

"Pondering Doctrines"

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If you have been around the Sabbath Keeping Churches of God for any length of time, you may be wondering what does all of the "Doctrinal Divisions" really mean? We observe that the Saints are split into hundreds of large and small Groups, totally fragmented, so that no significant fellowship gatherings or outreach projects can be done.

There is a tragic reason why . . .

We observe that most of the larger Sabbath Keeping Groups teach that a person must "Know The Truth", or else he cannot be a "True Christian". They teach that those who do not "Understand The Truth" about almost "**everything**" are lost in a "False Christianity". This is the same thing as teaching that a person must "Understand Almost Everything", or else he cannot be "Saved". If you happen to be ignorant, then you are a "False Christian".

This prevalent teaching results in making the Saints fear losing their salvation, if they should ever allow anyone to change their understanding of one of their Group's doctrines. Many Saints are actually taught not to even talk about the Bible with Saints of another Group, lest they change a belief, and lose out on eternal life. Many Saints are taught to believe that attending another Group's services, or even having an honest Bible study with someone who is not of their Group, is the same as threatening them with losing out on salvation. That is: "**God Forbid**" that you should ever believe something that is not one of your Group's doctrines.

Most of the larger Sabbath Keeping Groups would never even consider having someone of another Group speak at their services. They live in fear that an outsider might convince some of their Saints that one of the Group's doctrines is in error, and that would be the same thing as tossing the entire congregation into the hands of Satan. Thus, most of the larger Sabbath Keeping Groups teach a Saint to live in fear, and that they must only believe "The Truth" taught by their own Group, or else they will lose their salvation.

The brutal fact is that the Saints are being taught to fear each other! Saints are being taught to fear the other Saints. This is the same as teaching that those Saints who are not members of your Group, are not really Saints at all; so you are not to show them the love and concern commanded by the Messiah (John 13:34). 1-John 4:18, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear: because fear has punishment. He that fears is not made perfect in love". That is: Saints that live in such fear must keep any feelings of loving-fellowship to outsiders as "Guarded" and "Hidden".

Thus, many Saints live a life-style **fearing "new truth"**, and completely **avoid having any brotherly fellowship with outsider Saints**.

Of course "The Truth" is always "Their Group's Truth", and they seem intent on excluding everyone that disagrees. Many of the Group leaders seem to champion as many "Doctrinal Issues" as they can think of, ensuring that the Saints stay separated for as long as they are in charge. The prevalent attitude seems to be: "They Do Not Agree With Us, So They Are Not As Righteous As We Are". Thus, the Saints are kept separated, and the resources of the Body are kept fragmented.

We observe that the Saints are being separated by Doctrinal Issues ranging from "Who Baptized You" to "True Church Government" to "Calendars" to "The Divinity of Jesus". Such Doctrinal Issues are real, and they do not just go away. Understand that Biblical Issues exist because there is some ambiguity somewhere, and therefore they need to be debated.

But Biblical debates should always be viewed as "an Information Exchange", and "an Educational Process". It takes time and effort to be educated. Most people will not know enough to agree on everything. This means that the Saints must be willing to **be gracious, and to love each other anyway**.

However, instead we observe that many of the Saints have no incentive to study for themselves, nor engage in any of the Doctrinal studies associated with the debates. Because if they did, and started to disagree with their own Group leadership on anything, they would probably be chastised, and even asked to leave the Group. Who wants to **fear** being chastised? So many of the Saints are resigned to just sit quietly, and allow themselves to be told what to believe.

Even so, should these Biblical debates on Doctrinal Issues be reasons to keep the Saints separated? Is it really true that the Saints cannot fellowship and work with each other unless they agree upon every single doctrinal detail?

If not, then who is it that is keeping the fear going, and thereby keeping the Groups and Saints separated?

There are so many different Groups, so many big Doctrinal Issues, and so many "Doctrinal Divisions". Many find themselves wondering "Who is right, and who is wrong", while being told: "**Let's not talk to them, because they are wrong about something**".

