

False Doctrine, Councils, And The Papacy

- Acts 27:25-29

Sunday PM 08/19/18

Introduction:

The Bible is the word of God. The word of God is stressed in many passages in the Bible. *Luke 8.11* the "seed is the word of God"; *Luke 11.28* "blessed are those that hear the word of God and keep it"; *Romans 10.17* "faith comes by hearing the word of God." It is the word of God that we are to keep and not the words of men, *Acts 4.19*.

Very early we read of persecution and its effect on the church. But the greatest danger was from within the church and not from without.

I) Changes

A) Any time there is a falling away it is because attitudes toward God and His word changes.

1. *1 Peter 4.11* is replaced with man's ideas and desires.
2. Changes in doctrine usually leads to changes in organization and changes in organization leads to changes in doctrine.
 - a. The bishops were seen as the church. Without the bishops there would be no church.
 - b. Instead of focusing on what the Bible taught they started focusing on what others said

the Bible taught. Example: Augustine of Hippo in his writings in 400's became the center of discussion instead of the Bible. In discussing infants, it did not matter what the Bible said but what Augustine said the Bible said on that topic.

B) "We are on safe ground when we say that any change in doctrine or organization from that found in the New Testament is a departure." The Eternal Kingdom, page 107-108.

1. If the church under Apostolic guidance taught or practiced a certain thing the adherence to this same teaching or practice today cannot be said to be denominational.
2. Any departure from such teaching and practice, however, is denominational and cannot be said to be a characteristic of the eternal Kingdom.
3. In order to remain undenominational we must adhere to the New Testament pattern.
4. Departures:
 - a. Seeing the bishops as equal to the High Priest; presbytery as the priest, and deacons as the tribe of Levi.
 - b. the Lord's Supper as a Mass - the bread becoming the literal flesh of Jesus.
 - c. Baptism - a ritual administered by the bishop. Regeneration separate from faith and repentance.

- d. Sprinkling - 251 Novatian was the first person recorded as being sprinkled.

II) Early Issues

A) Gnosticism

1. One great God and 7 lesser gods. Jehovah is a lesser god, he created man, and is the god in the Bible.
2. The great God gave man his soul. The spirit is inherently good and the physical is evil.

B) Neo-Platonism

1. Created by the original "Absolute Being"
2. Man to be re-absorbed in to the "Great Force."

C) Docetism

1. Everything material is evil.
2. Therefore, Christ did not really suffer on the cross He only "seemed" to suffer on the cross.

D) Montanism

1. Made spiritual gifts a test of fellowship. Man by practicing self denial can obtain a higher spiritual understanding.
2. A person could not be forgiven of sin after they are baptized.
3. Marriage was permissible but celibacy was better.

E) Manichaeism

1. The mother of light formed the soul of man from pure light, but the king of darkness enveloped this soul in an evil, material both.
2. Salvation was a matter of releasing the soul from the body.

F) Ebionites

1. Moses was equal in authority to Christ. Joseph was the father of Jesus.
2. All Christians were to keep the law of Moses and Jesus was an ordinary man that was exalted because he kept the Law of Moses perfectly.

III) The Political Climate

A) The Empire had 4 Emperors

1. Diocletian and Maximian had the title of Augusti
2. Constantius and Galerius were Caesars.
3. Diocletian and Maximian abdicated their throne in 305 AD
4. Constantius and Galerius became Augusti

B) Constantius dies in 306 AD

1. Constantine August thought he saw the sign of a cross in the sky. He was on his way to battle Licinius in 323 AD. He with 40,000 men defeat the opposing army with 175,000 men.

2. For this reason he favored Christians as he saw their God as being the most powerful being in the Universe.
3. He moves the capital from Rome to Constantinople in 325 AD.

IV) Ecumenical Councils

A) Ecumenical means universal or world wide in extent

B) At the same time there was a battle among the bishop at Rome and Constantinople.

1. 325 the Council of Nicaea placed all bishops on equal footing, overseeing the church.
2. 341 Bishop of Rome wrote the council at Antioch saying the matter under dispute should be settled at Rome.
3. 343 The Council of Sardica agreed that the retrial of bishops should be held in Rome to "honor the memory of the Apostle Peter"
4. 380 Theodosius recognized the bishop of Rome as "Pontiff"

C) Constantine takes a hands on approach to the church

1. Roughly 30% of the Empire considered themselves Christians.
2. A problem developed over the nature of Jesus in the church. In 325 Council at Nicaea was called by Constantine to settle the issue. He wanted

unity in the church and did not care about the doctrinal issues as much as the political issues. He called together 318 Bishops.

D) List of Ecumenical Councils and their primary issues

1. 325 Nicaea dealt with the nature of Jesus, the observance of Easter
2. 381 Constantinople, nature of the Holy Spirit, Jesus having a divine and human nature
3. 431 Ephesus, Mary being the Mother of God, so as to affirm the deity of Jesus
4. 451 Chalcedon, nature of Jesus, the bishop at Constantinople is equal to the bishop at Rome.
5. 553 Constantinople, nature of Jesus; one nature (monophysitism)
6. 680 Constantinople, nature of Jesus; he had two natures but only one will (monotheletism)
7. 787 Nicaea, images and icons. The Eastern Church did not allow images or icons while the West did.

V) The Papacy and Power

A) 440-461 Leo I was the 1st to set forth Papal claims on the basis of Scripture, *Matthew 16.16-19*, and traditions

B) 588 John the Faster assumed the title "Universal Bishop".

1. Gregory I 590-604 stood against such a claim.

C) 606 Boniface III claimed to be the Universal Bishop the Pope.

1. Phocas, General of the Roman army promised to back up Boniface III if he would back up the General.
2. The meeting of political and religious power comes together.
 - a. Pope replaces the councils to determine church doctrine.
 - b. Charlemagne assumed the power of crowning the kings of Europe.
3. Those that stood against the church were persecuted. John Huss - back to the Bible, Lord's Supper is a Memorial Service, no trans-substantiation. He was driven out of the city and taught from house to house. Promised safe haven to return to Prague. He was arrested and burned at the stake.
4. King Henry of Germany found out that 30% of farmland was owned by the Catholic Church. Wanted to raise taxes so he deposed the Pope in Germany.
 - a. Gregory VII, declared Papal Interdiction. No priest to hear confession, perform weddings, give last rites.
 - b. King Henry travels to the Pope and waits 3 days bare footed, dressed in the robe of a peasant, and kissed the foot of the Pope.

Conclusion:

The formation of the Catholic Church was complete. The Bible says there is only one King of Kings and Lord of Lords, *1 Timothy 6.15*. Man does not have the right to rule Christ's church, He is the Lord and Savior of His church. We need to simply go back to the Bible to understand the Doctrine of the church and its organization.