

Core Doctrines of the church of Christ

Based Upon Dr. Everett Ferguson's Definitive Work; The church of Christ, A Biblical Ecclesiology for Today

All Quotations Are From the English Standard Version Unless Otherwise Noted

Lesson 2: Introductory Items & Chapter 1; "The People & the Messiah: History & Eschatology" -- Covenant

Introduction:

- Emphasis: We are called to righteousness, not correctness

1. As were the Pharisees, Scribes and Lawyers we can be RIGHT and not be RIGHTEOUS

2. Matthew 5:6 -- "Blessed are those who ***hunger and thirst*** for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."

2. Matthew 6:33 - "But ***seek first*** the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

3. Matthew 5:20 -- "For I tell you, ***unless your righteousness exceeds*** that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

4. "IF" we seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, we will be driven to be correct.

5. On the other hand, if we seek FIRST to be correct, righteousness will elude us and so will eternal life.

6. Thanks be to God, Jesus Christ is the Word and the Word is Jesus Christ. Through the knowledge of Jesus Christ (The Word), His divine power has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness. (2 Peter 1:3)

7. Jesus Christ Himself summed up this apparent conflict between righteousness and correctness in Matthew 23:23: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For your tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law; justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others."

A. Jesus says there are primary and secondary truths, neither of which is to be neglected, a concept that eluded Saul in I Samuel 15. When we ignore or discount any part of God's Word, we corrupt and negate it all.

-Definitions:

1. Ecclesiology -- "Theological doctrine relating to the church." -- Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, 1991
2. Eschatology -- "People of the end times." -- Everett Ferguson

-Observations:

- a. We are saved by an obedient faith in Jesus Christ, not by faith in a doctrinal system.
- b. The doctrine of the church followed the establishment of the church
- c. The establishment of the church followed the proclamation of the Word
- d. The proclamation of the Word followed the revelation to us of Jesus Christ in the flesh
- e. The doctrine is not the church, the body of Christ is the church
- f. Correct doctrine indicates obedience
- g. Incorrect doctrine indicates disobedience

- Quotations and Additional Observations:

- a. "The proclaimed word calls and gathers a *people*. The people respond to the proclamation of the person. The church is derived from the word of the gospel and from the Christ, who is the Word. God gave a word before He gave a church...While stressing the church for the purposes of this study, we must remember that it is not itself part of the proclamation, but is the result of the proclamation." -- EF from the "Introduction"
- b. "...this is not a historical study, but a doctrinal study. A doctrinal approach does not mean imposing a doctrinal scheme on the text; the effort rather is to let the doctrinal teaching arise out of the text itself." (1)
- c. "Sometimes people, finding the heart of the gospel, want to treat the rest of Biblical teaching as irrelevant. It may be secondary but it is not irrelevant." (2)
- d. The reverse is true as well. Though the doctrine of the eldership, for example, is a secondary doctrine. In other words, one may be saved without fully understanding regarding all the truth surrounding leadership in the church. This is why Jesus Christ said in Matthew 28:18-20 to:
 1. **Make** disciples of all nations.

2. **Baptize** them in the Name of the Father, the Son & the Holy Spirit
3. **Teach** them to observe all thing whatsoever I have commanded you.
 - Teaching of secondary doctrines follows the obedience to the primary doctrines of the gospel.
- e. Secondary matters come after primary but the details cannot be ignored or spiritual collapse will occur as it did to King Saul in I Samuel 15

IA Introduction:

- 1) "A proper understanding of the New Testament, however, requires the whole biblical context." -- EF pg. 1
- 2) "...the Old Testament is still authoritative for God's people in it's theology but not in it's institutions." "...as a "system of religion," the Mosaic Law (at least for Gentile Christians) has been superceded." -- EF pg. 16
- 3) The New Testament is the fulfillment of the Old Testament promise." -- EF pg. 16
- 4) As we recently studied in Frank Chesser's book; Portrait of God; Viewing the Divine through His work of redemption, "The redemptive history of the Old Testament has its significance for Christians as pointing to the Christ event and gains its fullness of meaning as related to him." -- EF pg. 16
- 5) "New Testament writers appeal to the Old Testament as authoritative for Christians." -- EF pg. 16 -- I Corinthians 9:8-10
- 6) There is great value of the Old Testament for us!
 - A. The Old Testament Law **reveals sin** -- Romans 7:7
 - B. The Old Testament **warns of sin** and it's consequences -- Hebrews 2:1-4; I Corinthian 10:6-11
 - C. The Old Testament **points to Christ** -- John 5:39
 - D. The Old Testament **instructs in salvation** -- Acts 8:26-40
 - E. The Old Testament **provides** "...teaching, reproof, correction and training in righteousness so that we all may be equipped for every good work." -- II Timothy 3:16-17
 - F. The Old Testament provides **examples of righteousness** -- Hebrews 11:1 -- 12:2
 - G. The Old Testament **gives hope** -- Romans 15:4
 - H. The Old Testament **reveals the nature of God** -- Exodus 34:6-7

