

INTRODUCTION TO STUDIES IN TRADITIONAL TEACHINGS

Clearly the teaching of the Trinity is a traditional teaching held by the vast majority of churches and has been explored in Volume One. So Volume Two deals with questions concerning traditional teachings such as:

- Does a person have a number of separate literal parts to his nature i.e. a spirit, and a soul as well as his body?
- When a person dies does some part of him i.e. his soul live on because it is immortal?
- If so, and if the person has been wicked, does this 'soul' suffer eternal excruciating tortures of hell-fire?
- Or does the soul of the good person go to heaven?
- Does the gospel concern life in heaven because the Kingdom of God is in heaven?
- What will be the future life of the Christian?
- What really is the Kingdom of God?

On questions of salvation a Christian needs to know whether such teachings as the following are really true:

- That even if a Christian loses faith he is still saved. This is called 'Once saved always saved.'
- That only certain people are going to be saved. This is called 'Predestinarianism.'
- That everyone who has ever lived will be saved. This is called 'Universalism.'
- That the salvation of everyone is totally contingent on being baptized. This is called 'Baptismal regeneration.'
- That sprinkling with water is sufficient for one to be considered as baptized.

Other practical issues that have proved difficult for many denominations over centuries are examined. These are:

- Should women keep totally silent in a meeting or could they be appointed as deacons or even elders in a Christian congregation?
- Is divorce never allowed, allowed only for sexual immorality of the partner or are there also other reasons that a Christian might legitimately cite as a basis for divorce?
- And what about those who have been divorced can they legitimately re-marry?

Please note that there are also some teachings covered in the other Volumes that are occasionally taught by the traditional or orthodox churches. These cover the important subjects of the sacrifice of Christ, the return of Christ, the resurrection, speaking in tongues, tithing, approaches to understanding prophecy, and belief in evolution.

METHOD OF PRESENTATION OF THE MATERIAL

These studies are presented as an attempt to draw together the many Scriptures that have a bearing on each subject. No claim is made of being correct on all points, in spite of every effort made to express what is factually correct.

The Christian's task is to draw together these statements in the Bible and to make sense of the information. In doing all of this, the truth-seeker has to ensure that the reading of these texts is never taken out of context. So although these studies present mainly single or partial verses it is strongly recommended that the reader examine from his or her own Bible the context in which these verses are set. Of course, the reason for the single or partial verses is to focus on the point the text makes and hence to gain clarity. Also it is hoped that the sub-headings, the highlighted key words and the comments will help to connect the related information and act as a guide to bring out the teaching of the Bible on each subject. *The approach taken here is to use the **plainly understood texts** as the basis*

to understand the more difficult texts and also to refer to the scholarly works. Although often dismissed by some truth-seekers, the work of Bible scholars can be very valuable toward gaining a correct understanding of Scripture. In fact, Jesus said that he would make such a provision: “*Therefore, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes (NKJV)*” (Matthew 23:34). Such *scribes* were not public speakers with little scholarly background but, in Bible times, were a class of professional Bible scholars. We, too, need to take advantage of the up-to-date work of such professionals today. This helps in the areas of Bible translation, greater understanding of Jewish culture and ways of Jewish expression, more accurate definitions of Bible terms and analysis of the meanings in English. However, there is the warning for us to be discerning with such works.

We also make acknowledgement of the fact that many non-professional individual seekers after truth have also researched these subjects and have revealed numerous points that are set out in these studies.

To understand the writings of the scholars on these subjects it is helpful to know the meanings of the rather jargonistic terminology that has grown up around the various issues. To this end I have set out basic definitions of the terms used in the studies **in the main introduction to the website.**

Whenever I have updated a Study the new point is identified by a vertical line set to the right of the new section.

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