do we have the attitude sometimes expressed, “Oh, there's no false teachers. Everyone's just trying to teach that which is right”? That's not what the Bible says. God says there will be false teachers among us.

And notice how they work, according to this verse. He said that they will “secretly.” They're not going to come out and say, “I'm a false teacher. You better not believe what I'm saying.” That's not how they're going to work. They're going to secretly bring in destructive heresies. What does the word “heresy” mean? The original word means, “a self-willed opinion,” substituted for submission to the powerful truth of God's Word.” And it leads to division and the formation of sects, or breakaways from the main body of Christ. So, a heresy is a self-willed opinion, which is in opposition to the truth, which is God's Word (John 17, verse 17).

So false teachers work by teaching their own will, by teaching their own opinions, by their own doctrines. And they do it secretly. They don't do it openly, unless they're absolutely sure that there is no threat to them. So false teachers will be working among us just as they worked in Old Testament times, just as they worked in New Testament times.

But notice the end of verse one of 2 Peter chapter 2. What does God say there? “Bringing upon themselves swift destruction.” So what is the end result of the false teacher teaching that which is contrary to God's Word? He brings upon himself, or she brings upon herself, swift destruction. And again, the idea of destruction is not annihilation, ceasing to exist, but the being separated from God for eternity, as we've seen in our reference to 2 Thessalonians, chapter 1, verses 7 through 9. So, 2 Peter, chapter 2, verse 1, is another verse that shows us the effects of false doctrine. It destroys those who teach it.

But let's look at another verse along those lines. This one is also in 2 Peter, this time the 3 chapter, and verse 16. 2 Peter 3, verse 16. In verse 15, Peter had talked about the beloved

Apostle Paul, and he began to talk about Paul's writing. In verse 16, he says, "As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things in which are some things hard to understand, which those who are untaught and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do also, the rest of the Scriptures." Here, Peter talks about Paul's writing. And he refers to his writing as Scripture, as epistles, as letters. And he talks about those who are untaught, and those who are unstable. That is, they're not grounded, and rooted in the gospel of Christ. They're floating around, if you will, in some other teaching, some other doctrine. And he says that they twist the Scriptures. The old version of the King James says, "wrest the Scriptures." The word literally means that they change, they twist, they torture the Scriptures, by teaching things opposite from the Bible, the Word of God.

And notice what he says about that, that they bring upon themselves destruction, if they twist, rest, pervert, distort the Scriptures in any way. So, whether it's Galatians chapter 1, verses 6 through 9; or it's 2 Peter chapter 2, verse 1; or 2 Peter, chapter 3, verse 16, the message from God to you and to me is the same. If I choose to teach that which is wrong, which is opposed to the Bible, the Word of God, which is opposed to sound doctrine, the gospel of Christ, then I bring upon myself, destruction, separation from God, for eternity. That's why false doctrine is so horrible. It destroys those who teach it.

But let's look at one other passage from a different inspired author. This one is found in 2 John, little one-chapter book towards the end of the New Testament. 2 John, verse 9. 2 John, verse 9. Here's what God said through John: "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son." That's very clear, isn't it? Difficult to misunderstand what God is saying to you and me in that passage of Scripture. He said, "Whoever transgresses." What does that word mean? It means "to violate." It means "to go beyond, to add to, or take away" from God's Word. "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ." That is, the teaching that Christ made on His own, while He was here, and through His inspired apostles, and prophets, after He left this earth. Whoever chooses to go beyond the doctrine of Christ, whoever chooses not to remain in the doctrine of Christ, what is the result? Look at verse 9. What does God say? He said, "If I choose to do that, or you choose to do that, then we have not God." What does that mean? Means we're not in fellowship with God. We don't have God on our side. We don't have God watching over us and taking care of us, and protecting us the way that He has promised to do, those who are faithful to him. That's a serious problem. What are we without God? We're lost. We have no happiness, no joy, no reason for existence. And that's the result of transgressing, violating, not abiding in the doctrine of Christ.

So we believe that those passages through the pens of the apostle Paul, the apostle Peter, and the apostle John, show us very clearly that false doctrine, false teaching, destroys those who teach it. That ought to be reason enough for us to have an abhorrence of false doctrine. Stay away from it at all cost. Not get involved with it in any possible way. So there's the first reason, the first effect, of false doctrine: it destroys those who teach it. We know of those who teach that which is false.

We can see them on television, or we can hear them on the radio, we can read of their writings. And we ought to all fervently pray, and do what we can to influence those men and

women to change that which they're teaching, which is contrary to sound doctrine, so that their souls may be saved in the end.