- I. The Old Testament **shows the unfolding purpose of God** -
- I Peter 1:10-12
- 7. God has now spoken definitively through Christ -- Hebrews 1:1-2
 - A. This revelation represents:
 - a. A permanent and final word -- II Corinthians 3:11
 - b. The last dispensation -- I Corinthians 10:11; I Peter 1:20
 - c. The ultimate authority for today -- Matthew 28:18

IB -- Covenant

- 1) Covenant defined:
 - A. "Biblical religion is covenant religion." -- EF pg. 2
 - B. "Covenant may be defined as **a relationship based on promises or sworn oaths.**" -- EF pg. 2
 - C. There are several kinds of covenants:
 - 1. **Parity** Covenant -- "...contract or mutual agreement between individuals." -- Genesis 31 (Jacob & Laban) & I Samuel 18 & 23 (David and Jonathan)
 - 2. **Partial Parity** Covenant -- Marriage -- Malachi 2:14-15 (The man and his wife are par though God is the superior party acting as witness, i.e. "...what God has joined together, let no man rend asunder.")
 - 3. **Treaties** -- Covenant "...actions by sovereigns and relations between nations." -- Hiram and Solomon -- I Kings 5:1-2
 - 4. **Unilateral Divine Charter** -- "God (binds) himself by oath to grant certain favors to a chosen person and the people descended from or joined to that person."
 - a. **Components** of a Unilateral Divine Charter
 - 1) Identification of the **superior party** -- Exodus 20:1
 - 2) The **stipulations** -- Exodus 20:3-17
 - 3) Provision for **Deposit** -- Joshua 24:26-28
 - 4) Periodic **Public Reading** -- Deut. 17:18-19; 27:11-26
 - 5) List of **witnesses** -- Exodus 20:18-22
 - 6) **Blessings** for keeping the covenant -- Deut. 28

7) **Cursings** for not keeping the covenant -- Deut. 28

8) **Ratification** ceremony -- Exodus 24:5-8

b. Various Unilateral Divine Charters:

1) God & Noah -- Gen. 6:18; 9:8-17

2) God & Abraham

A. Components of the Abrahamic Covenant:

(1) Through him all nations blessed -
- Gen. 12:1-3

(2) A land grant to him & his
descendants -- Gen. 15:18;
17:1-21

(3) Sealed by circumcision -- Acts
7:8

(4) Continued through Isaac & Jacob
-- I Chronicles 16:14-17

3) God & Aaron -- Numbers 25:13; Nehemiah
13:29

4) God & David -- II Samuel 23:5; II Chronicles
13:5; Psalms 89:3-4

c. God's Unilateral Divine Charter with Israel was
dependant on God's Grace:

Deu 7:7 It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples,

Deu 7:8 but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Deu 7:9 Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations,

Deu 7:10 and repays to their face those who hate him, by destroying them. He will not be slack with one who hates him. He will repay him to his face.

Quote: "Because of the covenant with Abraham, Israel was not completely cast off when she failed to live by the covenant. God's grace continued to find a remnant among the people. Thus, even for Israel, the situation was not a matter of keeping the law in order to be justified. God established the relationship at the Exodus. Disobedience could cause a person to be cut out of the covenant, but keeping the law was not the basis of the relationship and the covenant itself remained because of God's faithfulness even in the face of human un-faithfulness. The people obligated themselves because of what God had done, which they could not have done by themselves and which was unmerited by them." -- EF pg. 6

- 1) It is clear that Bro. Ferguson views Scripture as did Samuel; straightforward and linearly....and so shall we.
- 2) A circular approach to the Scripture will treat most of the Scripture as "irrelevant."