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Frank W. Nelte

A VITAL PRINCIPLE FOR UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

In trying to understand the various teachings in the Bible, people will sometimes use one Scripture in an attempt to "explain away" a different Scripture somewhere else. This is sometimes the case when a clear biblical statement in one place "SEEMS TO CONTRADICT" what they wish us to believe some other Scripture supposedly means.

In such situations there is always a way that different scriptural statements can be reconciled, unless we are dealing with a mistranslation, or a translation from an incorrect source document. But in the process of reconciling such apparently contradictory statements there is a principle we should always keep in mind. This principle applies to specific circumstances.

WHEN YOU HAVE TWO APPARENTLY CONFLICTING STATEMENTS: IF ONE OF THOSE STATEMENTS WAS MADE BY JESUS CHRIST IN PERSON, AND THE OTHER STATEMENTS IS EITHER BY ONE OF THE OTHER WRITERS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, OR EVEN BY ONE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT WRITERS, THEN ...

THE WORDS OF JESUS CHRIST ALWAYS TAKE PRECEDENCE!

In such a situation it must ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS be that the other statement must be understood in terms of what Jesus Christ Himself said! It is NEVER, NEVER, NEVER a case of "interpreting" the words of Jesus Christ in terms of what someone else said or wrote!

This is the most basic principle of resolving potential difficulties in understanding apparently conflicting statements, when one of those statements involves the direct words of Jesus Christ.

The prophets in the Old Testament, amongst other things, pointed to Jesus Christ. For example, Moses said::

The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; UNTO HIM YE SHALL HEARKEN; (Deuteronomy 18:15)

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Jesus Christ was clearly in a much higher position than Moses or any of the Old Testament prophets. Christ is also far greater than any of the Apostles, including Paul. Paul himself, in the Book of Hebrews, explained how Christ is superior to all but the Father. Christ is the Son of God!

So:

CLEAR PLAIN STATEMENTS BY JESUS CHRIST ALWAYS TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER DIFFICULT AND QUESTIONABLE STATEMENTS BY ANYONE ELSE ... BE IT BY PAUL OR BE IT BY ONE OF THE PROPHETS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT!

Specifically:

Everything the Apostle Paul wrote has to be understood in the context of the CLEAR AND UNAMBIGUOUS statements by Jesus Christ.

Don't ever let anybody tell you that Christ didn't mean what He said, that Christ's words are only arguments to make a point, that Christ's statements have to be understood in terms of what Paul wrote!

By comparison to Jesus Christ, Paul is nothing! Oh certainly, Paul's writings are inspired, and I believe the things Paul wrote. But don't ever try to use Paul's writings to somehow do away with clear statements by Jesus Christ. Paul builds on the foundation Jesus Christ laid; he didn't do away with Christ's clear words. And Paul himself never at any time wrote something that he himself believed was in some way in conflict with what Jesus Christ said! He just never did that!

It is NEVER a case that we should understand the words of Jesus Christ in terms of what the Apostle Paul wrote!

So when someone presents you with some explanation for some verse or other, where your mind immediately thinks of a clear statement by Jesus Christ that refutes this explanation that has just been presented to you, then you ought to realize that:

- 1) The words of Jesus Christ are correct and true.
- 2) The problem lies with the explanation you have been given for the OTHER Scripture.
- 3) The problem NEVER lies with the words of Jesus Christ, that Christ's words supposedly need some special explanation to resolve the conflict with the other explanation.

In this type of situation the priorities should be very clear and obvious.

Frank W. Nelte