**“Doctrine Does Not Matter!”**

Jarrod Jacobs

 When discussing certain Bible topics with others, and trying to ascertain what God wants us to do, have we ever heard someone say, “Doctrine does not matter, anyway”? Do we agree with this statement? Does doctrine matter when it comes to Bible subjects?

 To begin, it is necessary to understand that the word “doctrine” as is used in Scripture simply means “teaching.” Thus, would it make sense to say, “Teaching does not matter”? Of course, not. Yet, there are many today who treat the doctrine or teaching of the Bible as unimportant. This is dangerous!

 Let us think about it another way. If the doctrine or teaching of the Bible does not matter then why did the apostle Paul say to “mark” and “avoid” those who teach doctrines contrary to “the doctrine” which we have learned (Rom. 16:17)? Why did Paul leave Timothy in Ephesus and specifically charge him “to teach no other doctrine” (I Tim. 1:3)? Why did Paul tell Timothy to “take heed...unto the doctrine” and say that in so doing he would save himself and those who heard him (I Tim. 4:16)?

 The apostle Paul told Timothy that if he did not take heed to himself, he would be lost (I Tim. 4:16; Cf. I Cor. 9:27). Also, if he did not “take heed... to the doctrine,” others would be lost. How can this be possible if doctrine does not matter in the lives of people today? Can we not see the problem that arises when someone claims that doctrine or teaching “doesn’t matter”? Further, the Bible speaks of “good”, “wholesome”, and “sound” doctrine (I Tim. 4:6; 6:3; Titus 2:1). How is it possible to have “good”, “wholesome”, and “sound” doctrine if doctrine does not matter today? Let ask the question another way. Are there any bad, unwholesome, or unsound doctrines in existence? If there are, then at least some doctrine matters, does it not?

 In consideration of this subject of whether or not doctrine matters today, let us look at the responses of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Why do both Jesus and the Spirit tell us not to believe every teacher we hear (Matt. 7:15; I Jn. 4:1)? After all, if doctrine doesn’t matter today, we should be able to believe anyone and everyone, right? When we read II John 9, we learn that those who do not abide in the teaching or doctrine of Christ do not have God; while those who abide in it have the Father and Son. How can John make such a distinction if doctrine does not matter? I believe we all can see the point, can’t we?

 Let us beware of people who say that doctrine does not matter. Such teaching contradicts what the Bible says. Instead, let us be the kind of people who respect Bible doctrine (teaching) and follow it faithfully while we live.

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