

"These Things Speak"

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Certainly, if any mortal man ever correctly comprehended the concept and connection of Christ and the church with salvation from sin, that man would have been Paul the Apostle. He knew that as an apostle of Christ he could instruct others to continue the work he and the other apostles had begun. Titus received a letter from Paul telling him how to set things in order that were needful on the Island of Crete (Titus 1:5). Paul told Titus to “speak thou the things which become [befit, ASV] sound doctrine [teaching, ASV margin]” (2:1). The Christians were to do so with “sound speech, that cannot be condemned” (2:8). Therefore, through the medium of inspired words Titus was to accomplish the task of spiritually strengthening the church at Crete and the manner in which this was to be done was clear: “These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee” (2:15).

The word translated “authority” in Titus 2:15 is the Greek word *epitages*. Of this word in this context Walter Bauer in the lexicon translated by Arndt and Gingrich wrote that it means “with all impressiveness” (p. 302). W.E. Vine suggested that the word is from *epi* meaning “upon” and *tasso* meaning “to order.” Perhaps the definition given by Arndt and Gingrich is intended to focus attention on the impression made by Titus speaking the commands of God to others. The ongoing instructions Titus was to give would be in words: “These things I will that thou affirm constantly” (3:8).

The person today who would teach and preach the gospel must do so “with all impressiveness.” His hearers should be impressed that the message is heaven-sent. “These things” refers to the inspired word of God. The word of God is designed to make the proper impression upon the minds and hearts of men and women. When communicated faithfully and accurately it will accomplish God’s purpose (Isa. 55:8-11). Paul complimented the church at Thessalonica for the manner in which they had received his inspired teaching and preaching: “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe” (I Thess. 2:13).

The ability to speak these things impressively must take into account the fact that Christ communicated authoritatively, Christ conveyed authority, and Christ’s

authority was comprehensive. Each one of these points will be consecutively considered.

Christ Communicated Authoritatively

The insight gleaned from reading Matthew's account of the reaction to the Sermon on the Mount establishes this point. Matthew wrote, "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matt. 7:28-29). Fourteen times in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said, "I say unto you" (Matt. 5:18, 20, 22, 26, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44; 6:3, 5, 16, 25, 29). He was drawing attention to himself as the Son of God sent to declare the will of the Father. He accordingly impressed the people as is evidenced in their statement regarding the manner in which he spoke.

Christ Conveyed Authority

Christ imparted authority by the Holy Spirit through the words of his apostles without relinquishing any of his authority. In John 14-16, Jesus met with his apostles and promised to send the Holy Spirit to them for the twofold purpose of bringing what he had taught them in his three-and-a-half-year personal ministry back to mind and guiding them into the completed body of written material called "the truth" (cf. Matt. 26:20; John 14:26; 16:13). When Paul said, "These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority," he was referring to this the body of written material that constitutes "the truth." The New Testament demands that people hear "the word of truth" (Eph. 1:13), be begotten by "the word of truth" (Jas. 1:18), and correctly handle "the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15). The truth must be spoken, and it must be spoken in love (Eph. 4:15).

Christ's Comprehensive Authority

The synoptic gospel accounts close with Christ giving the Great Commission to his disciples: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matt. 28:18-20). The Great Commission is predicated or based upon the comprehensive nature of Christ's authority as indicated in the words "all power [authority, ASV] is given unto me." Christ's authority is contained in the message of salvation known as the gospel of Christ. The gospel or "good news" is the system of salvation supplied by the

scriptures. It is the “power of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16). The fact that it must be obeyed proves that it is more than merely a certain set of facts to be accepted (Matt. 7:21-23; Rom. 1:5; 10:16; 16:25-27; Heb. 5:8-9).

The blood of Christ purchased the church of Christ (Acts 20:28; Rom. 16:16), and all the saved ones, i.e., those who have obeyed the gospel, are added to it by the Lord (Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:23). The mission of the church is wrapped up in the message of the gospel of Christ. What is the church to do in a setting locally, nationally, and internationally where multiplied millions are lost in sin? The answer is heed the divine instructions: “These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority [with all impressiveness, A & G]. Let no man despise thee.”