

Why One Way? (Part 2 of 4)

Serendipity Class — April 14, 2002

Study Guide: “*Why One Way?*” by John MacArthur (available at Christian Words & Works)

Lesson Plan Outline:

- ◆ April 7: Introduction and The Church vs. the World (Chapter 1)
- ◆ April 14: Objectivity (Chapter 2) and Rationality (Chapter 3)
- ◆ April 21: Veracity (Chapter 4) and Authority (Chapter 5)
- ◆ May 5: Incompatibility (Chapter 6) and Integrity (Chapter 7)

Lesson 2: Objectivity and Rationality

Key Points

- ◆ Last week we saw how the postmodern worldview leads us down the road to despair — we are forced to conclude that the universe materialized spontaneously from nothing, that no form of life on earth can claim a superior position over another, and that the end of all things is annihilation; there is no intrinsic value or meaning to any life experience
- ◆ *Objectivity* is the basic premise of Christianity — that an objective truth exists independently of creation and can be known through Scripture
- ◆ Scripture has only one true meaning — as determined by God — that applies to everyone; God does not speak with a forked tongue, nor can He; every Christian has the responsibility to “get it right”
- ◆ The Bible speaks clearly on all essential matters of faith, and is not open to private interpretation; Scripture was meant to be understood by human minds, but not apart from the illumination of the Holy Spirit
- ◆ God chooses to reveal only in part; most of the mind of God remains hidden to all creatures
- ◆ Our inability to fully understand the wisdom of God's truth is a human limitation, not a failure on God's part
- ◆ Without an ultimate standard of truth — Scripture — any effort to discern worldly truth becomes a fool's errand; in our fallen nature we seek our own version of the truth, which unavoidably distorts God into a useless idol
- ◆ Seeking revelation apart from the Bible may be the result of: (1) arrogance — thinking ourselves spiritually superior to the Prophets and Apostles; (2) laziness — not wanting to make the effort to search for God's will in Scripture; (3) apostasy — knowing the truth of God, but rejecting it and refusing to submit our wills to it
- ◆ *Rationality* means that the Bible makes sense and is not in opposition with itself or reality; to deny rationality is to deny all truth
- ◆ Postmodernism rejects rationality and requires us to accept contradictions *as if* they were true
- ◆ *Rationalism* is a worldview that believes human reason is sufficient for discovering truth
- ◆ The power of Scripture is in the *meaning* of the text, not the words themselves

Discussion Questions

- ◆ What is the difference between a paradox and a contradiction? What happens to the credibility of Scripture if it contains even a single contradiction?
- ◆ How does a postmodern worldview — when widely accepted — serve to undermine the family and lead inevitably to social tyranny? What symptoms do we see that this is taking place?
- ◆ What happens to the justice system in a postmodern society?
- ◆ How would our economic systems be affected if all standards for weights, measures, and forms of currency were eliminated?
- ◆ How does postmodernism affect the church? What begins to happen when the desire to be inclusive (i.e., tolerant of all ideas) takes precedence over the teaching of sound doctrine?

Take Home

- ◆ As Christians, we must seek objective truth because we each carry the seed of rebellion and will attempt to distort Scripture to fit our own desires
- ◆ Believing in the objective truth of Scripture is a basic necessity for every Christian
- ◆ Faith means believing that God will do all that He says — it does *not* mean embracing ideas that are contradictory or irrational
- ◆ Spiritual growth is an active process that requires a transformation first in the way we *think* (thoughts become words, words become actions, actions become habits, habits become destiny)

Supporting Scripture Verses

- ◆ Genesis 3:1-6 — deception of Eve
- ◆ Matthew 4:1-4 — temptation of Christ
- ◆ 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 — demolish pretensions and take every thought captive to Christ
- ◆ 1 Corinthians 13:11 — when I was a child, I thought as a child
- ◆ 1 Corinthians 15:12-19 — Paul defends the faith with a reasoned argument
- ◆ Titus 1:2, 2 Timothy 2:13, 1 Corinthians 14:33 — God cannot lie or contradict Himself
- ◆ Romans 1:16, 1 Corinthians 1:18 — the gospel is the power of God for salvation

References

- ◆ Chuck Colson and Nancy Pearcey — How Now Shall We Live?
- ◆ Os Guinness — Time for Truth
- ◆ R.C. Sproul — Lifeviews