

The Bible
Profitable for Doctrine
by Hendrik Joubert

The godweb.org dictionary defines doctrine as: *A set of accepted beliefs held by a group*, and adds this religious dimension: *In religion, it is the set of beliefs that define the parameters of that belief system. Hence, there is true doctrine and false doctrine relative to each belief set.*

Defining a doctrine as false is a drastic measure not to be taken lightly; however the failure to distinguish it from the truth would be catastrophic - ***Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.*** ²John 9 (NKJV)

As the head of His church Christ *defines the parameters* of His *belief system*. Jesus Christ received ***all authority in heaven and on earth***¹ from the Father: ***My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me.***² In **Hebrews 1:1-2** we have the Son confirmed as the sole source of authority ***in these last days***; a dispensation which therefore started when ***so great a salvation was at the first spoken by the Lord.***³ The Old temporary⁴ Covenant was ***nailed to the cross***⁵ and the New, sealed with the blood of Christ,⁶ took effect shortly after His resurrection from the dead when the gospel was preached for the first time.⁷ What happened at this occasion was prophesied through ***the prophet Joel*** to take place ***in the last days.***⁸ (¹Matthew 28:18; ²John 7:16; ³Hebrews 2:1-4; ⁴Galatians 3:16-29 ⁵Colossians 2:14; ⁶Hebrews 9:13f; ¹Corinthians 11:25; ⁷Acts 2:37-38; ⁸Acts 2:16f)

In **Hebrews 2:1-4** we learn that Jesus was the first to announce the message of ***salvation*** after which it ***was confirmed to us by those who heard.*** Various passages supply details of the Lord's choosing and training of the twelve to be ***witnesses of His resurrection***¹ and be the first to confirm the grace of God to mankind.² Two statements recorded by John explains why we are to not only trust, but also continue ***steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine.***³ In **John 14:25-26** the Lord explains that He ***spoke*** things to them ***while being present with*** them and then promises to send them the Holy Spirit as a Helper to ***bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.*** In chapter **16:12-13** we learn that the Holy Spirit would ***guide them into all truth.*** Jude exhorts believers ***to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.***⁴ (¹Luke 6:13; ²Acts 1:15-26; ²Titus 2:11-12; ³Acts 2:42; ⁴Jude 1:5)

The faith which was delivered¹ was ***revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets.***² The letters of Paul (and by implication those of others) are therefore declared to have been written ***according to the wisdom given him*** and considered equal to ***the rest of the Scriptures.***³ Peter warns that some ***twist*** what God said through Paul ***to their own destruction.*** (¹Jude 1:3; ²Ephesians 3:5; ³Peter 3:15-16)

In **1Corinthians chapters 12 to 14** the apostle Paul, who received his gospel directly from Christ,¹ and not by *oral tradition* as I heard a college professor once remark, teaches those at Corinth who received the gifts of the Spirit to use them properly.² In the well-known **13th chapter** God explains through Him that the Corinthians were missing the point as to the purpose of the gifts; the gifts were a temporary measure by which the gospel was being revealed ***in part*** through different individuals, but once the ***complete, or that which is perfect,***³ was available the parts will have served their purpose and be done away. They did not have the complete revelation of the New Testament in written form as we have it. Many who sincerely believe they need the gifts as a sign of salvation are coached into making meaningless sounds, believing they speak in tongues, as the apostles did on the day of Pentecost to announce the gospel in the language of the different nations represented in the crowd.⁴ This ability was ***a sign to the unbelievers***⁵ that the message of salvation was the work of God. (¹Galatians 1:11-12; ²1Corinthians 12:1-2; ³1Corinthians 13:9-10; ⁴Acts 2:7-12; ⁵1Corinthians 14:22)

In his ***inspired***¹ statement to Timothy the apostle Paul declares the Scriptures ***profitable for doctrine.***² Many view it as an optional use of the Scriptures. The idea is that we should all be free to worship God as we see fit as salvation is by *grace*. This viewpoint is popular because it releases us from our responsibilities. The declaration that God is ***a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him***³ more than suggests that each sinner should make a concerted effort to determine His will, and the statement that ***All Scriptures is given by inspiration of God so that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work***⁴ supplies each sinner with the source to determine what God defines as ***every good work.*** For this reason those ***who searched the Scriptures daily*** to see if they were hearing the

truth was considered *noble or fair minded*.⁵ (¹1Peter 3:15-16; ²2Timothy 3:16-17; ¹1Corinthians 14:37; ²2Timothy 3:16; ³Hebrews 11:6; ⁴2Timothy 3:16-17; ⁵Acts 17:11)

Inserted between the statement that *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God*, and what may be considered the ultimate purpose statement for revealing the Scriptures, *so that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work*, we find the details of more exactly how the purpose is to be accomplished. We may use it to determine *doctrine*, and in the case of the New Testament, *the doctrine of Christ*.¹ Contained in this doctrine are demands which would require sinners to be *reproved* and *corrected* for failing to adhere to *the doctrine of Christ*. (¹2John 1:9; ¹Matthew 15:9)

False *doctrine* is a well defined concept in Scripture and it would be foolish for sinners to ignore the fact that the *doctrines of men*, *subtly* introduced,¹ would cause worship to be *in vain*;² we would therefore still be lost in our sin. Sinners need to *believe in Jesus*,³ and demonstrate⁴ that by following His *doctrine*⁵ rather than demonstrating their faith in men by following their *doctrine*.⁶ The simplicity of the statement in **Romans 10:17** in this regard is often overlooked: *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*. (¹Jude 1:3-4; ¹Hebrews 2:1; ²Mark 7:7; ³John 3:16; ⁴James 2:14-26; ¹Hebrews 11; ¹Luke 6:46; ⁵2John 1:9; ⁶Matthew 15:9)

In the New Testament we have all the tools we need in order to establish the *doctrine* which comes from God and every servant should *be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*.¹ It would be easy to apply this passage to those who would be preachers and teachers of the gospel, and not an instruction to every would-be Christian; however we should emulate the attitude revealed in **Acts 17:11** as we *diligently seek*² God. Teaching for doctrines the commandments of men causes our worship to be rejected. (**Mark 7:7; 2John 1:9**) Consider the implication for the decisions taken by the many synods and councils. (¹2Timothy 2:15; ¹Hebrews 11:6)