
Words of Truth

Is The Conclusion Consistent?

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Back in September we had a lesson here in El Paso about the law being good if a man uses it lawfully (https://www.wordsoftruth.net/lawisgoodifusedlawfully_2019.mp3). Among many points in that lesson, we discussed how that people who err can ignorantly conclude something without fully understanding what they are affirming (I Timothy 1:7). Many people believe, and/or teach, and/or state twisted things from the Scriptures (II Peter 3:15-17) without thinking through the conclusions of what they say. I want to resurrect (pun intended; you will soon get it) a point from our September lesson and spend some time with it.

The church in Corinth had many problems. One of those problems was this: *“Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable”* (I Corinthians 15:12-19).

When you read what is stated above you see that a series of false conclusions, and ultimately the destruction of the faith, started with one false point. The belief that there was no resurrection also meant Christ wasn't risen, the Apostle's preaching was in vain, the faith was vain, the Apostles were liars, there was no hope, etc. Ultimately, there would be no forgiveness of sins. The message of hope in Christ would be pointless. Clearly, the Corinthians that believed this did not consider the conclusions they would have to reach to consistently hold that there was no resurrection. Our hope is rooted and based in the resurrection (I Thessalonians 4:13-18 and I Peter 1:3-9).

From this example, we need to take heed and consider what the conclusions we reach in our studies of the Scripture mean when we think them through. Then, we have to take our conclusions and study to be sure that those conclusions are consistent with the rightly divided word of truth. What if we, like the erring in Corinth, believed something that in fact ended our hope of salvation? Isn't it true that if we hold to a view that is not Scriptural, our journey to Heaven is over (Hebrews 3:13-14, II John 1:8-9, and Revelation 2:14-16)?

The Conclusions We Reach Must Be Consistent With The Truth

The word “consistent” means: “acting or done in the same way over time, especially so as to be fair or accurate; unchanging in nature, standard, or effect over time; compatible or in agreement with” (New Oxford American Dictionary). If you search the King James Version of the Bible you will not find the words “consistent” or “consistency”. You do find the concept though.

An example of God’s expectation of consistency is in how we are to always abound in the work of the Lord (I Corinthians 15:58). Another example of God’s expectation of consistency is in how our living faithful needs to line up with our proclamation that we are faithful (Romans 2:1-29, Titus 2:7-8, and I John 2:3-6). Consistency in our spiritual lives is shown in our unwavering practice of the faith (Hebrews 10:23). Consistency is so important that two cannot properly walk together unless they are in agreement (Amos 3:3).

Now that your mind is working, think about how this applies to our studies and the conclusions we reach from those studies. Consistency is about something that is unchanging. Truth is consistent. However, all conclusions arrived at from the truth are not always consistent. For example, the truth is that salvation is found in the body of Christ (Ephesians 5:23). That is not deniable. Some go on to think and even state that all outside of the body of Christ are lost. That is not true. I cannot say that everyone must be a member of the body of Christ to be saved. Therefore, I cannot proclaim that all outside of the body of Christ are lost. Why is that? How is that? Well... Are babies lost? Do babies need converted?

What does a person need to do to be a member of the body of Christ? Doesn’t the word of God show us that, among many other things, a person must be immersed in water to be added to the body of Christ (Acts 2:38-41; 47 and I Corinthians 12:12-13). Before baptism, doesn’t a person need to hear, believe, and understand the Gospel before that person can be properly baptized (Matthew 28:18-19, Mark 16:15-16, and Acts 8:25-39; cf. Matthew 13:19)? So, what does that mean about an infant or a severely mentally handicapped adult? You see, we cannot consistently say that all that are not members of the body of Christ are lost. The conclusion cannot be carried out to meet all situations. Therefore, it is not a correct conclusion. We know that children and those unable to understand right from wrong are not in need of salvation because they are not lost (Matthew 18:1-5, Mark 10:14-15, and James 4:17). They are not in the body of Christ, but they are not lost.

Conclusion

We are told this: *“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good”* (I Thessalonians 5:21). Brethren, let’s not be like the erring in Corinth. We need to consider if our conclusions are consistent with the whole truth.