



The Evil that Results from Bad Hermeneutics: Love for God Is Missing from the Legalism of Self-Verification; the Myths of 1st-Century Allegory, 2 Tim 4:2-4

The Evil that Results from Bad Hermeneutics

1. The discovery that Koine Greek was the language of the New Testament had at this point been already established in our study. However, when further confirmation of this was discovered I brought it to your attention.
2. This information was presented from Daniel B. Wallace's *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics*. In an introductory chapter he addresses the subject of "The Language of the New Testament" which chronicles the development of the Greek language and the discovery that the Koine dialect is the language of the New Testament. This portion of our study can be reviewed in *Clanking Chains 318-321*.
3. The discovery of ancient manuscripts and advances in philology that augmented the science of textual criticism have given theologians, pastors, and missionaries all the tools they need to translate biblical texts correctly.
4. Such is not the case. Seminaries are drifting toward limited atonement or "limited atonement lite," such as "lordship salvation." Pastors are more interested in attracting new customers at the expense of a clear, precise presentation of the Gospel.
5. The thing that drives this heresy is a works-oriented legalism that finds its origin in the writings and influence of Theodore Bèza and those who followed him in the development of Reformed theology.
6. This is ridiculous! The only way works can be effective at all, let alone over the long haul, is for believes to know doctrine and how to use it under the power of the Holy Spirit.
7. The impact of limited atonement and lordship salvation has led to the emergence of a touchy-feely Christianity that is not motivated by love for God, executed by the power of the Spirit, or guided by the Word of God.
8. Instead there is the false motivation to either self-verify salvation or make Christ Lord.
9. This is where the sinful nature's trends toward human good get converted into evil and the sad result is a loss of truth and a buying of the lie.
10. Satan's genius approach to neutralizing believers and client nations is the presentation of the lie in such alluring terms that it is mistaken for the truth.
11. Those devoid of doctrinal discernment are ever eager to believe the lie and to make personal decisions based upon it. The reason is they are not taught properly by their pastors. These issues are addressed by Paul in:

2 Timothy 4:2 -Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season [good times & bad], reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience [never deviate from truth] and instruction [teach doctrine].

v. 3 - The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine [no objectivity]; but wanting to have their ears tickled [an eagerness to hear what appeals to them], they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance with their own desires;



v. 4 - and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths [μῦθος, *muthos*].

12. Paul's use of the word *muthos* in this passage has an application that corresponds to our overall study and warrants mention here. Gerhard Kittel's comments on *muthos* in the New Testament are instructive:

Kittel, Gerhard (ed.). *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1967), 4:783:

μῦθος, *muthos*. Most deserving of notice are the interpretations which refer the myths to the Jewish haggada and which assume that the myths are proclaimed by a Jewish or Jewish-Christian Gnostic sect. It is highly probable that the Pastoral Epistles [1 & 2 Timothy & Titus] are concerned with the early form of a Gnosticism which flourished on the soil of Hellenistic Jewish Christianity. References to dualistic ideas such as those contained in 1 Timothy 4:1-5 clearly take us beyond the sphere of Judaism proper. In this, Gnosis haggadic stories and their religious allegorical interpretation were contemptuously described by opponents in terms of the pagan expression μῦθοι, *muthoi*, with a primary reference to the method of exposition, which was fundamentally the same as that of the Hellenic myths. In this type of interpretation, which opened the door to Gnostic caprice, the Church saw a danger which caused it to hoist a warning signal.

13. Even during the incipency of the Church Age the battle with allegorical interpretations of the Word had begun and Paul speaks of the impact upon those who were drawn to this method of biblical analysis when he writes, "they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance with their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to μῦθος, *muthos*: myths"— i.e., allegorical interpretations.
14. In a similar fashion, Reformed theology, characterized by its belief in "limited atonement" and the supralapsarian order of the elective decrees, has transformed the Christian walk from humble submission to the mandates and unquestioned faith in the promises of Scripture to a frantic search for confirmation through works.

Ramifications for the Future

1. The confusion that presently hobbles Protestantism was evident at its beginnings. And the one who started the confusion did so by hiding behind the name and borrowing the power of John Calvin.
2. Theodore Bèza developed the false doctrine of limited atonement and was able to sell it by associating the idea with his mentor. Others bought in and then contributed to making the problem even worse.
3. Therefore, Theodore Bèza's distortions of Calvin's theology are an illustration of Cyril of Alexandria's distortions of Nestorius's theology.
4. These controversies have been sufficiently explained. The two parties in conflict have a number of issues that define their respective positions. Defining these differences between the two can become very complex, as you have surely noticed.
5. But the simplest way to identify one from the other is to compare the order of the elective decrees subscribed to by each.