

Acts 24:14-16 (WCF 14:2) “Believing Everything”

For the Children: Those who teach you in home and school may sometimes say things you don't understand at the time. If you tell them, “I don't get it,” they should not be offended. But if you tell them, “I don't believe you,” they will probably become quite upset. Of course, parents and teachers may make mistakes. But it is much worse to call God a liar or to say you think He has made a mistake. When we say that faith involves believing everything in the Bible, we mean that we do not want to call God a liar or say He has made a mistake. We believe that His Word is without error – even if we do not understand it all at this time. Questions: Why do we need to believe the whole Bible in order to believe the Gospel? Why do we need to believe the whole Bible in order to have a hope of resurrection? Why does belief in the Gospel require belief in holy living?

Introduction:

First Point: Everything Versus Some Things

- 1) No Arrogant Claim: No sinner knows and believes every single thing in the Bible. See Psalm. 139:6, 17-18. But WCF 14:2 claims that by faith, a Christian believes whatsoever is revealed in the Word. See also LD 7, Q/A 21-22. Does this mean that no one has faith? No, because the contrast here is not between faith with omniscience versus no faith with partial ignorance; it is between those who see the Bible as wholly God's Word versus those who want to pick and choose what they accept. On the former view, see Psalm.12:6 and 2 Tim.3:16. If we divide the Bible into true/false, we imply that God is a liar, or unable to control what men have smuggled into His Word. Acts 24:14 must be understood in that light.
- 2) Everything True in Context: In some contexts, the Bible accurately records the untrue statements of men and devils. When we say we believe everything in the Bible, we allow for these different contexts. The same is true of the apostle's claim in Acts 24:14.

Second Point: Everything in the Gospel

- 1) The Principal Part of “Everything”: Both WCF 14:2 and LD 7, Q/A 22 define the everything we must believe in terms of the Gospel – or accepting, receiving and resting upon Christ. In order to rest upon Christ, we need to believe the Gospel, in Christ's person and work.
- 2) The Hope of the Gospel: The apostle grounds his Christian hope in that same Gospel (v. 15) – his hope in the resurrection. The same hope is expressed in the Law and the Prophets. Even those accusing Paul had a formal acceptance of that doctrine. If we do not believe everything in the Bible, this hope is put in jeopardy.
- 3) The Gospel in its Broad Sense: Believing everything in the Gospel should not be limited to a bare minimum of fundamental truths (e.g., “Jesus saves”). LD 7, Q/A 22, explains believing everything in the Gospel in terms of the Apostles' Creed as a *summary*, not the be-all-and end-all of the Gospel. The summary is then expounded in a very broad way. This shows that the “Gospel” is actually connected to *the whole counsel of God*. WCF 14:2 connects it, for example, to justification, sanctification and eternal life. If we do not believe everything in the Bible, our belief in the Gospel is undermined.

Third Point: Everything with a Blameless Conscience

- 1) Sanctification Included: The “everything” of Acts 24:14 and the “whatsoever” of WCF 14:2 are also connected to sanctification – which is specifically mentioned in WCF 14:2. In Acts 24:14, the apostle connects the belief in “everything” to “serving God.” In view of this, he states that he does his best to have a “blameless conscience before God and before men” (v.16). That also implies sanctification.
- 2) Gospel and Sanctification: The Gospel includes the topic of sanctification because Christ did our sanctification for us. His righteousness is imputed and imparted to us. Sanctification must follow justification.
- 3) The Nature of Faith: Faith also believes “everything” in the Law and the Prophets, and they speak of sanctification. LD 7, Q/A 21, includes “conviction” (personal commitment) in its definition of faith. Personal commitment involves holy living. See James. 2:26.

Conclusion: