RETAIN THE STANDARD OF SOUND WORDS

2 Timothy 1:13(NASV) Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

“Retain” translates a Greek word meaning to hold fast (KJV) or keep (NIV).

“Standard” translates a Greek word meaning pattern (NIV) or form (KJV).

“Sound” translates a word meaning healthy, whole or wholesome.

“Words” is *“logos,”* as in John 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” The basic idea is the communication of a concept, truth or idea. Jesus fully communicates all that God the Father is. Jesus said in John 14:9b, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.” Words are the primary means of communication.

I Corinthians 2:13 This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom, but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words.

What Was Paul Concerned About?

I Timothy 6:3-5(NASB) If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicion, and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.

The phrase “sound words” is the same in I Timothy 6:3 as it is in 2 Timothy 1:13. Paul tells Timothy to use words to mean what Jesus used them to mean, and what he, Paul, used them to mean. The Greek word translated “disputes about words” in I Timothy 6:4(NASB) is translated “quarreling about words” in 2 Timothy 2:14(NIV).

2 Timothy 2:13&14 Keep reminding God’s people of these things. Warn them before God against quarreling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen. Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

A Literary Example - Animal Farm

Original slogan: “All animals are created equal.”

Final slogan: “All animals are created equal, but some are more equal than others.”

Current Cultural Examples

Original Definition: Man: A human being who is genetically and physiologically male. Merriam-Webster: “An individual human, especially an adult male human.”

Proposed Definition: Man: A human being who self-identifies as male, regardless of genetics and/or physiology.

Original Definition: Woman: A human being who is genetically and physiologically female. Merriam-Webster: “An adult female person.”

Proposed Definition: Woman: A human being who self identifies as female, regardless of genetics and/or physiology.

Marriage has traditionally been a consensual, legal relationship between a man and a woman that can only be dissolved by divorce. Merriam-Webster now has a new definition that includes gay marriage, along with a lengthy explanation for their new definition.

Scriptural Insight on Cultural Examples

Matthew 19:4-6 “Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

This is important because God tells us to call Him Father, Israel is portrayed as the unfaithful wife of the LORD and the church is the bride of Christ.

The Problem in Ephesus

I Timothy 1:3&7a As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer…They want to be teachers of the law…

I Timothy 6:20&21 Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have departed from the faith. Grace be with you all.

Word Meanings Changed by Gnostics

Christ: The Anointed One, the Messiah became the “Christ Consciousness” which descended upon Jesus, as it had upon many others in the past and many more since Jesus, and then left Him before the crucifixion.

Yahweh, the LORD, the Creator became a created fallible god who created the earth but needed to be rejected for man to become all he could be.

Salvation from the penalty and power of sin became salvation from ignorance of spiritual realities not revealed in the Word of God.

Modern Examples

Jesus is the Son of God. In Mormonism, this means that God in heaven has many wives, and his spirit wives have many spirit children who enter human babies when they are conceived. Jesus is the Son of God because He was conceived by one of God’s spirit wives and entered the womb of Mary when Jesus was conceived. Satan is also a “Son of God” in this sense, as is every human being.

Romans 3:20 “For by the works of the Law no human being shall be justified before him, for through law comes the recognition of sin.” Note on verse 20: “It does not follow from St. Paul’s statement that no man is justified by the works of the Law, that good works are not necessary for salvation. The justification of which St. Paul here speaks is the infusion of sanctifying grace which alone renders a person supernaturally pleasing in the sight of God. This cannot be obtained either by the observation of the Law or by any other work of unregenerate man.”

Ephesians 2:8&9 “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not from yourselves, for it is the gift of God; not as the outcome of works, lest anyone may boast. (The quote and footnote on Romans 3:20 and the quote of Ephesians 2:8&9 are all from the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine translation of the New Testament published by the Catholic Book publishing company with the imprimatur of Francis Cardinal Spellman.)

To whom does the word “Israel” refer in the New Testament, including the Book of Revelation? Romans 11:25b&26a, Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, and in this way all Israel will be saved.

Jehovah’s Witnesses say they are the 144,000 Jews, 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes.

Seventh Day Adventists say they are Israel in the Book of Revelation.

The Catholic Church says, “The Israel of old gave birth to the Messiah and then became the new Israel, the church, which suffers persecution by the dragon.” Footnote on Revelation 12:1-6 The New American Bible, The New Catholic Translation. Most churches that came out of the Protestant Reformation have historically agreed. I am NOT saying this is a salvation issue.

Somethings to Think About

Words and their meanings are important. If we are going to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints” (Jude 3 NASB), we must pay attention to words and their meanings.

In Ephesus words were being redefined by the Gnostics in such a way that who Jesus was and what He did for us when He died on the cross and rose again was completely garbled.

Paul tells Timothy to “retain the standard of sound words,” “those of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Jesus said God created mankind “male and female” and instituted marriage between a man and a woman. We should use the words “man, “woman” and “marriage” in the same way Jesus did.

Many groups will talk about the Lord Jesus Christ but redefine what the name means and who He is. We need to be careful.

People will talk about being justified or being saved and mean something different than what Scripture says.

Groups who claim that God is done with the Jews and that they are Israel need to be checked out.