

REVIVAL NEWS

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THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

by Geoff Tarran

ONE DOCTRINE – fulfills God’s eternal purpose.

John 7:16-17 Jesus answered them and said, *“My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority”*. The Word of God given to us through Jesus is also called here, ‘the doctrine’. This doctrine is powerful: we can experience it working in our lives so that we know it is from God.

This is what happened to the crowd listening to Peter on the Day of Pentecost. They experienced the power of God to show them that *“this same Jesus that you crucified, God has made both Lord and Christ”* (**Acts 2:36**). *“What shall we do”* (**Acts 2:37**) they cried! Then Peter said to them, *“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”* (**Acts 2:38**). They responded and were transformed to become disciples of Jesus, the Christ [God’s King], and to experience new life in His Kingdom.

We can also testify that the Holy Spirit empowers us to live a whole new life of righteousness, peace and joy in the Kingdom of God, (**Romans 14:17**). We become a new creation in Christ (**2 Corinthians 5:17**), now able to be part of fulfilling God’s purpose for making us, and for His Creation.

In **Ephesians 1:10** Gods final purpose is revealed: *“that in the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.”* There will be a *“new heavens and a new earth”* in which only righteousness dwells, (**2 Peter 3:13**). All this God will accomplish through the word that He has already spoken. The Scripture calls this ‘*the doctrine*’.

ONLY ‘THE DOCTRINE’ – the word which God has ‘sent’, can accomplish the purpose of God on the earth

There are **many** ‘doctrines’ in the world that are anti-Christ. They are called:

- The doctrines of men (**Colossians 2:22**)
- The doctrines of demons (**1 Timothy 4:1**)
- Various and strange doctrines (**Hebrews 13:9**)

- Every wind of doctrine (**Ephesians 4:14**)
- Doctrines of the Pharisees and Sadducees (**Matthew 16:12**)

All these doctrines do not lead to life but rather to death. *“Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it”* (**Matthew 7:13**)

There is only ONE ‘Doctrine of God’

1. Jesus Christ is the Doctrine [Word of God] made flesh

Soon after His resurrection, Jesus walked with two disciples returning to Emmaus who feared He was dead. He said to them *“Fools and slow of heart to believe all that the Scriptures have said. Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?”* (**Luke 24:25**). *“And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself”* **Luke 24:27**. All Scripture points to Jesus and is fulfilled in Him. Jesus is the Word made flesh. He believed and taught from ‘all the Scriptures’.

In **John 1:14**, we read that *“the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth”*. Jesus, as the ‘only begotten Son’ fully revealed and ‘declared’ who God is, and what God is like (**Jn.1:18**).

“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by [His] Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power” **Hebrews 1:1-3**. In creation, Jesus is the One through whom God **spoke** the Universe into being, and He still upholds it all by ‘the **Word of His power**’. [see **Genesis 1** – God speaking creation into being].

As our Apostle, (**Heb.3:1**) **Jesus represented God to man. He showed us what God is like.** An important part of His assignment was to prepare twelve apostles who would continue His ministry and build His Church by speaking the only true doctrine.

2. All that Jesus Taught is ‘the Doctrine’.

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away” (**Matthew 24:35**). The Words of Jesus are eternal Truth! And we have already seen that Jesus believed ‘all the Scriptures’ and taught from them.

Luke 4:17-19 is a powerful example of how Jesus applied the word of God to His life and ministry. *“And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to Heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD” Then Jesus*

announced: 'today is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.' His life fulfilled the many Old Testament prophecies of Messiah.

Then Jesus began His public ministry preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, saying: "*The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel*" Mark 1:15

Jesus taught with authority

"And they were astonished at His doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes" Mark 1:22. Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "*What is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him*" (v.27)

The doctrine of God

When the Jews were amazed at the way Jesus taught in the Temple, He answered them: "*My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is God or if I speak on My own authority. He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him*" John 7:16-18.

Only the one who is 'sent' can do this, seeking only the honour of God, the Sender. The doctrine Jesus received from His Father was given through Him as the Son. He was One with the Father, having no private agenda.

3. Just as Jesus was SENT by the Father to speak His Words, the apostles are SENT by Jesus.

- During His three-year ministry, Jesus taught by example; then He sent the disciples out to do as He did, and to report back (**Matthew 10:40**).
- Just before going to the Cross Jesus prayed: "*For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me*" (**John 17:8**).
- In **Matthew 28:18-20** after His resurrection, Jesus sent His Apostles - just as He had been sent by His Father. Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "*All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.*"

4. The Doctrine of Jesus becomes the Apostles' Doctrine

"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers" Acts 2:42. These were the first works of the early church that brought wonderful results: the apostles' doctrine, the fellowship, the breaking of bread and prayers.

In **Romans 6:17** the apostle Paul writes: *“But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered, being made free from sin.”* Although Paul was not one of the twelve apostles Jesus trained, his doctrine was received from Jesus (**1 Cor.3:15a; 1Cor.11:23a**). The ‘*apostles’ doctrine*’ has the power to reveal Jesus and transform lives.

