

Sabbath School Today

With the 1888 Message Dynamic

How to Interpret Scripture

Lesson 4: The Bible—the Authoritative Source of Our Theology

The disciples asked Jesus the question, “When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?” (Matt. 24:3). He replied: “Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many” (vss. 4 and 5). “There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (v. 24).

The very fact that there are hundreds of different church theologies, all claiming to be right, is in itself one of the signs that Jesus foretold. People are puzzled by the fact that there are so many different religions. They cannot all be right! In the theological confusion that prevails, many people are being deceived as Jesus said they would be.

In order to avoid being deceived, we must study for ourselves the clear teachings of the Holy Bible. “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isa. 8:20). “Thy word is truth” (John 17:17). Not miracles and wonders, nor the size of the churches, but teaching of *theological truth* is the test by which we are to know which is the right way.

We want to encourage you to ask God to give you a “hunger and thirst after righteousness” as Jesus said (Matt. 5:6), a desire to know the theological truth that He has revealed in His word, the Bible. It’s “blessed” to sense that hunger for Bible truth that is stronger than our natural-born infatuation with fictional portrays and sports. It’s impossible to know “the love of the Father” (which is all-important) if our love is “for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (1 John 2:15, 16).

In fact, a love for the word of God is an absolute miracle for any of us, because no one is born with it; it must be acquired as a gift of the Holy Spirit. If you are praying for a new luxury car, your prayer may or may not be answered as you want; but for sure, if you pray for the dear Lord to give you that hunger for biblical theology, He will respond positively. But don’t pray like a child asking for something from the toy store which tomorrow he forgets he ever wanted; be serious, be persistent. Let the Lord see that you mean business.

And while you are praying, remember to ask for God to give you good common sense to go along with your “hunger for righteousness” that will enable you to distinguish between solid biblical theological truth and the multitude of clever counterfeits that the devil is constantly prompting people to come up with. There are people who are wiser

and better informed than you; “he that walketh with wise men shall be wise” (Prov. 13:20). But some people who think they know the Bible and love to talk (and write!) their ideas are fools, for “in the multitude of words there wanteth not sin” (Prov. 10:19). Ask God to give you grace to tell the difference. John says, “Believe not every spirit, but try [test] the spirits whether they are of God” (1 John 4:1).

The evidence that we truly believe in Him will be seen in the quality of the spiritual food, or refreshing “water of life,” that we share with others. It’s what Paul said is “the truth of the gospel” (Gal. 2:5), which is “the power of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16). New Covenant truth is the explosive “gospel.” This is what we’re beginning to see as a result of believing this important aspect of the 1888 message.

A prayer that is according to the will of God (1 John 5:14) and therefore sure to be answered in our behalf is a prayer for understanding of the pure truth of the New Covenant in contrast to the Old; the Old leans toward bondage (Gal. 4:24). For sure, that is not “water of life”! Only the New Covenant has life in it.

—*Paul E. Penno*

Notes:

Pastor Paul Penno’s video of this lesson is on the Internet at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TCfZjSxyJCY>

Many of Pastor Penno’s sermons are on YouTube in Spanish. Just type **pastor paul penno en español** in the search bar.

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