

“I Used To Be A Bear”





You Don't Believe Me!

- You are expecting a punch line of some sort!
- If I insist, you still will not believe me...and might wonder about my mental health!
- Why you don't believe:
 - I cannot produce reputable proof.
 - All I have is my word...and that is not enough.



The Point?

- I have no more right to expect you to accept my assertion than should people who make biblical claims about salvation/doctrine without proof!
- Proof is not found in one's *emotions* or *firm conviction* that one is right in what he/she believes or practices.
- Proof must be found in the divine authority, the Bible, God's revelation to mankind!

Man has generally sought to
know the divine will...

by his own devising!

Man Has Fashioned His Own “gods”

- The world of Isaiah’s day sought the divine by their own creations – Isa. 44:9-11
- There was no perception of the foolishness of their action – 44:14-19
- We see the foolishness of their actions; but the world didn’t.
- 700 years later nothing had changed – Rom. 1:18-23



Creating God:

Nothing Has Changed Today!

- **People call their gods by biblical names, but fashion them *according to their own devising*.**
- The God of the Bible...
 - Is remade to love, save, and provide, all on man's terms and by man's dictates...just like idolatry.
 - Is made to be accepting of sinners *and sin!*
 - **Still condemns all sin – 1 Cor. 6:9-10**
 - **Still demands all who come to Him to repent and turn from sin – Acts 3:19; Rom. 6:12-14**

Serving God:

Nothing Has Changed Today!

- **People seek to worship/serve God *by their own dictates*, rather than by His revelation.**
 - Worship of God is remade into a matter of what man likes, such as music bands, drama, entertainment, and fun, which are not revealed in the N.T.
 - God's will has become subservient to man's because people claim that "it doesn't matter what you believe as long as you believe in Jesus."
 - This approach makes one's worship vain – Matt. 15:8-9

Knowing God:

Revelation Is Required

- God's prophets could not know His will without revelation – 1 Pet. 1:10-12
- We face the same limitations today.
 - We are dependent on the revelation of the Spirit through the apostles and prophets – 1 Cor. 2:7-13
 - The mystery of God revealed by the Spirit has been written down for us to read and understand – Eph. 3:1-7
 - Without written revelation from Christ's apostles, it is presumptuous to assume to know God or His will.

Claims VS Truth

Salvation and Doctrine

Claims of Salvation Vs. Truth:

Are Emotions Proof of Salvation?

- People reject bible teaching, believing what they feel over what God's says.
- Emotions are connected to salvation – Acts 8:39
- Yet, the joy of salvation follows:
 - A willing reception of the truth – Acts 8:30-34
 - Understanding the truth – Acts 8:35-36
 - Obedience of the truth – Acts 8:37-38

Claims of Salvation Vs. Truth:

Salvation's Joy and Truth/Obedience

- God's grace and peace bring joy...but only through knowledge of the truth – Rom. 5:1-2; 2 Pet. 1:2-4
- Eternal life brings joy...but only through diligence to know and do God's will – 1 Jn. 4:1-4; 2 Pet. 1:5-11
- Feelings alone are no more proof of one's salvation than they are of the idea that I was once a bear!

Doctrinal Claims Vs. Truth:

The Question of Baptism

- People create idols by rewriting God's truth to fit their feelings and desires.
- It is true that...
 - We must “call on...the Lord” to be saved – Acts 2:21
 - Saul was praying before salvation – Acts 9:10-11
 - But, there is no sinner's prayer commanded of anyone.
- Saul was not saved until he called on the Lord *in baptism* – Acts 22:16
 - This agrees with Peter – Acts 2:37-38; 1 Pet. 3:21
 - This agrees with Paul – Gal. 3:26-27
 - Doctrinal positions are only acceptable when based on the truth of God – Lk. 6:46

Conclusion

- I do not believe I was ever a bear.
- But, I have as much right to claim it as truth based on feelings and personal conviction as do those who seek to justify their faith the same way!
- We must follow Peter's words – 1 Pet. 4:11
- We must be people of the word and understand the seriousness of false doctrine!
- Are you a saved child of God today?