In **1 Timothy 6** Paul is teaching masters and slaves to relate in love as brothers in Christ, then says in **verse 3-4**: *“If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing”*. And finally, *“... who suppose godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself”* (v.5).

5. The Apostles Doctrine includes All Scripture!

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” **2Timothy 3:16**.

I have been impressed again, that it is important to **believe what I read in Scripture**, – and **not just read what I already believe**. Note carefully the distinction.

In **Titus 2:7** Paul exhorts, *“in all things showing yourself a pattern of good works; in doctrine: integrity, reverence, incorruptibility.”* We need to treat the Word of God with integrity, reverence and incorruptibility. Only speak the Word: not adding to what is written – or taking from it! This is difficult when there are competing loyalties to denominational doctrine.

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers” **2Timothy 4:3**. These ones follow teachers who are saying what they want to hear: about wealth, worldly comfort, and success etc. The prosperity doctrine, and ‘escape rapture’ doctrines are examples of this. They have corrupted many, leading them away from understanding God’s purpose and pursuing it.

“Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ have both the Father and the Son” **2 John 1:9**.

The ‘**doctrine of Christ**’ is first a revelation of who Jesus is. All the Scriptures reveal Jesus and clearly teach that the name ‘Jesus’ means ‘God saving us’ (**Matthew 1:21**). ‘Christ’ is Greek for the Hebrew, ‘Messiah’, which means, ‘God’s anointed King’ – and Jesus is King now (**Acts 2: 36**). As we remain, or ‘abide’, in this revelation we grow to know and love Jesus - and He reveals our Father to us as His sons.

6. The Apostles Doctrine, taught through the five-fold gift of Jesus, to His Bride Church – brings her into ‘one faith’ and to ‘the stature of the fulness of Christ’.

In His ascension, Jesus gave a five-fold gift to His Church to bring her into oneness in Christ. There is ‘**one faith**’, that comes from teaching **one ‘doctrine of God’**: the apostle’s doctrine. (**Ephesians 4: 4-7**).

“And He Himself gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity [oneness] of the faith and of the [full] knowledge of the Son of God, to [into] a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” Ephesians 4:10-13.

The Greek word for ‘to’ is usually translated ‘into’ - which fits here well. Religion presses us to become something we are not. The Apostles’ Doctrine calls us ‘into’ the One who is our life – and who is perfect.

Jesus became a sin offering for us so that we can receive His righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21). God sees us ‘in Christ’ and credits us with the righteousness of Jesus – while we are in the process of being transformed *“into the same image” (2Cor.3:18)*. He sees you and me, ‘justified’ - just as if I had never sinned - while we are still on the way to coming *“to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph.4:13b)* together. None of this is by our own effort, but through faith in God, and His word of truth - ‘the doctrine’ - that releases His empowering grace.

In **Ephesians 5**, we find that Jesus is washing His bride *“with the washing of water by the word that He might present her to Himself a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing” (v.26-27)*.

In **Chapter 4** we see that Jesus’ ministry of grace was through His **gift (v.7)**, which are the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (**v.11**). Together these gifts are bringing His Church to ‘*oneness of the faith*’ and ‘*into a perfect man*’ (**Eph.4:13**).

“But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” 2 Th 2:13-14.

7. ‘The Doctrine of God is to fill every place – and finally, to ‘gather together in ONE, all things in Christ’.

“Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine” Acts 5:28. The Doctrine of God is preaching and teaching Jesus the Christ! *“Daily in the temple and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus the Christ” Acts 5:42.* What doctrine are you speaking? Does your doctrine make known Jesus the Christ?

Habakkuk 2:14 God has always intended the earth to be filled with knowledge of the glory of God. How can this happen? By teaching and preaching this doctrine!

God will fulfill His Word:

- A glorious bride church will arise and meet her Bridegroom (**Ephesians 4:13 & 5: 27**)
- Sons who continue in faith will see their adoption completed with a resurrection body! (**Romans 8:23**)

- Creation itself will be released from ‘the bondage of corruption’ into ‘the glorious liberty of the Sons of God’. (**Romans 8:21**)
- “*A new heavens and earth in which righteousness dwells*” will become a reality (**2 Pet.3:13**)
- Bringing together all things ‘in Christ’ will be completed (**Ephesians 1:10**)

In **Acts 1:1**, Luke the writer, says of his ‘former account’ [the Gospel of Luke], that it was about the things Jesus began both to do and teach. Then in Acts he gives an account of the continuing ministry of Jesus through His disciples. They are also becoming ‘living epistles’ of ‘the doctrine’, making Jesus visible, and bringing heaven to earth.

Now it is our turn. As an apostolic people, we are ‘sent’ to be part of the continuing ministry of Jesus in our generation. He has called us each by name for such a time as this! Amen.

Jesus Christ is ‘the Doctrine’ and all the Scriptures point to Him. Only ‘the doctrine’ given by God through Jesus to His apostles has power and authority to fulfill His eternal purpose and to ‘gather together in ONE all things IN CHRIST’.