

Message #113 of *Scripture Beneath The Surface*

"Call No Man, Father"

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Hello! Thanks for being with us. Today I'd like to take a look at some things in our current church doctrine which seem to be contrary with what scripture actually says. What I mean is that there are some things which our current day church teaches, in most all the pulpits of the world, but yet, they don't seem to line up with what the Bible specifically says. To start with, let's look at the story of Noah's Ark. If someone was to ask you how many of each kind of animal went into the ark, you would most likely say, "two of each." That would be the standard answer. In every storytelling of this event it is said that two of each animal went into the ark. If you see a drawing which pictures animals entering Noah's ark, you see two of each animal, side by side, entering the ark. There are two elephants, two monkeys, two horses, two cows, two sheep, two chickens, two goats, two lions, two tigers, two water buffaloes, etc. and etc. In fact, I've never heard the story of Noah's ark told without hearing the storyteller say that there were two animals of every kind.

However, there were actually more than two animals of every kind. In fact, there were four animals of every kind of unclean animal, and there were fourteen animals of every kind of clean animal. Now, hold on a minute, and I'll read some scripture. Let's look at Genesis, chapter 7. I'll start with verse two. It says, "Of every clean beast you shall take to you by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female."

Now, notice that Genesis 7:2 says that Noah was to take seven of each clean animal into the ark, and that they should be the male and his female. It doesn't just say a male and female mixture,

but each male animal was to have his female mate. And it very specifically says that there were to be seven of each clean animal. Now, basic arithmetic tells us that if there has to be seven clean animals of each kind, and that if each male was to have his mate, that there can't be just seven total. You can't have each animal with a mate and come out with an unequal number. So then, that makes fourteen of every kind of clean animal that went into the ark. And besides, when God says to take clean animals into the ark by sevens, this in no possible way can be understood to mean two of each kind. Seven is not the same thing as two.

Let me read the next verse also. Verse three says, "Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth." You see here again that the birds were to be taken into the ark by sevens. Seven of each kind of bird was taken into the ark, not two. And, once again, the fowls of the heavens were to also have their mates come with them into the ark. This means that seven male sparrows and their mates, came into the ark, and seven male robins and seven female robins came into the ark. In every case, there were seven of each kind of birds.

Now, of course there were also two lions, with their mates, and two camels with their mates, but then, the Bible refers to these as unclean animals, and therefore they weren't taken into the ark by sevens, but by twos. And another interesting point is found in chapter 8, verse 20. It says, "And Noah built an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burned offerings on the altar."

Now, here again is a simple bit of arithmetic. If there were only two clean animals of every kind, and if Noah sacrificed one of them, how many does that leave? One from two equals one. One clean animal would not be able to reproduce. Of course, there are those who say that the animals reproduced on the ark and therefore there were enough animals to sacrifice and still reproduce. So, that's fine, but what about the verse in Genesis, chapter seven that I read to you which tells Noah to take seven of each kind of clean animal into the ark? No matter how you interpret the animals kinds and their accompanying mates, there's no way to say that seven clean animals is only two clean animals. There weren't just two animals of every kind that went into the ark, but that's what is taught in our current church society. And, it is doctrinal error.

However, it's not the different doctrine that is my point today. The thing I want you to see is that it isn't just some varying forms of interpretation of scripture, but rather a vary blatant example of blindness. Why would anyone teach that only two lions, two giraffes, two cows and two sheep went into the ark? At the very least there has to be seven of the clean animals. So what's going on in our pulpits. No, I'm not just talking today's pulpits, I'm talking about the pulpits that have existed for almost 2000 years. How can our Christian church preach the Bible and not accurately teach what the word of God really says? That's my point today. If people need to depend on their shepherds for the lush green pastures of God's word, then why are our shepherds telling us things that can't possibly line up with scripture?

Let me give you one more example. And this is sometimes discussed, but not very accurately. We are taught that Jesus was crucified on Friday. Now, there are a lot of scriptures which might give the impression that this is so. However, I'd like to give you a couple of scriptures to ponder. And once again, my purpose is not to argue doctrine, but to get you to thinking about what we are being taught. Anyway, let's read what Jesus said in Matthew 12:40. He said, "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the fish's belly; so will the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

Now, notice that Jesus said he would be in the grave for three days and three nights. You do the math. Jesus died on the cross shortly after 3:00 in the afternoon, and rose early on the morning of the first day of the week. If he was crucified on Friday, count the number of nights he was in the grave? Friday night, Saturday night, and - - - and - - - and there aren't any more nights to count. Jesus does not lie. When Jesus said he would be in the grave for three nights, he meant three nights, not two nights. However, Christians have been taught blindly for hundreds of years that Jesus was crucified and died on Friday. It's not possible to die on Friday and be in the ground for three nights and still rise early on the first day of the week. Now, in addition, here's another interesting portion of scripture which sheds light on this subject. In Luke, chapter 24, we are told that two of the disciples had an encounter with Jesus on the first day of the week, the day Jesus rose from the grave. In the dialogue which is presented, the one disciple, named Cleopas, made a statement that is very interesting. In verse 21, Cleopas tells Jesus that it has been three days since the crucifixion took place. The third day since the crucifixion was Sunday, the first day of the week. This means that the crucifixion could not have been accomplished on the previous Friday, because Sunday would only be two days since those events, and not three days.