Can a person's salvation, or their eternal rewards given at the Judgment Seat, depend upon fully understanding who is right on all of these Doctrinal Issues? Are you lost if you pick the wrong Group? Are you lost if you wind up being on the side that happens to be wrong?

Here is how you can understand what is going on. Just take a high level view of "Doctrine", and look at all this from the "**mile high view**":

Has "The God of Israel" (the 'YHWH', 'Yahowah' in Aramaic) written anywhere in His Text that you must "know all of these doctrines" to get saved? The answer is "**NO**".

Focus on only those clear scriptures which actually state "point blank" what you **MUST** believe in order to be saved. They tell us to believe that "The Father" resurrected His Son "The Jesus" (in English, Greek 'Ieesous', Aramaic 'Yahoshua') from death back to life, and that we are to believe that His exalted Son is the Second Prophet (the first was Moses, Deuteronomy 18:18) and the Promised Messiah.

We are further told to continue to worship the "One True God" (YHWH), and to conduct ourselves in a holy lifestyle, and to not sin (read Hebrews 10:26).

From this "mile high view" consider this:

When does it matter if you fully understand a Doctrinal Issue?

The answer is:

Only if it will significantly affect your rewards at the Judgment Seat.

It only matters when the Doctrinal Issue significantly changes your lifestyle, so that your Judgment Seat rewards are affected.

Think about this from the "mile high view":

If the "**Big Debate**" does not seriously change your lifestyle, nor seriously affect your rewards (good or bad), then that Doctrinal Issue does not really matter that much. This does not mean that the "Big Debate" should be avoided, as it probably still needs to be studied and pondered. But it does mean that it is not to be considered "**vital**".

Everyone can get along just fine without having full agreement.

No Saint should separate himself from the other Saints based on honest disagreement over the less important issues.

Every Doctrinal Issue which does not make you do something dramatically different, does not make you change your lifestyle very much, does not seriously affect your eternal rewards after receiving eternal life, is not important enough to force your separation from the other Saints. Such Doctrinal Issues need to be classified as "Educational Details".

But said in reverse: Every Doctrinal Issue which does make you do something dramatically different, does make you change your lifestyle, and does significantly affect your rewards after receiving salvation, then that issue does matter. That Doctrinal Issue is important.

For example: Doctrinal Issues regarding how a person should keep the Sabbath (details of lifestyle and conscience), are not nearly as important as the Doctrinal Issues regarding which day to keep, keeping "The Sabbath Day" or keeping "The Sunday". The first deals only with "some Educational Details" about what some people are doing on the Sabbath Day. These details are best left to personal judgment and conscience, and should not be used as an excuse to keep the Saints separated. But the second seriously affects a person's lifestyle, that issue is important.

Remember, we are looking at all of this from the "mile high view":

A Doctrinal Issue is only a "Group Separator" when its conclusion significantly changes the lifestyle of the Saints.

The 'Yahowah IS 1' Community is focusing the Saints in order to support each other, and to work together, regardless of which Group they attend.

This means: unity is not asked for at the level of agreeing upon every single doctrine and all of its details.

Unity is asked for at the level of **agreeing that the Saints should be working together, like a Community, even without agreeing upon every single doctrine and all of its details.**

The 'Yahowah IS 1' Community understands that the doctrinal details are "an Information Exchange", and "an Educational Process". It takes time and effort to be educated. Most people will not know enough to agree on everything. This means the Saints must be willing to be gracious, and work together anyway.

Given enough time and education, we will all finally understand every doctrinal detail. Until then, we can still organize, and do projects together, **and help each other get out of Babylon!** Who knows what Yahowah/Yahoshua may ask us to accomplish!

Please understand: essentially the 'Yahowah IS 1' Community deems every Saint to be growing in maturity, graciousness, knowledge, and wisdom. We understand that there will be differences in the level of maturity, graciousness, knowledge, and wisdom between individuals, **so we expect it.** It is the individual Saint himself, alone, which will stand in front of their Creator at Judgment.

