

"Doctrine is Vital" is a clarion call for Christians and churches to return to sound Biblical doctrine. Sound Biblical doctrine provides the framework for the Christian faith and practice in our daily lives. Doctrine is no little matter!

Doctrine is Vital: Essential Food for Christian Living
By Billy M. Murchison, Jr.

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Doctrine is Vital

Essential Food for Christian Living



Billy M Murchison JR

Pre-Release Reviews by Ordinary People

A Valuable Tool in my bag

like a copy of “The Calvary Road” by Roy Hession. I can see myself keeping a handful of copies to give to people lacking a doctrinal foundation. It will be very useful in leading them to the sure footing on which their faith stands.

I thought that Chapter 3 was an excellent introduction to the triune nature of God. It put Jesus at the center, and the focal point, of our salvation without getting so deeply entangled in the Trinity that some might lose focus. From Chapter 3 forward, I found the rest of the book flowing well through all the basics of Biblical doctrine. Chapter 8 was especially thought provoking because I find it difficult to share things about myself with other believers. By doing so, I cost myself the needed prayers of others in my life. I needed that insight.

I look forward to seeing this book published.

Mick Douglass

Nailed it!

This book is full of knowledge about the importance of Biblical doctrine in the church. It also contains much wisdom on how this knowledge affects how we live our lives. A very good read.

Tony Curtis

Right on Time Message

for an ever-increasing shallow and unbalanced modern church to
rediscover the depth and balance of God's Plan

Ray Floyd

No other series

of topics is more important than doctrine at this time in our history

Lisa Pruitt

And from a member of the clergy

Excellent Job of Explaining

why doctrine is important in our lives as Christians. It is foundational for all our beliefs, which in turn, are demonstrated by our life choices and lifestyles. It creates the principles that we choose to live out in our daily lives and the consequences we face if they are not present in our habits, decisions, choices, and life. The author takes the application of each of our doctrines of faith and puts them into everyday language for people to understand. I highly recommend this work for every Christian and for their living out their daily walk of faith for this world to see and recognize our Savior, Jesus Christ!

Clayton Wilbanks
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Introduction

On the beautiful planet, teeming with life, there is a small but mighty kingdom called Doctrina. Some say it has existed from the beginning. The kingdom was formally established by the Great King, whose reign was brief. He was mortally wounded and yet lived. After instructing His generals, He went on a great journey from which He would return. The kingdom was established by His generals in a rapid and mighty way. It became a force for what is righteous and good on the planet. At the center of Doctrina is the beautiful capital city- Gospelton. Its magnificent towers can be seen for miles in any direction. All roads in the kingdom lead to Gospelton. Every subject is proud of their glorious capital and would defend it with their lives.

The subjects of Doctrina have a very different culture and lifestyle from others on the planet. They are a warm, giving, and loving people. They are more than willing to accept new subjects into the kingdom, as long as they are willing to adapt to Doctrina's culture and lifestyle. (In fact, they actively seek to make new subjects.) This distinct culture and lifestyle has led to many a conflict with the surrounding kingdoms.

Throughout the centuries Doctrina has fought many wars and her enemies are numerous. The Doubters, the Compromisers, the Heretics, and the Destroyers are but a few of her multiple enemies. Despite fighting multiple enemies at once, the borders of Doctrina stood firm!

About a 150 years ago, the enemies of Doctrina gathered together to discuss what could they do to overcome her. The Tyrant of the Doubters suggested that some of his loyal slaves would infiltrate

Doctrina by posing as true immigrants. Then after a time, they would start sowing doubt. After about 25 years, the Compromisers would send their loyal slaves to pose as true immigrants. Once they were integrated into society, they would start spreading their compromise. This would be easy due to the work of the Doubters. Next the Heretics would send in their slaves under the same ruse. With the Doubters and the Compromisers already there, their heresies would be quickly and easily accepted. Finally the Destroyers would invade and shortly thereafter, Doctrina would fall! The plan was approved and set into motion.

The Doubters came in and settled in northern mountain region of Doctrina. For a few years, they were model subjects of the kingdom. Then they began to spread doubt about the strategic importance of the northern mountain area. It took a lot of manpower and money to keep the northern border of Doctrina safe. Could not the resources be better used in other areas? Their doubts were ignored at first, but soon more and more subjects began to embrace these views. A few, alert officials fought vigorously against these views. Eventually, the decision was made to pull back the troops and resources from the northern region. Doubters poured into the region, as well as some compromisers and heretics. Soon the original subjects of the area adopted the ways of the enemy that outnumbered them.

