
Words of Truth

Unnecessary Implications

By: Brian A. Yeager

Most so-called "Christians" will agree that you need biblical authority for what is said and done by Christians. The marching cry of many churches of Christ is to "speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent". That is a noble statement. It is certainly based in the Scriptures (I Peter 4:11). It is also right to say that we need Scriptural authority for all that we say and do (Matthew 28:18-20, John 14:15, I Corinthians 4:6, Colossians 3:17, and II Timothy 3:15-17).

One problem that often occurs with most who agree we need authority for everything is that they read too much into some Scriptures. It is not wrong to see things that are necessarily implied in the Scriptures. For example, notice how Jesus taught using necessary inference: *"The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him, Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her. Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine"* (Mathew 22:23-33).

Like Jesus, we correctly use necessary implications when we teach. For example, when Philip taught the Eunuch, nothing is mentioned directly about him teaching on baptism. However, we correctly teach that he taught about baptism since it is inferred in that the Eunuch saw water and knew he had to be immersed in water to be saved (Acts 8:26-39).

If I tell you that I am going to the bank, could you necessarily infer that I went to get groceries? Of course you would not because banks are not grocery stores. If I told you that I went to McDonalds today on my lunch break and now have an upset stomach, would you deduce that I went to get Katrina roses? You would not conclude that I got Katrina roses from McDonalds. However, you would infer that I went to McDonalds and ate food based upon three factors. The first, I went there on my lunch break. The second, McDonalds sells food. The third, I didn't get an upset stomach at McDonalds by buying flowers. The conclusion that I went to McDonalds to eat lunch is a reasonable, inescapable conclusion. No other conclusion makes sense. If I somehow got roses on that same lunch break, you'd have to conclude that I went somewhere else and did something else to get those roses. If we can understand that, we should be equally reasonable when it comes to the Scriptures.

Using All The Facts To Form Inescapable Conclusions

Not long ago Harold and I studied with a gentleman that came to a conclusion that one can be saved by faith only, based on the following text: *“And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimæus, the son of Timæus, sat by the highway side begging. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee. And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus. And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way”* (Mark 10:46-52).

If you read the text above, you read about a blind man being healed. The man did not ask Jesus to be saved. The man did not ask Jesus to teach Him the Scriptures. The man asked Jesus to have his sight restored. How can one read that text and conclude the text had anything to do with salvation? Moreover, how could someone be a Bible student and come to that conclusion? The phrase “in the way” doesn’t necessarily mean salvation (Matthew 21:8, Luke 9:57, Luke 12:58, Acts 9:27, etc.). When you consider all the Scriptures say about salvation, are we saved by faith alone?

The only time the phrase “faith only” appears in the Bible is to say that we are NOT saved by faith only (James 2:24). I also know that the devils believe, tremble, and confess Christ (Matthew 8:28-29 and James 2:19), but that they are not saved (Matthew 25:41 and Jude 6). Therefore, I know that knowing who Jesus is and having faith will not save a person. In addition to that, we know that there are many things one must do to be saved.

The blind man did not hear and understand the Gospel in the account we read (Matthew 13:19). The blind man did not learn about conversion from sin to a pure life (Matthew 18:3, Acts 3:19, and II Timothy 2:19). The blind man did not hear about the resurrection of Christ (I Corinthians 15:1-4). The blind man was not immersed for the remission of his sins (Acts 2:38) into Christ (Galatians 3:27). Jesus had not died yet for His baptism to come into effect (cf. Acts 19:1-7). The blind man was not added to the church at the time he was healed. I know this for Christ had not yet established the church, which took His death for such to occur (Acts 20:28 and Ephesians 5:25). Remember, being a member of the church of Christ is part of being saved (Acts 2:47 and Ephesians 5:23). We could go on and on, but the point should be clear. We know man is not saved by faith only. We know this because the Scriptures teach otherwise when they are being rightly divided (II Timothy 2:14-18).

Conclusion

Honest Bible study requires one to use some deductive reasoning (inferring things from what is written). Some people, like Peter did once, take statements too far (John 21:20-23). We must guard against doing that. We have to be careful not to twist Scriptures (II Peter 3:15-17). That means we are going to have to dig deep when studying (John 5:39 and Acts 17:10-11) to be sure we are not making unnecessary implications.