Now, once again, my purpose is not to point out the specific error of doctrine. But my point is that there are scriptures that are very plain which tell us something completely different than what we are being taught from our pulpits. And my point is this. We've been told by all our Bible teachers that only two of each animal went into the ark, including the clean animals. But yet, the Bible specifically tells us there were seven of the clean animals with their mates. Also, we've been told that Jesus was only in the grave for two nights, but yet, Jesus himself has told us that he would be in the grave for three nights. So, looking at these simple scriptures, and seeing the great discrepancy between what the Bible says and what we've been taught, how then can we place our trust in what our shepherds are telling us? Can we really take what our preachers and teachers are telling us and place our trust in them?

And, my answer to this question is, "Absolutely not. We can't trust them." In fact, you can't trust me. You can't trust that I'm telling you the absolute truth. The only one you can trust for certain is God. It is God's word that you need to know, and not what the preacher says. The preacher is a necessary ingredient to the word of God. It is by the preachers that you hear. And the Bible tells us that without a preacher, the people wouldn't be able to hear the word of God. However, it stops there. Your understanding doesn't come from the preachers. You hear the preachers, and it is good that preachers tell us things. But, it is the Holy Spirit who is our guide. It is the Holy

Spirit which is the one who leads us into all truth, not the preachers and teachers. I'm a preacher, or a teacher, or whatever you want to call me. But I'm not the authority for the word of God.

Matthew 23:8-10 says, “ But do not be called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and you all are brothers. 9 And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, who is in heaven. 10 Neither be called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.”

Now, a father is one who a child looks to as authority and guide. We submit to authority, but our ultimate authority is God. We are not to follow men. We give men respect, and recognize their authority, but only the authority they have UNDER God. There has always been an element of ‘church fathers’ who try to act as liaisons between God and man, much like popery. When we look to a man as our guide, our teacher, our master, we are no longer following Christ, but man. We must not confuse ‘respect’ for our teachers with ‘following’ our teachers. The word, ‘Christian’, means, follower of Christ. That’s what we are supposed to be, followers of Christ. A man may have authority to act as a preacher or teacher, but a man does not have authority to act as our father would act. A father is obeyed. A father's words are followed. We should respect our pastors and our teachers, but we need to follow God himself.

When we begin to follow men, we lose the ability to understand God's word. And the reason for this is that when we make our pastors our scriptural authority, we no longer look to God's Holy Spirit as our guide. Truth comes from God, not from men. However, men can have the truth, and men can share the truth. But how can you know for certain that what the man is telling you is in line with God's word? The answer to that is very simple. Don't look to men for your understanding. Look to God for your understanding.

What has happened in the church is that people have made their shepherds their owner. But a flock of sheep belongs to the owner of the sheep, and not to the hired shepherd. Shepherds have a huge responsibility as hirelings of God, but it is God who determines what the shepherd does and where he leads the sheep. But then, sheep eat grass which is provided for them. They can't wander off just anywhere they want to, and therefore the shepherd is a necessary ingredient. But it is still the sheep who must eat, and what they eat must be good food, or they will get sick and die.

There are some good shepherds, and as the Bible indicates, there are also bad shepherds. And I'm sure that you consider the shepherd in your church to be a good one. But if you begin to think he is also your scriptural authority instead of the Holy Spirit being your scriptural authority, you are in danger of believing something that is not truly Biblical. When we become Christians, we accept Jesus Christ as Lord. The word 'Lord', means, 'Master'. If we look at anyone else as our authority, then that automatically replaces Jesus as our authority.

Now, think about this. If we're being taught such a seemingly minor thing, that there were only two of every animal which went into the ark, then what else are we being taught that doesn't line up with scripture at all? My purpose today is not to point out doctrinal error. Every preacher

interprets scripture as he sees it, and there is always disagreement between men. Men aren't the same thing as God. We may be made in the image of God, but we're a long way from God.

