

GOODNEWS LETTER

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A Doctrinal Guy

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs of God, and joint-heirs of with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together," Romans 8:16 & 17.

I'm a doctrinal guy - the kind that uses chapter and verse to prove a position that I hold. I don't go on feeling nor do I float on some heavenly "pie in the sky" kind of cloud. I'm on earth. And Jesus came to earth to present His Father's salvation through grace and love to those on earth.

To keep spiritualizing from becoming a fault, I cover myself with harmonization of the Word of God. A doctrinal guy seeks deeper meaning by studying a truth; yet at the same time, he looks for God to begin and to end any position within the plan of salvation.

For example, a doctrinal guy sees the **"Brazen Serpent"**, but he realizes there's a concrete and absolute meaning to be discovered. Rather than stopping at the symbol to worship it, as the Israelites did, a doctrinal guy goes beyond this symbol to find meaning. To him, the Brazen Serpent shows Jesus on the cross; which explains that the symbol finds fulfillment in the Person of God, Himself.

While, allegorical truth, by definition, is an abstract for explaining symbolism, we must always look for a deeper understanding than the abstract. A "symbol" acts as a representation. The "symbol" represents truth when it fits into the "real." But, we can't go the other way. The Symbol can never fit into the real; it represents the meaning of truth and is not the truth itself.

The Brazen Serpent was broken and cast away by David because Israel began to use it as a means of serving God. The meaning was lost and, therefore, not only useless but a hindrance. David called it "Nehushtan" (only a piece of brass). Out it went.

Thus, when we pray, **"Thy Kingdom come."** God may abide closer in us, all right, but our understanding allows us to see the literal kingdom upon the earth. It's coming! Thy Kingdom come" means that King Jesus will sit on David's throne and rule the world. Today, the world doesn't hear Him.

Further, **"Thy Kingdom Come"** is God's governmental realm that takes over the earth. It occurs when Jesus sets up His rule on the earth. And like the "model prayer," we have to see that all spiritual truths continue until they work their way into the Person of God, Himself. Never does truth stop until it has found the Omnipotent, Omnipresent One, God.

And so, we must look for deeper meaning; all the while seeking Spiritual truth that is found in the Bible. We have to harmonize a particular truth with other truths, making them agree. And when we harmonize correctly, we realize that finality of all truth ends up in the Person of God, alone.

PARABLES

Parables are so often misunderstood because men seek a truth within themselves rather than God. **John 15** is a good example of that. What could "I am the true vine and My Father is the husbandman" mean, other than God is the beginning and God is the ending of all truth?

If we will allow it, we shall see that Jesus **finished** all Spiritual things that He alone **began**. He says so Himself: "It is done. I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end." (Rev 21:6)

John 15 means that all believers must go through the horticultural process. To abide comes from "**Meno**" with a Greek meaning of "**remaining, to continue.**" By **abiding**, we receive His life (His sap). And here, Abiding means that fruit is produced; even, "**bringing forth much fruit**" (Jn 15:5).

It is clear that branches are to bear fruit or experience the next step in the horticulture process. There is a purging.

Purging is the "**taking away**" of the unproductive and **non-abiding branch**. Purging removes the dying portion and, at the same time, allows the necessary life to fill other branches within the vine.

Abiding is to stay put! After Jesus referenced Himself with "**I am**" and His disciples with "**Ye**" (ye are clean, ye abide, ye can do nothing), His lesson ends with "**Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples,**" **John 15:8.**

Actually, the lesson ends by Jesus presenting the source of getting into the vine in the first place; which comes by LOVE. My Father loves Me and I love you, Jesus teaches. He taught that we are to continue (abide) in His love by keeping My commandments: "**even as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.**" **John 15:10.**

So, what does a doctrinal guy do when he is faced with the horticultural process? He goes back to the beginning - how and when he got into the vine. He looks at God's declarative Word on love, "**God so loved...that whosoever believeth in Him...**" (Jn 3:17). Next, he combines that portion with other verses; such as discipline that is taught in so many places by Jesus and the church letters.

The doctrinal guy knows that salvation is by grace (Eph 2:8-9). Grace is not only the beginning, but the continuation of service; all of it! The doctrinal guy

believes - with all his heart - that Jesus finished everything; and, this means he is saved forever.

Yet, he looks to the Book of Revelation where Jesus scolds His churches (a sort of end-teaching to what was begun in John 15). The doctrinal guy always fixes his ear on the words of Jesus, "**let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.**" And he knows that these words are spoken more than just one time in the last book of the Bible.

The doctrinal guy has learned that Jesus died for the world with a view of bringing all the saved into His body - the church. But, here in His body, fruit is to be produced or a cutting off results. After combining these thoughts, he is sure that the Bible presents a difference between those saved from condemnation and those with His church. A church member must be saved, but he also must produce.

By Biblical types, the guy realizes that many came out of Egypt but few entered the Promised Land. This combination makes him content that John is teaching about service fruit, a fruitful life; not keeping one saved from hell.

After recognizing the seriousness of John 15 (et al), the doctrinal guy is settled on chapter and verse, once again. The means of salvation is God's love for man, as lived out in the Person of the Son of God, Jesus the Christ. Here, the doctrinal guy abides.