

Divers and Strange Doctrines

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Heb. 13:9

“Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace...”

The word “strange” is defined by Strong as *xenos*, 3581 — “foreign (lit. alien, or fig. novel)”.

What is Paul referring to here? Was he referring to foreign doctrines taught in the world? or in the church?

We have all experienced strange doctrines taught by those in the world — those who have rejected God’s plan of salvation. But it is a different matter to experience this sort of teaching by those of the “household of faith”.

Today we have facing us a most “strange” doctrine which, in effect is a contradiction of the essential message of the gospel. It is necessary that we should bring this to the light of the gospel, that all may see the truth and not be led astray.

Recently, we have been informed that Jesus’ teachings in the four “gospels” (Matthew, Mark, Luke & John) are not teachings to and for the benefit of the church, but merely apply to the Jews in the last days of Moses’ dispensation.

This idea has surfaced from time to time in various forms such as, “the four gospels (as formerly mentioned) are not part of the New Testament, but are the last four books of the Old Testament.

Others insist, “The gospel began on Pentecost: therefore, anything Jesus taught before this time applied only to the Jews.

These are all variants of the same theory.

One thing I have observed is that “strange” doctrines are usually based on the “agenda” of the perpetrator. If one assumes a certain doctrine, it is necessary to make all scriptural references conform in order for it to fit. This generally creates a great distortion of the teachings of the word of God.

The Earthly Ministry of Jesus

Jesus came to create a revolution! Not a revolution of blood and violence, but of the hearts and minds of mankind.

To those who sat in darkness (in this case, the Jews) he brought a “great light” (Matt. 4:16). That great light was the gospel. This occurred at the beginning of His ministry, immediately following His temptation by Satan. Please note Luke 4:16-21.

Jesus taught in the synagogue in Nazareth from the Prophet Isaiah, *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.”* Truly, He was preaching an entirely different doctrine than these people had ever heard!

Now notice verse 21, *“And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.”*

What is Jesus saying? Simply put, “Today marks the beginning of my gospel”. Can any doubt this?

Mark 1:1 states, *“The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God”* begins with the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah (40:3). This was reiterated by Malachi (3:1) at the end of the Old Testament writings. According to Mark, the coming of John the Baptist marked the beginning of the Gospel of Christ.

But this was only the beginning of the “good news” of Christ. It told of His coming and the events leading up to His teachings.

When Jesus preached in the synagogue in Nazareth it marked the beginning of His gospel (teachings).

We recognize that Jesus was not teaching a re-hash of the Law of Moses, but an entirely new doctrine. Note John 1:17, *“For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”* (NIV) This demonstrates beyond a shadow of a doubt the contrast between “The Law” and the teachings of Jesus.

Also, please note: Jesus said (John 5:45-47), *“Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?”* Note the contrast between the two!

For brevity’s sake, let us follow the evolution of the gospel toward the end of Jesus’ ministry. Jesus states (Matt. 24:14), *“...this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world ...”*, referring to the “great commission” given to the apostles (Mark 16:15-16).

Jesus did not reveal the terms of the gospel to the public at large during His ministry because they were not able to receive it. Thus He spoke to them in parables. Luke 8:10 teaches us, “... *Unto you* (apostles) *it is given to know the mysteries* (mysterion: 3466 — a secret or mystery — through the idea of silence imposed by initiation into religious rites) *of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.*”

There is never mentioned in all the teachings of Jesus, nor that of the apostles, other than “the” or “this” gospel.

We must ask the question, “If Jesus began His ministry by preaching the gospel of the kingdom, how can it be insisted that this is part of the Old Testament?”

Likewise, how can some insist that these things taught by Jesus have no relevance to Christians today? Truly, by what then can Christians be guided today?

Some insist, “the gospel began at Pentecost and we must be guided only by those writings that came afterward.”

To this I will reply: Do we then find TWO gospels in the New Testament? One taught by Jesus during His ministry and the other on Pentecost and thereafter? This is too bizarre to contemplate!

But let us contemplate it for a moment. If Jesus taught one doctrine and called it “this gospel”, but the apostles taught another on Pentecost, we are forced by logic into an impossible conclusion.

Please note the time element involved.

Jesus instructed the apostles (50 days before Pentecost) to “...*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*” (Mark 16:15). Obviously, this would necessitate a 50-day evangelistic program to “*all nations*” (Matt. 28:19) and “*every creature*” (Mark 16:15).

After accomplishing this (in 50 days, no less) they would begin another preaching program, another doctrine, another gospel at Pentecost. And to whom would they go? They had already gone into “all the world”. Would they then retrace their steps and re-evangelize the world to another doctrine? This is just too incredible to consider!

Rather than this totally unscriptural teaching, we should be persuaded by Paul, that prolific gospel writer and preacher. He wrote, “*But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*” (Gal. 1:11-12).

But some insist that Christ “revealed” it to Paul because it was new; never taught before. This is simply not so. Paul did not live and walk

with Jesus. He declared himself to be “...born out of due time.” (1 Cor. 15:8). Thus Paul had no reminder of “*whatsoever I have said unto you*” (John 14:26), as was the case with the other apostles. BUT NOWHERE DID PAUL STATE THAT IT WAS ANOTHER GOSPEL!

But what of the occasions where Jesus referred to the Law of Moses? Was this His gospel?

I searched diligently for those references and came to one conclusion. The scribes, Pharisees, doctors, lawyers, chief priests, etc. constantly interrupted Jesus in His earthly ministry with questions concerning obscure passages in The Law. Their intentions were obvious; to confuse Jesus and to entrap Him so that accusations could be brought against Him. He was forced to reveal their falsity and render them speechless and frustrated, finally forcing them to resort to lies and false witnesses to convict Him before the law.

But this was not His doctrine; it was merely an interruption.

That we may all realize just what Jesus came into the world to bring to men, let us briefly consult the words of Christ.

- Luke 21:33, “... *my words shall not pass away.*”
- John 6:63, “...*the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*”
- John 6:68, “...*thou hast the words of eternal life.*”
- John 14:23, “...*If a man love me, he will keep my words...*”
- And the words of Paul, the apostle (Col. 3:16), “*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...*”
- And finally, in the words of Paul, 1 Tim. 6:3-4, “*If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words...*”

I ask, where do we find the “words of Jesus”? Resort to the “four gospels and there you will find them. If we do not consent to them, or teach otherwise, we are merely know-nothings and are contentious arguers over strife-causing words that have no true value toward eternal life.

There is much more that could be said from the words of Christ and His apostles, but space will not permit. Let us avoid these false teachings for they only divide the followers of our Lord.

With love for all the brethren, J D Logan