Education is the process of giving another person enough believed information that they become convinced to change from one opinion to another. **If "the truth" is not presented in such a way that it can be both understood and believed, then it is not their fault that they are unconvinced.**

Even the Truth, if presented poorly, cannot be understood.

and conversely

Even the Truth, even if presented well, cannot be understood without the eager desire to seek out the truth.

Ultimately, each Saint is responsible for their own self-determination. Therefore, we want to allow each Saint to choose for themselves in those matters that are "under debate", or which are a matter of "preference" (differences in Administration).

The 'Yahowah IS 1' Community will make every effort to uphold a Saint's unique self-determination, and encourage them to follow their own conscience in such matters.

Consider: what is the first source of "Doctrinal Confusion"?

Doctrines are formed and taught based upon which Bible is being used. Christianity is the only major religion in the world that allows its members to learn its religious tenets without having to read them in the original language. The Koran is written in Arabic, the Jews read the Hebrew Text, and the Hindus read their text in Sanskrit. Only the Christians do not learn their doctrinal tenets by studying them for themselves, directly from the Hebrew/Aramaic and Greek Texts.

What this means is that those who do not study from the original languages **are letting other people, other men, tell them what the Text says**. When you do this, you will be led down the Doctrinal path that those men want you to go. As long as you read from their Bibles, and read from their Commentaries, you are going to be led down the path of believing their Doctrines. This fact is not a matter of what the Text says; this is a matter of what the hired translators tell you the Text says.

Which Bible Version is being used is the fundamental reason why it is so difficult to debate the scriptures. For examples: Christians using the King James Version will be biased towards the 1604 mindset of English thinking and theology. Christians using a version created by Trinitarians will read a translation biased towards the Trinitarian view of God. Christians using a version created by translators believing in "Pauline Theology" will be led to think that Paul is "doing away with the Law", **because that is what their Bible Version tells them**.

For example: The original Hebrew and Greek Text have no commas and periods. In fact there are not even 'between-the-words' spaces. But yet, we rely implicitly upon the insertion of commas and periods to tell us how to interpret the Text. **These insertions are not part of the Bible!** Many inserted commas and periods are printed to give you the publisher's own interpretations of the Text. Even the words printed are in fact those words chosen by the publishers to ensure that you read the verses as they want you to read them. Thus, you are reading the orthodox catechism of the publishers, ensuring that you believe the dogmas that the publishers want you to believe. **You are not really reading "The Bible"**. You are reading a biased catechism, and you are being led to believe things solely because that is what the publisher's Bible Version Catechism tells you to believe.

It is not YHWH (Yahowah) that makes this confusion. YHWH warns us about the scribes who write errors that are a lie (Jeremiah 8:8). **We are to believe YHWH's Text, not men's text**.

For these reasons the 'Yahowah IS 1' Community **will always debate Doctrines based on the original Hebrew/Aramaic and Greek Texts**. We recommend using an Interlinear Hebrew Greek Bible and Lexicons. When reading the English, when a word seems to be important, then look it up in the Lexicon and Grammar helps. In all Community research, debates, and teachings; the question is:

"How might an honest seeker of truth translate the Text?"

No doubt there will be differences in interpretation between the truth seekers. This is to be expected. Honest disagreements about "the details" are not a problem. Debating the details, and thinking about the different ways to interpret the Text, should be fun. The 'Yahowah IS 1' Community intends for Bible Studies, Presentations, and Information Exchanges **to always be fun**.

Salvation is not obtained by Fighting about Doctrines

Doctrines need to be viewed as: "**This is what I know today.**" We are to grow in graciousness and knowledge, **so we can never assume that we know it all now.** We should expect that some of our understandings will be modified as we study deeper.

You do not participate in a Community because everyone in the Community agrees with you. You participate in a Community because you love the only 'Elohim/God' of Israel, and the resurrected and exalted Yahoshua (in Aramaic, Greek 'Ieesous', English 'Jesus') the promised Messiah, and you love the Brethren, and,
because you want to do things with them!

In Service To The Brethren,
Wayne L. Atchison, an Elder in the Body of the Messiah

Two Tassels Ministry



Living By Both Covenants
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Standing Up for the Gospel of the Christ as it is Proclaimed in the Greek Text !
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