

Title: One Doctrine, Two Works
Text: Deuteronomy 32: 2
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Deuteronomy 32:2: My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass:

Our subject is “One Doctrine, Two Works.” Notice, it is one doctrine—“my doctrine.” But this one doctrine does two works on two very different things upon which it falls. One, it “shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distill as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb.” The doctrine drops as small, light rain, even as light as dew. This work is done upon the tender herb. Two, the same doctrine comes “as the showers upon the grass.” The doctrine drops as a heavy downpour. This is upon the grass.

ONE DOCTRINE

First, the message of the gospel is one doctrine, “My doctrine.” I heard a brother point this out once in a message—when the scripture speaks of falsehood, it is usually in the plural “doctrines”, but when speaking of the truth it is always singular “doctrine.”

Concerning lies scripture says:

Matthew 15:9: But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

Colossians 2:22: Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?

1 Timothy 4:1: Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

Hebrews 13:9: Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For *it is* a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

But speaking of the truth, scripture says:

Matthew 7:28: And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:

Mark 4:2: And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine,

John 7:16: Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

The doctrine of God and our Savior Jesus Christ has many branches of teaching, but it is all one doctrine. It all stands vitally connected, giving the triune God in Christ all the glory. The doctrine of total depravity is vitally connected with the necessity for God to elect a people unto salvation in Christ Jesus, else none would be saved. Then the doctrine of election is vitally connected with the doctrine of particular redemption—it is only the elect for whom Christ died. It is because we are depraved, elected, redeemed, that the Holy Spirit must and shall irresistibly, invincibly regenerate us to life and faith in Christ. And because justice has been satisfied, since redemption is accomplished by Christ, for each particular, elect child, they must be preserved unto the end and thus, by God’s grace, they shall persevere. It is impossible for justice to be poured out on

them a second time. God works all of this without fail, doing as he pleases, because he is absolutely sovereign to work his will in the earth. Every other doctrine stands connected to each other. By simply teaching error in one doctrine it is necessary to teach error in the rest because they make up one doctrine.

TWO WORKS

Yet, though we preach one doctrine there are two works produced by God.

First, this one doctrine works upon the tender herb, “My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb.” The gospel “drops.” The word of God comes down from above from Christ himself through his gospel preacher who Christ sends. This gospel drops “as the rain. It “distills as the dew.” This is a light and easy rain, small rain. And this work is performed “upon the tender herb.”

Secondly, notice the word “And.” This same doctrine works differently upon the grass, “and as the showers upon the grass.” While the gospel falls gently upon the tender herb it comes “as showers” upon “the grass.” The gospel falls as a heavy downpour, like in a thunderstorm, upon the grass. This “grass” is like the grass that grew upon the rooftops of the flat houses or the tall sage grass that grows in fields

Psalm 129: 5: Let them all be confounded and turned back that hate Zion. 6: Let them be as the grass upon the housetops, which withereth afore it groweth up: 7: Wherewith the mower filleth not his hand; nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom.

These two different works can take place by the same doctrine in the same person. It is because every believer has two natures. When a sinner is born again, the nature created is a new heart, broken and contrite, receiving the doctrine of God with gladness. (Eze 36: 27; Ps 51: 10, 8, 17; 4: 7) God said,

Ezekiel 36:27: And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do *them*.

David described the new heart:

Psalm 51: 10: Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me...17: The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

The new heart is tender—like the “tender herb” in our text. But the old nature, which is of Adam, is that which the scripture to in Is 40 as grass.

Isaiah 40: 6: The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field: 7: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. 8: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

The old man within a believer is referred to in Rom 7. This is a believer speaking because only a believer knows this about himself.

Romans 7: 18: For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

There is a new willingness in the new man, but the old man is too strong for us to perform that which is good. So how will a believer be brought to obey God? We are taught in the doctrine of God to put off the old, grassy man of flesh and put on the new man.

Ephesians 4: 22: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23: And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24: And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Yet, since it is not by any power in our grassy flesh by which the deeds of the believer's body are mortified and since we have not strength enough in the new man, of ourselves, to mortify our flesh, how then shall we put off the old and put on the new? How can we be renewed in the spirit of our mind in the new man?

This work is the work spoken of in our text. It is done by the same doctrine—the gospel of our Lord Jesus. The Holy Spirit makes the power of the doctrine of God effectual in the new man.

