

Paul had done this? To whom would he have preached? What if Jesus had done this? For whom would He have died? And now what if you and I do this? How shall we save this lost and dying world if we refuse to save ourselves? How shall we save ourselves if we refuse to discern our conduct in view of the righteousness of God revealed in the scriptures?

“Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? - unless indeed you are disqualified.”

(II Corinthians 13:5)

The Carriage Drive Messenger



Volume 4

August 16, 2009

Number 32

NEWSWORTHY NOTES:

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Radio Program: WJLS 99.5FM every Sunday at 9:00AM

Website: www.beckleychurch.com

The *Carriage Drive Messenger*
is published weekly by the
Carriage Drive church of Christ,
Beckley, WV
Editor: Bob Pulliam
Building Phone: 252-8108

TIMES OF SERVICES

Sunday: Bible Study 10:00am
Morning Worship 10:50am
Evening Worship 6:00pm
Wednesday: Bible Study 7:30pm

THEY HAVE IT FIGURED OUT

by Bob Pulliam

When we get our arguments all lined up in a row, we can be mighty confident in our assertions. The Sadducees seemed to have this confidence as they tested Jesus in Matthew 22:23ff. They had a scenario that seemed to not have an answer, other than the proof of their position that there is no resurrection. No other possibility?... They did not have all of the facts! Jesus quickly dispelled their “air-tight” argument with a simple observation from scripture. It was a scripture the Sadducees were well familiar with; but had failed to see an implication within.

As it always has been, so shall it ever be. We still have a lot of people who have it figured out. They make compelling arguments from the Bible that many think to be without answer. But a closer examination of the scriptures proves such not to be true.

Inherited Sin...

Intellectuals of our day want to make arguments proving that babies inherit sin from their parents. Sin that dates back to the sin of Adam in the garden. They even use the virgin birth of Christ to argue their case. They tell us that the purpose of the virgin birth was that he might not inherit the sin that was residual in his earthly parents. How absurd! To be the offspring of God, and be God in the flesh, Mary had to be endowed of the Holy Spirit. If Jesus had been the result of an ordinary conception, He

would have been an ordinary man.

They point out how children lie and steal, imagining that a “sinful nature” has driven them to it. It never seems to occur to them that people without a “sinful nature” were lured into the satisfaction of selfish desires. Adam and Eve did not have a “sinful nature”, and yet they did what was forbidden! Maybe the theoretical “sinful nature” is not behind it all!

But concerning the state of infants when born; have these never read Jesus’ statement concerning little children?... “But when Jesus saw it, He was greatly displeased and said to them, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God.” (Mk 10:14) I can’t imagine Jesus pulling forth a sinful creature like a child and associating it with the kingdom of God. But then I don’t believe children inherit any sin when they are born, so I can imagine it after all. (see also Ezk 18:20; Jms 1:14f)

Transubstantiation...

The sects argue that the bread and wine literally become the body and blood of Jesus when taken in communion. This is called *transubstantiation*. They base this belief on Jesus’ words, “this is my body... this is my blood...”. Within this doctrine is the belief that partaking of the emblems imparts forgiveness of sins. It is not difficult to see that the latter is purely Catholic dogma spilled over into the related sects.

The statements that offer the elements of the Lord’s supper as Jesus’ body and blood are called metaphors. Metaphors call forth one thing as something else to make an association, or emphasize a point. Metaphors are usually evident within their context. A good example of a metaphor occurs in Luke 13:32. When Jesus was told to flee because Herod wanted to kill Him, He said, “Go and tell that fox...” Now we know that Herod was not a fox. But it did associate Herod with a cunning animal. Jesus also said, “I am the true vine...” (Jn 15:1). So was Jesus a vine? Jesus also said, “I am the door of the sheep.” (Jn 10:7) Was Jesus a literal door? Why did Jesus speak in this way? Because the metaphor is a powerful way to make a point.

In Mark 14:22, Jesus said, “Take, eat; this is My body.” Two verses later he said, “This is My blood of the new covenant...”. Jesus is either speaking of the bread and cup as representing His body and blood, or they actually were His body and blood. Several points should be remembered as we arrive at our conclusion. The first and foremost is, “Do these statements make sense if Jesus is using a metaphor?” Clearly, a metaphor is most at home in Jesus’ remark. The intention of the metaphor is to associate the bread and cup with Jesus’ body and blood. In fact, the

purpose for this feast finds its realization in metaphor, rather than metaphysical. Jesus said, “do this in remembrance of Me.” (Lk 22:19; I Cor 11:24f) In fact, Luke has Jesus saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.” (Lk 22:20) So is the cup Jesus’ literal blood? No, *it represents His blood* which was shed for ratification of the new covenant.

What is the purpose of this feast according to learned theologians? It is a “sacrament” that has the power to forgive sins. Yet we find no such indication in the Bible. Forgiveness is always granted on God’s terms, and the Lord’s supper is never associated with such. To maintain this false doctrine, they must have us eating the literal body and blood of Jesus.

Conclusion...

It isn’t some obscure passage that trips people up. It’s a willingness to allow former faith and practice to blind the view. The Sadducees knew the passage that Jesus used, but they would only believe as they had always believed. So, what are you: A “Sadducee”, or a Bible believer?

SELF-EVALUATION

by Bob Pulliam

It is so easy to become convinced that a view is correct when it isn’t. And while we know that this is true, yet we act at times as if it isn’t. People become convinced that error is truth through many means. It may involve the emotions (*e.g.* divorce and remarriage). It may involve physical desires (*e.g.* justifying lascivious acts). It can come about by inordinately elevating a man above that plane on which he should stand (*e.g.* “preacheritis”). The desire to fit into a certain group of people (peer pressure) can many times draw one aside. The desire to be great and well known has led many to the sea of error. But then, we have a common condition that touches the hem of each problem above: ignorance.

The Bible points out the ease with which error can overtake us. Paul told the Corinthians, “Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Prove yourselves...” (II Cor 13:5) Paul realized the need for constant self evaluation. I need to always watch my ways to see that they remain in God’s one true way. Perhaps our own lack of self examination has caused our own confusion as to the “moral” but lost religious folks in the world. *We’ve refused to examine ourselves in some areas*, and are beginning to refuse to examine areas where others might be lost. What if