

Scripture Consulting Essentials

October 26, 2020

Learning from the Scriptures

In this study session, we are going to look at our association with others in this world. We need to recognize three things.

1. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against the authorities, against the world rulers of darkness, and against the spirits of wickedness in the heavenly realm.
2. Idolatry and the bondage of legalism are the two big attractions of the spiritual opponents.
3. Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are all complete in Christ, but in their walk, they are at various levels of growth in their Learning from the Scriptures.

Romans 15:4:

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

God's Word gives us what we need. We do not need other gods.

Galatians 4:4-11.

In times past, some of the Galatians had done service in their pagan religions to things that were not gods, such as idols. Sometime after they had turned to God, they were evidently being persuaded to return to some of the former customs and traditions, the weak and beggarly elements, which they practiced as pagans.

I John 5:21:

Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

I Corinthians 10:14:

Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.

Galatians 5:1-7.

Although Christ has freed us from the law, some of those in the church in the region of Galatia practiced circumcision and sought to be justified by the law of Moses. The epistle points out that in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, and those who sought to be justified by the law were "fallen from grace."

Some of these believers in the Lord Jesus Christ were reverting to the law and to idolatrous customs.

Acts 21:17-25.

Although the gospel was clearly taught by the apostles to whom God had revealed the gospel, other people were blending beliefs from the law and from pagan idolatry with the gospel of the grace of God concerning Jesus Christ.

The blending of beliefs and practices from the law and from pagan philosophy with those of the gospel of grace perverted the gospel, making it a mixture of ideas rather than the pure gospel as it had been revealed to the apostles.

II Timothy 1:15.

All in Asia had turned away from the apostle Paul by the time of the writing of II Timothy. Previously, as recorded in Acts 19:10, all of Asia had heard the Word of God regarding the Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 19:20 adds, "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." Following that fabulous outreach of the gospel, there was a conflict between the pagan idol makers and the Church because their idol making business had taken a toll, as recorded in Acts 19:23-41. However, it did not stop Paul and the others from bringing God's Word to the people in Asia. Paul also wrote two epistles (Ephesians and Colossians) to the faithful in Christ Jesus in the cities of Asia. By the time of the writing of II Timothy, all of those in Asia had turned away from Paul.

II Timothy 2:1 and 2.

The exhortation to Timothy, after those in Asia had turned away from Paul, was to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus and to commit to faithful people the same thing that he had heard from Paul among many witnesses.

II Timothy 2:14-26.

Profane and vain babblings and words of no profit were to be shunned, or avoided. Timothy and the faithful men with him were not to strive against those words that subverted the people. They were to avoid those words and to put forth a diligent effort to show themselves approved to God by rightly dividing the Word of truth, God's Word, without mixture from other materials. Arguments do not profit, but God's Word is very profitable.

God's Word does more to deliver people than any words of man could ever do. Rather than becoming involved in the arguments, leaders ought to teach and preach the Word of God. Say what the Scriptures say, and let God and His Word bring deliverance to those who want it.

Conflicts had developed from people who wanted to blend the Mosaic law and Judean traditions with what they were learning about Jesus Christ. Conflicts also developed from people who wanted to blend pagan beliefs and practices with the gospel. Other pagans who converted to Christianity throughout the centuries to follow also blended their former beliefs and practices with the gospel.

Writers in the second century wrote long epistles to refute the arguments of the Roman persecutors and of those who were teaching a different doctrine among the Christian churches. Rather than avoiding the arguments, as God had Paul write to Timothy, they attempted to address them, often using Greek philosophy to support their arguments against the Roman persecutors, against the legalistic Judeans, and against the proponents of the various other factions. Rather than recognizing the spiritual source of the arguments, they dealt with it as a wrestling against flesh and blood. The result was a perverted gospel.

Although we shall not take the time in this study to consider the writings from the second, third, and fourth centuries, reading some of them would show how soon strange philosophical and religious beliefs and practices were blended with the gospel. By those times, certain legal practices and standards had been adopted by many partisan groups. The pagan concept of an underworld for the dead was accepted by many of them, as opposed to what the Scriptures said about the gathering together of the Church.

Eventually, the birth of Christ came to be celebrated with decorated trees at the time of the pagan feast of Saturnalia. The day of Jesus Christ's first resurrection appearances came to be called by the name of the pagan feast Easter, and colored eggs came to be associated with it.

I John 5:21:

Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

Legalism and idolatry deterred people from understanding and manifesting what God had made available. The Dark Ages followed.

An Awakening

On October 31 this week will be 503 years since the day on which Martin Luther nailed a list of 95 theses on the Church door at Wittenberg in Germany (1517). His intention was to reform the Church of Rome, but the results ended with a complete break from the Roman Church.