Romans 8: 11: But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you...13: For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

We publish the name of the LORD by preaching Christ and him crucified. The gospel ascribes all greatness to our God. We speak only of Christ, declaring he is the Rock. His work is perfect. The truth declares all God's ways are judgment. He is a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he. We preach this doctrine because this is the message whereby the Spirit mortifies the flesh. To preach the truth and wait on the Spirit to mortify the flesh is the opposite of preaching works and trying to mortify the flesh by the works of the law. To do the latter is walking after the flesh, to do the former is walking in the Spirit.

1Corinthians 1:18: For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

We preach the gospel and by the gospel, the Holy Spirit also renews the inward man. It is not by any strength in us that the new man is renewed but only by the same doctrine, blessed of God by the Holy Spirit in the newly created heart.

TWO WORKS ACCOMPLISHED BY ONE DOCTRINE

Thirdly, back in our text, we see both these great and spiritual works are accomplished by the same doctrine at the same time. As we hear of God's sovereign, particular, redemption accomplished by Christ Jesus through his precious blood, the word comes softly and full of life upon the inner man, "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb." As the gospel drops from Christ through his preacher, God in his greatness enters into the new man in Spirit. Christ is formed in us. He makes the inner man spring forth fragrant and full, like as the tender herb is renewed by the gentle dew.

Yet, at the same time, the same doctrine comes upon our old man and subdues the flesh, "and as the showers upon the grass." Have you ever seen sage grass in a field after a heavy rain? It lays flat. That is what the gospel does to our grassy, fleshly man. The gospel lays low the old grassy man of our flesh, even as the heavy showers make the grass of the field lay flat. Moses tells us why this one doctrine works these two different works in the new man and in the old man.

It is “Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God.” (Deut 32: 3) The doctrine of the greatness of God—feeds the inner man which delights for God to have all the glory. But the same doctrine lays low the old man because it declares there is no greatness in our flesh.

My doctrine accomplishes this work because I will publish, “He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.” (Deut 32: 4) The new man is renewed because the new heart delights to hear Christ our Rock. Our old man of flesh makes us look to the law, to our works, to our life of faith. When we do we see nothing but sin and unfaithfulness. It brings us to worry and fret, wondering if we are really the children of God. But the gospel speaks in our inner man declaring that Christ’s “work is perfect.” It means his work is finished and complete and we are complete in Christ. (Col 2: 10)

The reason Christ’s work is complete is “For all his ways are judgment.” Christ is “the God of Truth and without iniquity.” He put away all the iniquity of his people on the cross by bearing our iniquity away in the just judgment of God. Christ took the place of his people and took all that we deserved. He did so “in Truth!” Therefore, “just and righteous is he.” In Christ all his people are justified and made righteous. This is food for the new man. It renews the inward man and strengthens the inner man. But this same doctrine takes away all the glory and all boasting, from our old man of flesh. It brings the old man of flesh low.

This work is done because I will publish, “They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children: they are a perverse and crooked generation.” (Deut 32: 5) Our new man delights to hear the truth about our old, fleshly man. We corrupted ourselves in Adam and in our corrupt sin-nature. By nature our spot was not the spot of God’s children. Our flesh is perverse and crooked. This same doctrine strengthens the inner man to pay no attention to the old man—to mortify the old man, to treat the old man as dead. Therefore, as the gospel strengthens the inner man, it lays low the grassy old man like heavy showers upon the grass.

POWER AND WISDOM OF GOD

Brethren, this is another reason why the preaching of Christ and him crucified is to us who are called, both, the power of God and the wisdom of God. By this one doctrine, God does two things: he says, “I kill and I make alive.” (Deut 32: 39) By one doctrine God kills the old man—mortifying the flesh. And by the same doctrine Christ makes alive the new man. The word of God is a two-edged sword—

Hebrews 4:12: For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

One side of the sword slays the old man. The other side renews the new man. And it always divides the two and keeps them divided. God’s doctrine falls softly as dew distilling upon the tender herb of the new man while it is a heavy downpour, beating down the grassy flesh.

Sinner, if all you are is flesh, if you have not been born again, this is why the gospel is offensive to you. The gospel gives your flesh no room to glory, no work to do and gives Christ all the glory. But keep coming to hear, because if God gives you a new man, this will be the word by which he says, “Let there be light.”

And believer, this is why we must have the gospel. It is not stretching Paul’s word to the Corinthians to use it in this application. He said, “For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.” (2 Cor 4: 16) “My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass.”

Amen!