

Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth and Making Our Calling and Election Sure

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It's necessary for us to read Scripture with an eye for truth and a critical mind toward erroneous departures from biblical truth. When we answer the faulty views of others, including the false Trinitarian view, what we need to do is understand their specific arguments and answer those. As another example, I used to say that the Angel of the Lord in the Old Testament would make a 4th "person." However, I learned that Trinitarians equate the Angel of God's Presence in the Old Testament with Jesus in the New Testament. So, they are not making that claim, and, therefore, it does absolutely nothing to address a claim they are not making in the first place. We need to stick to answering what they are actually teaching and purporting to be true.

Trinitarians distinguish between a personification and the presentation of an actual personal entity (or person). Some trinitarian theologians would not accept that the wisdom in Proverbs 8 is a reference to God because of the feminine gender of the term and because of the poetic nature of the passage. Also, Trinitarians and Oneness would agree, I think, that in 1 Corinthians 13 Paul is speaking of the attribute of love in the life of a person, what a loving person does. He begins the passage, "If I... but have not love..." So, it's clear in context that he's teaching us to love, have love, and be loving.

So, now where do we go from here? To refute error, it's much more helpful and effective to know the truth and know it well. The better we know truth, the more impervious we will be to error, and the better we will be at attacking it. This should be our main approach, to really know the Word of God and labor in it, rather than laboring in knowing erroneous, false doctrine. I guess there is a balance there, but the Word should always outweigh anything else we focus on when it comes to doctrine. There is a sense and a time in which we need to read the Word as worship, to be taught by God and the biblical authors directly, to soak in the message God wants us to hear, and to reach deeper into the depths of what it is you or I don't yet understand. This should be our main posture when we come to Scripture, focus on and submission to God.

Another legitimate way to approach the Bible is, when we read something that really confirms an important doctrine, such as Oneness, the deity of Christ, the new birth, etc., note that and note how what the Bible is actually saying is different from what the opposing views put forth. One example of this we could bring out is Acts 2:38, "and be baptized for the remission of sins." The NIV says, "for the forgiveness of sins." So, the text, if I understand it properly, plainly states that baptism is "for the remission/forgiveness of sins," and so those who say "no it's not" are simply wrong about that. We also let the Scriptures inform/sharpen our own views and correct them whenever necessary.

One major way that we can check to make sure we are in the right way, believe the right things, and are in surrender and submission to God's truth, is that we check everything that's not Scripture with what Scripture actually says and teaches. All other teachings and all other doctrines being circulated out there, we need to pass them through the filter of biblical truth, and then we will have a guard placed over our minds and hearts, that is, God's Word keeping us from going astray.

Another check we have is that we surrender totally within ourselves, our hearts and minds, and we give all diligence to allow the Scriptures to speak to us and to what we already think and believe is true. 2 Peter 1:10-11 says,

"Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things, you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,"

and 2 Timothy 2:15,

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

In 2 Peter, the apostle tells us to "be diligent" to ensure that we are truly saved, while Paul in 2 Timothy tells us to "be diligent" to show that we are approved by God. These are essentially the same thing. However, Paul adds how we are to do this, by "rightly dividing the Word of truth."

Therefore, we now must be continuously checking "every wind of doctrine" against the bedrock of biblical truth (cf. Ephesians 4:11-14), and we are constantly examining and checking ourselves to ensure that we are fully surrendered to God, not puffed up, and constantly learning from the Creator of the universe rather than thinking that we ourselves are the wellspring of total truth, instead of God, who actually is the Wellspring of unlimited, eternal, and perfect truth.