

Hearing the Text of the Bible

One of our human frailties is our inability to hear the text of Scripture. More precisely, we have difficulty in hearing what the Bible says when we have been propagandized into a different opinion. We then start with a fixed notion and enter a kind of "denial" when we read verses which obviously conflict with our belief. The classic example is this:

While churches and ministries unite under the conviction that "there is One God existing eternally in three Persons," Paul thought otherwise. It is surprising that Bible readers do not hear the difference between

"There is One God - the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit" (historic creeds)

and

"There is One God, the Father" (Paul, in I Cor. 8:6).

Paul is quite clear about who God is. "We know that there is no God besides One...To us there is One God - the Father" (I Cor. 8:4, 6).

Jesus said the same thing: "You, Father, are the Only True God." "You, Father, are the only One who is truly God" (John 17:3). He also affirmed the creed of Israel which, as everyone knows, stated that "Yahweh is one Lord" (Deut. 6:4; Mark 12:29, NASV). Jesus even said that hearing this creed is the most crucial issue of all, the first commandment.

The Amplified Version gives us this also from Paul: "We know that God is [only] one person" (Gal. 3:20).

(Would Paul then have agreed with the creed which announces that God is three Persons?)

A clever but mistaken argument tries to overthrow this straightforward information about who God is. Paul also said that "there is one Lord Jesus Messiah" (I Cor. 8:6). Quite true.

But Paul has already told us that the One God is the Father. Who then is Jesus? He is a unique Lord, but in what sense? He is the Lord Messiah (Luke 2:11 and many texts). He is the one Lord Jesus Messiah (his full title).

He is the one Lord in the sense given us by the Bible. Peter said, "God has made Jesus both Lord and Messiah" (Acts 2:36). Peter had just quoted Psalm 110:1 (the most often quoted passage from the Old Testament): "The LORD said to my lord..." Jesus is that second lord. But what sort of lord is he?

The Hebrew text tells us that he is ADONI (my lord). This word appears 195 times in the Old Testament and never means God. It describes human superiors of various sorts, occasionally angels.

Jesus is the ultimate human superior, the one Lord Messiah. He is the ADONI, my lord, of Psalm

110:1.

But remember: "There is One God, the Father" (I Cor. 8:4, 6; I Tim. 2:5).

Do we hear that creed clearly? Or has the massive propaganda of traditional creeds made us deaf to some of the most fundamental words of Scripture?