

A BACKWARD LOOK AT A BACKWARD METHOD

Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. (John 5:39)

I was rebuked... divinely rebuked!

Some years ago, I was thumbing frantically through the pages of my study Bible in search of a text. I had earlier experienced an event that had kick-started a series of “thoughts.” Those thoughts formulated into what I felt was a good sermon “thought” (as we tend to call such experiences). The process of my ongoing sermon-making was building and fleshing itself out beautifully – now all I needed, along with my already wonderful thought, was a TEXT – you know, some Bible to go along with it.

THEN, it happened – I was rebuked! As surely as if I had been pinged on the head with the ball part of a ball-ping hammer — I was rebuked by God!

As it often seems to be the case, at least with me, the rebuke was not some long discourse of exaggerated length — no, it was just a simple remark, in my spirit, in the form of a question that asked, “So you come here (the Bible) in search of a text to add to YOUR already outlined ‘thought?’ – Now, isn’t that backwards?”

I took a licking that day! (I tried to keep on ticking, however.) But to this day, I have never forgotten the lesson I learned from that rebuke. Yes! It’s so backwards to FIRST originate a sermon from an external impetus and THEN go to the Bible in an attempt to shore it up (as in, “Hey! I need a text for my thought”).

The above-stated system is BACKWARDS! Surely, we ought to STUDY the Bible, and by studying, the familiar Word should open our eyes to the events and situations which surround us and our external world. In other words, use the Bible filter to see the world and not the other way around.

One of the fallacies of the formulation of false doctrines is that they ALL can be retraced to a BACKWARD use of the Holy Scriptures. Men dream up ideas and then seek Biblical confirmation for THEIR own mind and imagination — rather than allowing the “Mind of Christ” to formulate His idea in man! False doctrines can truly be said to be man’s mind over the Mind of Christ.

It is a dangerous thing to get the process BACKWARDS. “Study to show thyself approved unto God a workman that needeth not to be ASHAMED.” Shame comes when we relegate the Bible to a SUBORDINATE position in our thought process. “HE must receive the preeminence in all things.”

Also, we find that when we have preconceived ideas, we are extremely reluctant to hear anything that counters that conception. This is why the doctors and lawyers of Jesus’ day hated Him because He (the LOGOS, the WORD) contradicted THEIR self-induced concepts. And, for this contradiction, nothing less than a crucifixion would appease them. Indeed, no greater crime can be had by man than refusing to allow the Word of God to contradict their favored, self-protected thoughts.

It is wise to question the source of our thoughts before we make firm and settled conclusions concerning vital spiritual matters. Pausing long enough to recall that Jesus stated that He would build His Church upon THIS rock... the rock of the revelation of His identity, and that revelation is via the Word of God.

The ultimate purpose of the Scriptures, and the preaching of the Word of God, is to manifest the God of the Word!

Knowing God is, first and foremost, a searching process – “Search the Scriptures; ...they are they which testify of Me.”

I often thank God for that beautiful rebuke... I didn’t realize how badly I needed it!

—jlg—