



Radmacher: Stewardship of Special Revelation, Deut 29:29; Eph 3:2-5; 1 Cor 4:1-2; 2 Tim 2:25; James 3:1; Rev 22:18-20; “Entrance of Adding & Subtracting”

(7) Dr. Radmacher continues:

All of the Bible has Christ as the apex of revelation; thus, everything in the Hebrew scriptures, whether the Law, the Prophets or the Writings, ultimately has Christ as its focus. He is the Alpha and the Omega. Everything in the Old Testament was preparatory for Him and everything in the New Testament, following the Gospels, is explanatory of Him. The Gospels are the epitome of God's special written revelation of Christ.

Stewardship of the Special Revelation. When Moses approached the end of the writing of the Pentateuch, including the blessings and curses determined by obedience or lack of it, he wrote:

Deuteronomy 29:29 - “The secret things [סֵתֵר *satar*: **concealed information**] belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed [גָּלַהּ *galah*: **to uncover; to reveal**] belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.”

In essence, God says, "It's yours. I'm trusting you with it. Now manage it well." This statement of Moses with respect to the stewardship of the Law is parallel to Paul's announcement in:

Ephesians 3:2 - ... you have heard of the dispensation [οἰκονομία, *oikonomia*: **the management of a household**] of the grace of God [**Church Age**] which was given to me for you;

v. 3 - how that by revelation [ἀποκάλυψις, *apokalupsis*: **the uncovering of knowledge, in context, the mystery doctrines of the New Testament church**] He made known to me the mystery [**doctrine previously unrevealed**] ...

Ephesians 3:5 - ... which (mystery) in other ages [**dispensations**] was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets ...

To be the recipient of the revelation of God is a stupendous privilege. And privilege begets responsibility. Thus, Paul says to the Corinthians:

1 Corinthians 4:1 - Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards [οἰκονόμος, *oikonomos*: **managers of the revelation given to the household of God**] of the mysteries of God.

v. 2 - Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

Thus, he admonishes his understudy, Timothy:

2 Timothy 2:15 - Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing [ὀρθοτομέω, *orthotomeō*: **“to cut straight”**; re: **stonemasonry**] the word of truth [**by use of a system of hermeneutics**].

Little wonder that James (... the half-brother of Jesus) warns in:

James 3:1 - My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.

Yes, privilege begets responsibility and the greater the privilege, the greater the responsibility. We understand, then, why the aged Apostle John gives the final warning in the Scripture:



Revelation 22:18 - I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God shall add to him the plagues which are written in this book;

v. 19 - and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life [**Nike Award #1, par 1**] and from the holy city **Nike Award #6, par 3**], which are written in this book [**loss of rewards for adding to or subtracting from the book of Revelation**].

[These are among the strongest of words in the bible that speak of the believer's loss of reward (cf. Revelation 2:7; 3:12; 22:14).]

v. 20 - He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly."

Truly, playing fast and loose with God's revelation is dangerous business. And creating plural meanings not found in the text will be found worthy of loss of reward at the *bema* (βῆμα: the Evaluation Tribunal of Christ, 2 Corinthians. 5:10).

The Entrance of "Adding and Subtracting":

The ink had scarcely dried on the vellum before Satan began enticing God's servants to tamper with His holy word. It shouldn't surprise us, however, since that was precisely the strategy he used to immerse mankind in sin. "Has God indeed said?" [Genesis 3:1a.] We still hear the arch deceiver today! "Surely, there must be a deeper, more spiritual meaning than the crass, literal meaning of the text." And, yet, it seemed so pietistic in the beginning rationale. The literary culprit I am referring to is allegorical interpretation which really results in the banishment of the author in its practice of multiple meanings (something that flourishes in a less formal way, more than we would like to admit, in many current bible studies and sermons). Though it wasn't invented by Origen of the Alexandrian School (ca. 185-254), his threefold meaning (literal, moral, and spiritual/allegorical) through his great learning and magnetic personality certainly popularized it. For him the literal meaning was simply the immature or carnal level for the unsophisticated but to rise to the moral meaning and hopefully to the hidden spiritual meaning (allegorical), for those who had been truly initiated, was to achieve greatness.

Not everyone bought into the charmed method of Origen, however. While his "fantasy unlimited" [Milton S. Terry. *Biblical Hermeneutics*. Reprint. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, n.d.), p. 609, n. 1.] thrived in Alexandria, the church leaders in Antioch of Syria, [Where the early disciples were first called Christians (Acts 11:26).] that emphasized historical, literal interpretation, sensed the rampant disregard for the literal meaning of the scriptures in the Alexandrian Fathers. Roy Zuck claims:

They (Antioch) stressed the study of the Bible's original languages (Hebrew and Greek) and they wrote commentaries on the Scriptures. The basis for uniting Old and New Testaments was typology and predictive prophecy rather than allegorizing. For them, literal interpretation included figurative language. [Roy B. Zuck. *Basic Bible Interpretation*. (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1991), p. 37.]