**Don’t Add To Or Take Away From God’s Word**

Revelation 22:18-19 reads “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.” So we should not add to or take away from God’s word. This text says if we do, our part shall be taken out of the book of life. That would mean we would lose our salvation since the book of life is God’s list of all His saved people.

Most likely this text is talking about the book of Revelation itself, but there are plenty of similar passages in the Bible that extend this principle to the whole Bible. For example Deut 4:2 has it “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.”

How can we be guilty of adding to the word of God? Well we could do it literally like the Mormons do – they add to the scriptures the Book Of Mormon, The Pearl Of Great Price, and The Doctrine And Covenants. But there are ways to add to God’s word without doing it literally. For example, Rom 6:4 says we are “buried with him (Christ) by baptism.” When we take someone who dies out to the graveyard to “bury” them, we don’t just stand them up and sprinkle a little dirt on the head; we put them all the way under the ground. So we all know what “buried” means. In baptism then we should bury the person in the water. Now wouldn’t practicing sprinkling for baptism then be adding to God’s word? It would be like writing a new verse in the Bible that would authorize sprinkling. See what I mean?

How can we be guilty of taking away from the word of God? We could do that literally by taking the scissors and cutting out parts of the Bible we don’t like. I don’t know many people who do that, but I know many who ignore Bible passages they don’t like. Isn’t that the same thing in effect? For example I Cor 14:34-35 clearly condemns “women preachers” when it says “Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.” Yet as clear as that passage is, most churches run merrily along allowing women to preach from their pulpit ignoring what the Bible says on the topic. They are in effect, subtracting I Cor 14:34-35 and parallel verses from the Bible.

Aren’t churches also subtracting from God’s word when they ignore Acts 20:7 which teaches congregations should partake of the Lord’s Supper every Sunday? Let me read that verse - “And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.” The breaking of bread here refers to the Lord’s Supper (I Cor 10:16), and so the disciples we should be emulating ate the Lord’s Supper each first day of the week.

Aren’t churches adding to God’s word when they practice infant baptism? You can’t read anywhere in the Bible about infant baptism. And wouldn’t Acts 8:36-37 prove infant baptism is unscriptural? That passage reads “And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest …” In other words one must believe first before he can be baptized, and an infant can’t believe, he doesn’t have the capability, the maturity for that.

The truth is the Catholic church started infant baptism centuries after the New Testament was written. And they began baptizing infants because they made up another doctrine not taught by the Bible – original sin. They thought infants are born with the guilt of Adam’s first sin, and therefore need baptism to get rid of that sin. But the truth is the Bible nowhere teaches the inheriting of original sin. Teaching that idea is just another example of adding to God’s word. To the contrary, Ezek 18:20 says plainly “The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.” And since infants have so sin, they have no need to be baptized anyway.

Most denominations subtract from God’s word when they take away something else clearly taught by the Bible, that obedience is necessary to salvation. Doesn’t Heb 5:9 make that requirement clear? - “And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.” Yet many churches teach all a person has to do to be saved is “accept Jesus Christ as your personal savior.” In other words, all you have to do to be saved is believe. This false concept is refuted by dozens of Bible passages. How about I Pet 1:22 “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth …”? So if we want to be saved, if we want our souls purified from sin, we have to do more than just believe; we also have obey the truth.

Have you obeyed the truth? Do you even know what it means to obey the truth? Send me an email at BibleCrossfire@email.com and let’s talk about it.