

Not Who, But What

Ponder: Determining what is true

Scripture: “He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true” (John 3:33, NKJV).

“Whose side are you on?” Whenever controversy arises, whether it be in a family, in politics, or in religious matters, our tendency is to choose up sides. It’s nothing new; folks in the first century A.D. did the same thing.

Jesus’ enemies tried and tried to embroil him in some controversy where He would have to choose one side or the other; no matter what He chose, some would find fault. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar? Choose between the Herodians (who would say ‘yes’) and the Zealots (who would say ‘no’)! Jesus sided with neither; instead, He remained faithful to the word of God. Jesus’ enemies acknowledged that the tax money was made in Caesar’s image (Matthew 22:20, 21). Scripture says people are made in God’s image (Genesis 1:27). The money belongs to Caesar; it’s made in his image. You belong to God; you’re made in His image. Case closed!

Is it lawful to divorce for just any cause? Choose between two rival rabbinical schools, Shammai and Hillel. Jesus didn’t fall for their scheme. Once again, He appealed to the word of God. He went back past Deuteronomy 24 all the way to Genesis, where God originated marriage in the garden of Eden. The word of God trumps any and all rabbinical schools!

Even in the case of John the Immerser, people who received his testimony were certifying that God is true. What John said was right, not because John said it, but because it was God’s word! Let loyalty be to the word (and, by extension, to God), not to the messenger.

That’s still the case today. People sometimes develop unhealthy loyalties to preachers, professors, authors, editors, et. al. “A certain teaching must be true, because brother Blank believes it.” Well, I hope brother Blank teaches the truth; but even if he does, it’s true because that’s what the word of God teaches, not because brother Blank said so.

The noble Bereans checked what they heard against the Scriptures (Acts 17:11). You would be wise to do the same!