
Words of Truth

Everything Can NOT Be Covered In A Single Lesson

By: Brian A. Yeager

There have been a number of times wherein I have taught a class, preached a sermon, or wrote an article wherein someone thought I should have clarified something more. Let's say a lesson is delivered about repentance. You can imagine this lesson is written, in an open discussion forum, or in a sermon. It really won't change the point. In that lesson, it is never said or implied that a person must bring forth fruit meet for repentance. Is that lesson now false doctrine? Think about your answer, from the Scriptures.

As you think, let me give you some food for thought. Does repentance include bringing forth fruit worthy of repentance? The answer to that is found in the following: *“Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; And all flesh shall see the salvation of God. Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? **Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance**, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then? He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages” (Luke 3:1-14).*

The fact that repentance takes work and that fruit is required is not under question (Acts 26:18-20). Man might not be able to see it (I Timothy 5:24-25), but it must be done. That was

even true under the Law of Moses (Ezekiel 14:6 and Ezekiel 33:14-16). So, again, let me ask... Is a lesson on repentance that does not include anything about fruit worthy of repentance and/or works meet for repentance a false lesson? Must those statements be made? Must they be explained in each lesson? What is the answer to these questions?

Must Every Lesson Be Exhaustive?

The word “exhaustive” means: “examining, including, or considering all elements or aspects; fully comprehensive” (New Oxford American Dictionary). If we are talking about a lesson involving repentance, must the subject be exhausted for it to be a lesson of truth? If the answer is yes, that would mean every time repentance was taught in the Scriptures you also would read about works and fruit meet for repentance.

Some lessons on repentance that Jesus taught recorded teaching about bringing forth fruit meet for repentance (Luke 13:1-9). However, there were times wherein He taught about repentance and said nothing about fruit meet for repentance (Matthew 4:12-17). The same was true regarding teaching about repentance in the work done after Jesus ascended into Heaven (Acts 8:1-24 and Acts 17:16-33).

Think about the record of sermons preached to the lost that didn't include language about repentance, fruit meet for repentance, counting the cost, confessing Christ unto salvation, etc. (Acts 10:1-48, Acts 16:13-34, Acts 18:8, and Acts 19:1-7). Repentance isn't spelled out in the conversion of the Eunuch (Acts 8:25-39). The record of some public lessons, taught to the lost, didn't mention anything about baptism (Acts 6:8-7:60 and Acts 13:13-52). You actually have to study multiple contexts and even different “books of the Bible” to get the whole picture. Do you see the point? There is no context, on any subject matter, that includes everything that can or should eventually be taught.

Jesus taught “as they were able to hear it” (Mark 4:33). The Apostles had things they needed to teach, but those needing taught were not capable of learning some things at the stages of learning they were in (I Corinthians 3:1-3 and Hebrews 5:1-14).

Conclusion

Faithful teachers must teach the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:17-27). However, it CANNOT be done all at once. To conclude otherwise condemns every teacher of the truth. The conclusion that every lesson must be exhaustive even condemns Jesus. He left things needing to be taught to His Apostles untaught. He sent the Holy Spirit to teach them those things (John 16:1-13). There is not a “book of the Bible” that gives us everything we need to know to please God and get to Heaven. You must take all the words of the Lord to be fully equipped (Romans 15:4 and II Timothy 3:15-17). No single lesson will ever be exhaustive.