

PLAIN SPEECH

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“Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech” (2 Cor. 3:12)

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MAKING THINGS MORE DIFFICULT THAN THEY ARE

One tendency I've noticed is people making things more difficult than they really are (or need to be) when it comes to various issues relative to the Bible. Yes, so often people miss the simplicity that is in Christ (2 Cor. 11:3). Listen, I am not saying that there are not some passages of the Bible that require more time and energy to figure out (2 Pet. 3:15-16). What I *am* saying, once again, is that it's not uncommon for people to make things more difficult than they really are (or need to be) when it comes to various issues relative to the Bible. Below are just two examples:

FELLOWSHIP AND THE DEITY OF CHRIST

Joe Goodspeaker says, “Open your Bibles to 2 Jn. 9-11. Here we find a passage that is very operose. Additionally, the pericope is fervidly contested, and poses a problematic predicament. The passage reads: *‘Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.’* The quandary germane to the text centers upon what ‘the doctrine of Christ’ is. Is it proper doctrine in general, or is the phrase denoting exclusively the doctrine about Christ – whether or not He was deity in the flesh (The Son of God; The Christ)? If the passage is, indeed, addressing the entirety of the New Testament (a general statement), then saints are thus forbidden to have common associations with those who teach falsely on any one of a plethora of points. But, (and many scholars have taken this view – one that does have some merit to it and one which causes one to pause for careful contemplation and one that lends to considerable thought), if it only refers to the teaching concerning Jesus’ deity (a specific and limited statement), then this passage only forbids fellowship to those who deny that Jesus was deity manifested in the flesh. To help us draw a proper conclusion about this matter we must necessarily understand some essentials of Greek Grammar. I, thus, turn your attention to the words of J.W. Roberts – noted linguist. In 1957 in ‘Restoration Quarterly’ Roberts wrote: *‘A common phenomenon in many languages is the use of the possessive or genitive ease with a noun implying action, where the possessive noun expresses either the one originating (subjective) or the one receiving (objective) the action implied in the noun. Thus the phrase ‘the love of God’ may imply the proposition (1) ‘God (subject) loves man,’ or (2) ‘Man loves God’ (object). If the expression ‘of God’ means the former it is called subjective genitive; if the latter, it is called objective genitive.’* Now, gleaning from Roberts’ scholarship we see that what we need to figure out is if 2 Jn. 9-11 has as its foundation a subjective genitive theme or an objective genitive motif. We shall now thoroughly consider the evidence and arguments for both positions. We’ll begin with proposition #1, that being that 2 Jn. 9-11 falls within the category of that which is subjective genitive. As to argument #1, please ponder the following words taken from the Septuagint and also the Textus Receptus as compared with coincident statements we espy from both the Codex Vaticanus and Codex Alexandrinus, respectively...”

Now, I don’t know about you, but I wrote the words above and I just about feel my head spinning. Sadly, my fictitious example mirrors what sometimes happens in real life. Folks, 2 Jn. 9-11 is just not that hard! Vs. 1-8 teach Christians must walk in the truth and not fall prey to error. Vs. 9-11 teaches how those who fall prey to error are to be dealt with and why. Wow, that was tough!

THE COVERING DISCUSSED IN 1 COR. 11:2-16

One gets up before a group of people and states: “The covering noted in 1 Cor. 11:2-16, is an artificial garment that a woman must have upon her head while praying. *‘The’* covering of vs. 3-13 is not what’s deemed ‘a’ covering in vs. 15; that is to say, long hair that hangs down from a lady’s head. A woman’s natural covering is just an incontrovertible and indubitable argument Paul employed to teach the desideratum of an artificial veil for the ladies when they pray. Stated another way, Paul did not say that a woman’s hair is given her as her only covering; his words are a logical appeal for an artificial veil.”

Again, sadly my fictitious example mirrors what happens in real life. Said statements commonly come from the lips of those who are convinced that an artificial veil is bound in 1 Cor. 11:2-16. The text is not that hard to figure out and takes far less mental gymnastics than some apply to it. There is a covering that men are not to have (the same one the ladies are to have). How does the context define that covering for us – as a man-made garment that is placed upon the head? No. The context of the passage defines the covering that men are not to have and that women are to have as long hair (vs. 14-15). I wholly believe that any capable middle school student (who is not biased), if asked to read 1 Cor. 11:2-16 and write down on a piece of paper what the Bible says the covering is, would not write down the words “an artificial veil.”

I cannot speak to the motives of others as to why they do what they do, but I do know some people make things way too hard.