There's a very plain line drawn between shepherds and sheep. If you're a shepherd, and you don't encourage your sheep to pray fervently for understanding, then you're a bad shepherd. If you're a shepherd, and you expect your sheep to just accept everything you say as the last word, and you expect them to treat you as the supreme leader in everything, then, again, you're a bad shepherd. However, if you're a sheep, and you don't pray fervently for God to give you wisdom and understanding of his word, then you are a bad sheep. In fact, it's even possible that you're a goat. And remember, in the end of time, God will separate the sheep from the goats. But then he will also pronounce judgment on the shepherds. He will be angry with many of them because they ate the sheep instead of feeding the sheep.

Either way, whether you're a shepherd or a sheep, you have a responsibility to God. As a shepherd you have a responsibility to provide the best pasture for the sheep that you can find. However, your authority over the sheep is not as owner, but as a shepherd which provides the opportunity for the sheep to eat. Shepherds are not supposed to force feed the sheep. They only provide the opportunity for the sheep to eat, and then it is up to the sheep what and how much they eat. For the sheep, they have a responsibility to eat the good grass. How much they eat depends on how much they need. But although they must be subject to eating where the shepherd leads them, still, they must eat for themselves, and not depend on the shepherd to force food down their throats.

At the bottom line, Christians need to pray fervently for the understanding from God's word. The Holy Spirit must be the conduit from which the understanding comes. The spoken word must come from God's shepherds, but the understanding must come from God himself. In today's church society, just as in other historical times, God's people have a tendency to accept whatever the preachers are preaching without ever praying about it. Sometimes people give the excuse that they have trouble reading and understanding the Bible. And that's understandable to a certain extent. Not everyone reads and understands with clarity to the same extent that another person will. However, each and every person can pray. Each and every Christian can seek God for understanding and confirmation of his word. The word of God is not understood because the pastor teaches it, but because it is both spoken by men and revealed by God's Holy Spirit.

Every Christian must pray for God's revelation. When you stand in the presence of God one day, and the book of life is opened, what will you say when God asks you why you believed what you did? Will you respond by saying that you just took what your minister told you, or, will you be able to say, "I believed what you revealed to me, Lord, by your Holy Spirit. I prayed, and you answered me, and that's what caused me to believe, and that's what caused me to live my life in the way I lived it."

Earlier in today's message I brought up the subject concerning which was the day of Jesus' crucifixion. Some people would say it doesn't make any difference, but I would differ with that opinion. God's word is very specific. Some of the greatest damage to the Christian church has been caused by preaching a generalized version of scripture instead of the specific word of God. God doesn't want his children obeying his word in just a general sense. He wants his children to obey his word completely. Otherwise, there is a tendency to justify the individual actions instead of being convicted by God's word. If you're a parent, then you can probably see what I mean. However, as long as the subject has been opened concerning on which day Jesus was crucified, let me just point out a couple of things which might be interesting to you.

Under the Old Testament Covenant of the Law of Commandments each seventh day, which we would call Saturday, was a Sabbath. However, there were also other days which were to be observed as Sabbaths. One of these Sabbaths was the first day of the feast of unleavened bread. This feast of unleavened bread started the day following the Passover sacrifice, and therefore was also called the Passover feast. First came the Passover day, and then came the Passover week, with the first and last days of the Passover week being observed as Sabbaths.

Now, we know that Jesus died as the ultimate Passover Lamb. He died on the very same day and at the very time that the Passover lambs were being sacrificed. And most importantly, Israel's day began at sundown, not at 12:00 midnight as in our 24 hour day. Now, the Passover lambs were to be killed at evening. Jewish law recognized this as the time from 3:00pm until 6:00pm. And, it was shortly after 3:00pm that Jesus died, coinciding exactly with the time that the Passover lambs were sacrificed. The reason Jesus had to be taken off the cross before sundown was that the Passover feast was to begin at sundown, and this first day of the feast was a Sabbath. Therefore, he could not be left on the cross on a Sabbath day.

The reason that preachers teach that Jesus was crucified on Friday is because there is so little understanding of the Sabbath days. The general knowledge is that the seventh day is the Sabbath, but other Sabbaths were observed also. Also, the day prior to a Sabbath was a day of preparing for that Sabbath day. Jesus was taken down from the cross on the day of preparation for the Passover feast day Sabbath.

Now, the chronology of the crucifixion of Jesus can be determined by you just by comparing scripture with scripture. But the important point is not the chronology, but the question, "Why are we told that Jesus died on Friday?" In the same sense is the question, "why are we taught that there were only two cows or two sheep on Noah's ark?" Most importantly, it is you who will be responsible for what you believe. We are counseled in scripture not to call any man father, for God is our Father. This means that no man is to be our authority when it comes to the word of God. God is the only authority for his word. The rest of us are hirelings. It would be a shame if you followed the hirelings of God rather than God himself.