

It Is Written

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THE NATURE OF THE APOSTLES INSPIRATION

By Clarence Johnson

When Jesus sent the apostles out on what is sometimes called the limited commission to preach to the lost sheep of Israel. He told them, "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. And you will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you" (Matthew 10:16-20).

Perhaps there are many lessons that might be gleaned from these verses, but we want to center our attention on the nature of the inspiration the apostles received from the Spirit of God. Notice that when they spoke by Divine inspiration, it was not necessary for them to plan ahead what they would say, or how to say it. The Holy Spirit was to reveal to them, not only some vague thoughts, but the precise words they were to speak.

This corresponds with the teachings of the apostle Paul concerning inspiration in I Corinthians chapter two. In I Corinthians 2:8-9, Paul indicates that those who crucified Christ did not and could not know the details of the marvelous gospel because God had not yet made those details known. However, Paul then indicates that since the crucifixion, "God has revealed them to us through His Spirit." That is, Paul and the other inspired men had been selected to receive these revelations from God, and those same men were in the process of preaching and writing those truths for the benefit of mankind in general. Paul writes, "We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (I Corinthians 2:12-13). The American Standard translation renders that last phrase, "combining spiritual things with spiritual words." God did not just reveal to them some vague thought and leave them to grope with how to put that thought across. God gave them the exact words they were to preach and write.

Further, in Ephesians 3:3-4, Paul indicates that when we read what he wrote, we can know what he knew about Christ and His gospel. We commend that gospel to you. Read it, believe it, obey it, and be blessed by it.

What Is A Gossip?

By Floyd Chappelle

Too many people think that "gossip" is the communication of information. Not so. The household of Chloe told the apostle Paul about some unflattering things that pertained to the saints at Corinth (I Corinthians 1:11). Paul was given a unique opportunity to lambast them for gossip but did not do so. Why? They had communicated information not to the detriment of the saints but for the benefit of them. Paul used the information to deal with important matters which dared not be neglected. Hence, gossip is not the mere communication of information.

Gossip is the spreading of tales (whether true or false) for the sake of damaging others. The motive is what contributes greatly to the sin. In fact, some reach the unwarranted conclusion that "talebearing" means that one is conveying false information. Not so. It is the distribution of information that should not be told. It is used that way in numerous passages (see Proverbs 11:13; 20:19). In fact, the gossip is one who will never tell a lie if he can do as much damage with the truth.

The intent of the gossip (the talebearer) is to foment strife. Consider: "the words of a talebearer are as wounds" (Proverbs 18:8), and "where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth" (Proverbs 26:20).

It was pointed out that on the Internet certain people spread a tale concerning a fine brother solely for the sake of causing harm to the reputation or influence of the brother. Those who engaged in such activities are gossips in spite of the fact they may claim to be telling the truth. Let us never forget this one thing: Truth can be told maliciously (or with intent to bring harm).

The best example of this that I can think of is Philipians chapter one. Some were preaching the Christ for the sake of bringing injury to the apostle Paul. They were teaching the truth with malicious intent. Now, in closing, have any of us been guilty of gossip (not the dissemination of facts, but having the intent to harm)? Think about these things.

The Sin Offering Of Christ

By Kyle Campbell

Calvinistic doctrine teaches the idea of "substitution," or that Christ took on our sins when He died on the cross. Passages such as 2 Corinthians 5:21 are used as proof: "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." A ramification of this doctrine is also erroneous. It says that now that we are saved, God does not see us, but He only sees Jesus; Jesus stands in our place. However, we are righteous because of God's forgiveness of our sins, not because Jesus is our righteousness in any substitutionary way or by Jesus' righteousness being imputed to us.

Jesus certainly did not sin (Hebrews 7:26-27; 9:14; 1 Peter 1:18-19). But He was our sin offering. This was prophesied in Isaiah 53:10: "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." Hebrews 10:1-18 makes the same case of Jesus being our "sin offering."

Galatians 3:13 is another passage that people have misapplied: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." When you read, "for it is written" and you look to the cursing applied to those hanging on a tree (cf. Deuteronomy 21:22-23), you know it has nothing to do with Jesus taking on our sins! Furthermore, it cannot mean that Jesus literally became a curse in the sense that His work and character were displeasing to God, because the contrary doctrine is taught everywhere in the New Testament. If we understand sin as something one does (James 4:17; 1 John 3:4), we should know sin is not something you "take on" (Ezekiel 18:20). If you know Jesus is/was without any sins (1 John 3:5), you know that you cannot understand any verse to be saying He became sin! You know then you have to look "deeper."

That Jesus died "for" us means that He died on our behalf. None of us could ever die for our our sins or for the sins of others; therefore, Jesus was not our substitute.