

Because His Truths Matter ...

On what grounds do churches typically build their doctrinal statements?

I believe it is the case that many (if not all) Bible-believing churches base their doctrines on the explicit data in Scripture, and rightly so. In fact, many churches begin their teaching position with a phrase stating, in effect, that it's the **Word of God** which serves as their authority for faith and practice. And yet, when *the rubber hits the road*—when it gets down to practical reality—is this always the case? (Please visit www.truthfoundations.com for important related appeals.)

We live in a day when doctrine is increasingly viewed as a negative aspect within the church. Because of the fruits of Postmodernity and other dark efforts to undermine the importance of Truth, much of today's culture feels doctrine, especially when held dogmatically, is a divisive thing. I sure hope we—His Church—don't *allow the world to push us into its mold* when it comes to this crucial concern. Because truth matters, are we still willing to stand firm on and endure in the important doctrines of the faith? But what about what some deem as not so important (doctrines of the faith)?

Is it possible our own church doctrinal statement is internally conflicted? IF our statement includes the standard for setting truths (doctrines) as being the explicit Word of God, I must confess I've observed a lot of churches which have inconsistent doctrinal statements. Please allow me to explain because a part of loving you all is a persistent appeal we walk in His Truths forever settled in heaven ... much like the prophets of old did as they lived out their divine assignment.

So again I ask: Is it possible we have conflicting entries in our doctrinal position statements as a result of buying into popular *Christian* tradition(s)? The following facts are examples toward that end—cases in point, if you would—and are HUGE when it comes to **living out our lives in Christ** TODAY.

1. There is not one explicit passage in the entire Word of God which teaches the Pre-Trib Rapture of the Church.
2. If you were to look up the passages that are cited by many Pre-Tribulationists as “imminent” passages (that is, passages teaching “imminence” – the quality of being imminent), guess what? **You would not find ONE passage** (in literal versions of the Bible – including the KJV, NKJV, ESV, NASB, NRSV and other more popular literal versions) **using the word, “imminent.”** The one place where the word “imminent” is used in the NASB – YES, there is a word bearing a close resemblance to “imminent” BUT it's NOT used in these so-called “imminent” passages! – is found in II Peter 1:14. WHOA There are other popular unbiblical traditions needing reconsideration. ...
3. There is not one passage in the entire Bible teaching *by faith alone*, yet one can find an explicit passage teaching the opposite: “One is justified by works, and not by faith only.” (I include this concern because there are many churches today which are encouraging the abuse of grace—churches which go on to belittle God-honoring works which He graciously wills to do in and through His people in the Lord Jesus as they abide in Christ/walk in the Spirit.) Some condemn the Catholics for their **anti-biblical traditions** yet will we consider **our own**? Mt. 12:37 ; 15:1-11
4. *You [may] have heard it said*, “Relationship is EVERYTHING!” but God's Word actually teaches to the contrary. “How so?” one might ask. While God values relationship to the extent He sent His only Son to atone for the sins of all, not all are saved! There is something preeminent to “relationship” and that is simply the transcendent Being of God. IF “Relationship is EVERYTHING,” God would save all. Fact is, while He has provided the means for all to be saved, not all have *Life*. Actually, our Lord Jesus says most will not accept restored relationship with God through Christ and, as a result, will live their eternal state in separation from God in the Lake of Fire. RELATIONSHIP, while HUGE, is NOT EVERYTHING. This popular *half-truth* is also leading many to compromise eternally significant Truths – e.g., joining hands with secularists, Neo-Gnostics, Muslims, etc. (for the sake of relationship) and denying *Jesus Christ is God's Son* – Truths which God has graciously given. God is faithful to His Word. What He says will come to pass.

All the above to say, “God's Truths Matter ... very much so!” **Please see the next page.** 2014, 2019 © by Dr. Jon Swanson

What one does find in the Word of God (concerning His Son's soon coming) is the following material.

While rejecting the doctrine of "imminence" as the Pre-Tribulationists define the term (because the teaching that Christ could come at any time is not stated in the Word of God), it's important to note the following: We AFFIRM the following Bible passages (addressing the sudden appearing and/or the soon-coming of our Lord Jesus):

Mt. 24:43-44 (cf. vv. 36-39)

Mt. 24:50

Mt. 25:13

Mk. 13:32, 33

Mk. 13:34-37

Lk. 12:40

I Cor. 16:22

Phil. 3:20

I Thes. 5:2

Titus 2:12, 13

Heb. 10:25

James 5:7-9

I Pet. 4:7

II Pet. 3:10

Rev. 1:3

Rev. 22:7

Rev. 22:12

Rev. 22:20

"Christ's soon-coming" (which is explicitly biblical and applicable to the Church today)
is very different than

"Christ can come at any moment." (which is the doctrine of imminence as held by the Pre-Tribulationists).

Wayne Grudem's *Systematic Theology* (pp. 1095-1106) and Millard Erickson's *Christian Theology* (in his section on "Eschatology") present excellent material on this topic of Christ's coming at any time (imminence), signs and ready expectancy. (Grudem and Erickson are both Baptist theologians.)