Following Luther's break from the Church, there have been many others who have searched the Scriptures endeavoring to return to the doctrine and practice of the Church as set forth in the Word of God. Ulrich Zwingli (Swiss), John Calvin (French), John Knox (Scottish), and William Tyndale (English) were among them.

John and Charles Wesley followed suit in the 1700's. In that century, there was a movement in America called The Great Awakening. It was an outstanding Christian outreach among those in the colonies, some of whom became involved with the American fight for independence. They were especially concerned for human rights as later set forth in the Bill of Rights amended to the U.S. Constitution.

Revivals of this great awakening occurred in the centuries to follow. In the 1900's, there was a revival during which many people were filled with the holy spirit in manifestation by speaking in tongues. During that century, numerous evangelists arose to preach and teach what they knew and were learning from God's Word, such as Billy Graham, Oral Roberts, A.A. Allen, T.L. Osborn, William Branham, Smith Wigglesworth, Howard Carter, Lester Sumrall, and J.E. Styles.

Most of these men were helping people to be filled with holy spirit and to speak in tongues. Many of them were involved in bringing healing and deliverance from devil spirits to people around the world. Some of these men had seen visions from God that led them to these ministries. What is consistent among those who saw such visions was that God had called them to preach His Word. They did so to the best of their understanding from what they had read in the Scriptures.

Howard Carter from England was one of the first to understand that people did not need to tarry to receive the holy spirit. They only had to believe what the Word of God said. Lester Sumrall and J.E. Styles learned from him. From these men came the understanding that receiving the holy spirit is not something earned, but rather something that is given by God's grace to those who believe.

In 1942, God spoke to Victor Paul Wierwille, telling him that God would teach him His Word as it had not been known since the first century if he would teach it to others. Thereupon, Dr. Wierwille began a quest to read and study the Scriptures so that he could teach it to others. As he learned more, he would teach it. He read the Scriptures regarding speaking in tongues, and he longed to receive what he had read about.

He attended conferences and meetings where others were talking about it. Finally, he met J.E. Styles, one of those who had been involved with the 20th century awakening. Rev. Styles taught Dr. Wierwille what the Scriptures said about speaking in tongues, and he led Dr. Wierwille into receiving the holy spirit in manifestation.

Dr. Wierwille continued to study the Scriptures regarding speaking in tongues and the other manifestation of holy spirit. He discovered that they were not called "gifts" as others were calling them. He discovered from the Scriptures that they were manifestations of the gift of holy spirit received from God in the new birth.

Thus began a great awakening that led to many other people around the world being filled with the holy spirit in manifestation and being able to rightly divide the Word of Truth. Some of us were students of Dr. Wierwille, and we worked closely with him in the study of God's Word. Over the years, we learned much from the Scriptures. We had to change our thinking at times, but we were always thankful for what we were learning and for what Dr. Wierwille had taught us. As a result of his ministry and faithfulness to God, there are many people today who love God and His Son Jesus Christ, who are endeavoring to rightly divide and understand the Word of God, who are walking by the spirit, and who want to help others to learn the same.

Ephesians 5:1-17.

I Timothy 2:1-4 (WT):

Therefore, I exhort that first of all prayer requests, prayers, intercessions, *and* thanksgiving be made for all people,

including for kings and all who are in prominent positions, so that we may lead a quiet and tranquil life with all godliness and dignity.

This is good and acceptable in the sight of God, our Savior,

Who wants all people to be saved [*delivered*] and to come to the knowledge [*acknowledgement*] of the truth.

God wants all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. He wants people to know the truth of His Word as He had it written in the Scriptures.

He wants us to know the gospel of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ and all that has been accomplished for us and in us in the new birth.

He wants us to know about spiritual matters including the manifestations of holy spirit.

He wants us to know the Mystery and all we have in Christ Jesus.

He wants us to know the hope we have in Christ Jesus.

He wants us to know about the spiritual conflict and of God's ability and willingness to deliver His children. We do not wrestle against flesh and blood.

He wants us to know about the successes and failures of those who preceded us so that we can avoid the pitfalls of idolatry and the bondage of legalism.

God wants us to be saved and to also know the truth that He has declared in His Word so that we can enjoy the fellowship with our heavenly Father and His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. We who have believed in Jesus Christ are complete in Christ. We have all that we need from God to live victoriously in these times. We are at various levels of growth in our learning from the Scriptures, but we are all part of God's great family.

Learning from the Scriptures by reading and understanding what the Scriptures say, anyone can come to an understanding of God's Word and the power of God that has been available to all people since the Day of Pentecost.