

## ***False Doctrines of the Early Church*** ©

Bob Williams - BibleLessons.com

### ***Introduction***

It is true that Christians are not always going to agree on every Biblical issue. And perhaps we ought indeed be more tolerant of one another's beliefs in regards to those issues that are not essential to salvation. However, this does not mean that we ought to blatantly forego a love for truth and a desire to study and search the Scriptures for such. In John 14:15, Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep My commandments." He went on to say that the Holy Spirit would be sent to inspire the writers of Scripture so that we would know those things that are important to our Lord. And if such things are important to Him, then they ought to be important to us as well.

### ***Doctrine that is to be Taught and Obeyed***

Scripture itself shows that doctrine is important. There are numerous references to truthful doctrine:

- Sound doctrine (Titus 2:1)
- Sound words and doctrine conforming to godliness (1 Timothy 6:3)
- Words of faith and sound doctrine (1 Timothy 4:6)
- Doctrine of Christ (2 John 9)
- Doctrine of God (Titus 2:10)
- Doctrine of the Lord (Acts 13:12) ¶The apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42)
- The gospel (Romans 1:16)
- The truth (John 17:17)
- The faith (2 Corinthians 13:5)
- The word (2 Timothy 4:2)

And what does the Bible tell us to do with truthful doctrine?

- Read it, meditate upon it (1 Timothy 4:13, 16) "Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things; for as you do this you will insure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you."
- Hold onto it (2 Timothy 1:13-14) "Retain the standard of sound words (KJV: "Hold fast the form of sound words") which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you."
- Handle it accurately (2 Timothy 2:15) "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth."
- Live according to it (Titus 2:10) "Adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect."
- Fight for it (Jude 3) "Earnestly contend for the faith."

- Teach it to others (Titus 2:1) "Speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine."
- Preach it to everyone (Mark 16:15) "Preach the gospel to every creature."

***The Character of False Teachers*** As mentioned, Christians are not always going to agree

on every Biblical issue. There will be

misunderstandings and, as a result, Christians who unknowingly teach things that are erroneous. Acts 18:24-28 tells about Apollos, "an eloquent man" who was "mighty in the Scriptures."

But he was also misunderstood some things about the way of the Lord. He was not condemned as a false teacher, but rather he was taken aside and taught more fully by loving Christians.

Nevertheless, there are many passages in Scripture condemning false teaching. What is the difference? Apollos was a sincere (albeit misinformed) Christian trying to teach and preach according to his understanding of the truth. His motives were pure; he was obviously preaching out of love for Christ and the lost.

Those who are condemned in Scripture, however, are those who are apparently intentionally misleading and misguiding people by their teaching. Their motives were not pure; their hearts were not committed to God and His truth. And thus they and their teachings were severely condemned.

### ***Jesus Warned Against False Doctrine***

Jesus Himself taught that doctrine is indeed important. In Matthew 7:15 He said, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves." In Matthew 15:8-9 Jesus strongly condemned those who were "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." He further condemned the false teaching of the scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees in Matthew 16:6-12 and Matthew 23:15.

He warned in Matthew 24:4-5, 24, "See to it that no one misleads you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect." (See also Mark 13:21-22 and Luke 11:52.)

### ***Paul Warned Against False Doctrine***

Paul also gave numerous warnings against false doctrine. Paul warned the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:28-30, "After my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them." In Romans 16:17-18, Paul said, "Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting." In 2 Corinthians 11:3-4, 13-15, Paul was greatly concerned that the church in Corinth might be led away and deceived by those who were "false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ." He said in Ephesians 4:14 that some are "children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming."

For more on this and other lessons, see [The Doctrines That Divide Us](#), available on Amazon.com.