

How to Smell a Rat

by Anton Bosch

As Christians, we must learn to discern between spiritual poison and spiritual food by understanding that truth is absolute, the Bible is complete, and God does not change His mind.

Scripture: Numbers 23:19, Psalm 119:89, Psalm 119:105, Matthew 5:18, Matthew 24:35, John 14:6, John 17:17, Romans 3:4, Hebrews 5:14, Hebrews 13:8

Topics: "Discerning Truth", "Biblical Authority"

Description

Anton Bosch preaches about the importance of discerning between spiritual poison and spiritual food as Christians mature in their faith, emphasizing the need to distinguish between truth and error. He highlights that truth is absolute and unchanging, centered around Jesus Christ as the way, the truth, and the life. The sermon also stresses that the Bible is complete, with God's revelation delivered once and for all through Jesus Christ, and warns against false prophets claiming new revelations. Additionally, it underscores that God does not change His mind, and His Word is settled and unchanging, guiding believers to measure all teachings against the Bible to avoid falling into error.

Transcript

A toddler will eat anything. It does not matter if it is nutritious or poison, it has no ability to discern between food and poison.

As Christians mature in the faith they should learn to discern between spiritual poison and spiritual food. "But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:14). The problem is that the vast majority of modern-day "Christians" are either not born again or have been kept in a perpetual state of babyhood and thus are unable to discern the difference between truth and error. Because of this, and because we have a new generation of church-goers who do not know the Bible, false teachers have multiplied and millions believe anything these preachers say.

Discriminating between truth and error is really not that difficult as long as we abide by a few basic principles. The first of these is that truth is absolute. I use the term "absolute" as the opposite of "relative". For most people - Christian and non-Christian - truth is relative. We hear:

"Truth is relative to one's own experience, background, culture and environment."

"What is true for one person may not be true for someone else."

"What was true in Jesus' day or a hundred years ago, is not necessarily true today."

"What is true in the jungles of Africa is not true in the concrete jungles of America".

But truth is absolute. It is unchanging and it is equally true in every time, culture, or environment. God's truth does not change or have a different meaning in a different environment.

What is truth? Jesus said "I am the way, the truth, and the life." (John 14:6). The Truth is first a person - Jesus Christ. His Word is Truth. Jesus said: "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth." (John 17:17). Truth, the Person, never changes: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). Truth, the Word, never changes. "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:18-19).

The second principle is that the Bible is complete. Many people think that God continues to give new revelation through prophets, preachers and visions. But that is a lie from hell to move people away from the foundation of the Word. Hebrews 1:1-2 says, "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son...". Note that God has spoken. The Greek is very specific, this is past and complete. God does not continue to speak. Yes, we refer to "God speaking to us," but what we actually mean is that God is reminding us of what He had already said in His Word. Jude 3 says: "I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints". This translation is accurate in that the faith was delivered once and for all (eternity). It is not continually being delivered.

Theologians speak of "progressive revelation". Unfortunately some preachers do not understand what the term means and assume that it means that God is continually revealing more and more truth. No. He gave us the whole revelation in Jesus Christ which has been written down in the form of the New Testament, and that's it. The next time we will get any more information is when we see Him face to face (1Corinthians 13:12). We can be absolutely sure that there is no further revelation between the Revelation given to John and the revelation of Jesus at His return.

Anyone who claims to have additional information that is not contained in the 66 books is a charlatan and a heretic. In fact, the Bible several times pronounces a curse on any who add to, or subtract from God's Word. (Deuteronomy 4:2, 12:32, Proverbs 30:6, Matthew 15:6-13, Revelation 22:18). If a preacher is willing to subtract or change the smallest part of the Bible (a jot or tittle), then you need to be careful. If he will subtract in one area, he is capable of subtracting or adding in other areas. Once you undermine the smallest part of the Bible, then you may as well throw the whole thing out.

The third principle is that God does not change His mind. What God has said is forever established and will never be altered in any way. "Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven" (Psalm 119:89). (Settled means established, firm and unchanging.) "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Matthew 24:35). "God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good" (Numbers 23:19). So, to suggest that God has a different plan for people today to what He described in

His Word, or that he changed His mind, or that He is making up His plans as He goes along makes God a liar and a man. He is neither. His plans were established from before the foundation of the earth. He knew all the twists and turns that man and history would take from the beginning. He does not adjust or tweak his purpose as time unfolds.

If we can accept that God has no other plan, purpose or will for us than which is revealed in the Bible and that any deviation from it in deed, word or principle is heresy, we will easily be able to recognize most of the error that goes around, simply by measuring it by the Bible.

Don't be fooled when men tell you that only the educated can understand the Bible. We can all understand it. It does not matter how clever the argument is presented. If its conclusion is contrary to the plain teaching of the Bible, it is error. BUT there are a few simple rules that we must apply when we interpret the Scriptures. It is often these rules that are broken in order to arrive at a teaching which is erroneous. I know that not everybody knows these rules or how to apply them. But every believer who faithfully reads his Bible will know enough to smell a rat and to be on guard.

I believe that no one can get into error by simply believing and practicing the Bible. God gives us enough information for each stage of our growth to protect us. Eve did not know the whole council of God, but she knew that God had forbidden eating of the tree. But, she got into trouble when she listened to the Devil's version of what God had said. If only she had stuck to the simple truth God had given her, she would have been safe.

Every believer can ask this easy question: "Show me where it says so in the Bible." If the teacher cannot do so, or has to contort your mind or the Scriptures to get a square verse to fit into a round hole then run for your life - he is dangerous.

God's word is "a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." (Psalm 119:105). It enlightens and leads us. It does not bring us into darkness, confuse or mislead us. Trust His Word and if man contradicts His word "let God be true but every man a liar" (Romans 3:4).

(To Be Continued)

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