



What Every Christian Should Know - Introduction

Wednesday Night: September 29, 2010

Tuesday morning I read a short article on YAHOO! NEWS by Rachel Zoll, an AP Religion writer, entitled Survey: Americans Don't Know Much about Religion. The article was in response to a survey that Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life had released on Tuesday. In this survey respondents were asked 32 questions about the major religions in our world including Christianity. What stood out to me the most was the fact that Atheists and agnostics scored the highest overall (averaged 21 correct answers) while Jews and Mormons followed in second (averaged 20 accurate responses). Protestants overall averaged 16 correct answers, while Catholics followed with a score of about 15. Another surprise to me was that on questions about Christianity, Mormons scored the highest with Evangelicals in second place.

Ms. Zoll stated "Not surprisingly, those who said they attended worship at least once a week and considered religion important in their lives often performed better on the overall survey."

The above has challenged me to begin a Wednesday night study on **What Every Christian Should Believe**.

All this is to say that it matters what Christians believe. It matters that Christians be well educated in the Scriptures. It matters that Christians be grounded solidly in the truth. It matters that truth is upheld, preserved, and honored. Otherwise we are vulnerable to lies that deceive and destroy.

Over the next several months I would like to take a systematic look at Bible Doctrine. There are three ways we will study the truths of Bible Doctrine.

(Note: Theology and Bible Doctrine is, essentially, the same thing. Theology is the study of God and related subjects. Bible Doctrine is essentially studying the teachings of the Bible and related subjects. Theologians are able to make a distinction between the terms, but for our purposes, the meanings are so similar that we will use them interchangeable.) The three ways to study are:

- Systematic Theology
- Biblical Theology
- Key Theological Terms

We will be using each of these methods of study as we go through this study. In the first part of our study we will use Systematic Theology. In Systematic Theology you study the categories in the Bible with the broadest scope. That is, you pick the major subjects under which all other subjects fit. Commonly, the ten major subjects of systematic theology are:

1. The Doctrine of the Bible
2. The Doctrine of God the Father
3. The Doctrine of God the Son
4. The Doctrine of God the Holy Spirit
5. The Doctrine of Angels

6. The Doctrine of Man
7. The Doctrine of Sin
8. The Doctrine of Salvation
9. The Doctrine of the Church
10. The Doctrine of Future Things

Theoretically, at least, all other subjects in the Bible can be placed under one of these great categories.

Systematic Theology is like painting with a large paint brush.

Biblical Theology is like using a fine tipped brush. In Biblical Theology we will study those topics that are given the most weight in the Bible. You determine this by virtue of the amount of time the Bible spends talking about a given subject. It is not that there is a right way or a wrong way to study Bible doctrine. Rather, there are different ways, each of which has its strengths and weaknesses.

The Ten Subjects of Biblical Theology we will study are:

1. Unity
2. Money
3. Suffering
4. Spiritual Transformation
5. True Spirituality
6. Eternal Perspective
7. Divine Discipline
8. Divine Warfare
9. Evangelism
10. Doing Good

Key words need to be studied no matter what other ways you study doctrine. We will isolate some of the most important key words that are very important regardless of whether you are studying doctrine systematically or Biblically.

The Ten Key Words we will study are:

1. Faith
2. Hope
3. Love
4. Grace
5. Atonement
6. Redemption
7. Regeneration
8. Justification
9. Sanctification
10. Holiness