Then the Compromisers came and settled in the eastern plains of Doctrina. They too were model subjects of Doctrina for a few years. Then the Compromisers began to argue that Doctrina did not need the miles upon miles of fertile farmland and abundant crops. This land could be shared with other, less prosperous nations. Many more officials were against this proposal, but after years and years of endless debates, the eastern plains were abandoned. Just like before, the enemies of Doctrina poured into the region. Once again

the original subjects of Doctrina adopted the ways of those around them.

With the Doubters, the Compromisers, and the former subjects all in place, it was time for the Heretics to come in. They moved into the industrialized Western region of Doctrina. They almost immediately began telling whoever would listen how this region of the country was bad for the planet. It was punching holes in the upper atmosphere, destroying forests, and was an ecological nightmare. The officials were not convinced that this was right but received heavy pressure from the eastern plains and northern mountains, where very few were following the customs and lifestyle of Doctrina. After even more serious and heated debates, the industrialized western region was abandoned. However, the heavily populated area was resistant to changes brought in by the rush of newcomers. The culture war had begun!

About 25 years later, the invasion of the Destroyers came on the Southern sea coast. Some officials realized that they had been invaded for many years before the Destroyers actually landed. The war, which had been fought with words, was now being fought with weapons. With a large number of their subjects compromised or actually siding with their enemies, these officials wondered if they had the manpower and resources to defend the coast. They determined to have their forces fall back and defend the area around the capital. Gospelton must be defended at all costs!

The forces of Doctrina pulled back and fortified a 75-mile radius around Gospelton. Loyal subjects from all over the kingdom joined the battle, but the army of Doctrina was greatly outnumbered. The fighting was fierce, but the armies of Doctrina kept losing ground and soldiers. The day came when the invaders were surrounding the capital itself. Gospelton was under siege! After a time. living

under these conditions, the city was in despair and disarray. The chief official addressed the people: "If the Great King does not come back very soon, the city will fall."

Chapter 3:

Doctrine Saves

Bruce could not believe it! His longshot had paid off! He had just gotten an email from the office of Oscar C. Zelding, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), of the multinational XYZ Company. He had an appointment for lunch next month at a New York restaurant to discuss using his company's products in their manufacturing process. If he were to land this account, then it would put near the top of the company's sales force. Maybe even at the top!

It happened last month when he was on a sales trip to Little Rock, AR. He found out that OCZ, as Mr. Zelding was commonly referred to in the business world, was in town viewing one of the XYZ manufacturing facilities. He was staying in the presidential suite of his hotel. Bruce was an admirer of OCZ for the job he had done in turning around the fortunes of the XYZ Company in a mere 18 months. He had pulled them from the brink of bankruptcy to making a decent profit their last quarter. OCZ was a no-nonsense type of CEO, full of common sense, and led the XYZ Company that way. Bruce would love to meet and do business with such a man. Acting on a wild thought, he wrote him a little note telling him how he appreciated OCZ's approach to running a business and the job that he had done at XYZ. He also stated perhaps some of his company's products would meet their needs and that he would like to talk with him about it. He also enclosed his business card with the note.

The news about Bruce's meeting with OCZ spread through the office, and his company, like wildfire. He had gotten a congratulatory call from the President of the company and the Vice President of Sales was coming into town to meet with him about

the appointment. This dream was quickly becoming a nightmare for Bruce because they were expecting him to close a profitable deal with OCZ. This was anything but guaranteed because of OCZ's reputation as a shrewd negotiator and cost cutter. However, this was just the beginning of Bruce's problems.

Oscar C. Zelding, though a brilliant businessman, was a noted recluse. He stayed out of the spotlight and avoided publicity. He was an unknown, but wealthy member, of the Board of Directors when he was asked to take over the helm of the X, Y, Z Company. He has maintained his anonymity, so that only a few people outside his inner circle knows who he is and what he looks like. Bruce needed to find out what OCZ looked like so he could recognize him for their appointment.

Bruce figured that it would be too embarrassing to contact OCZ's office and admit that he has no clue what he looks like; he would find out on his own. He contacted a former classmate who worked at prominent business periodical and ask her. She told him that OCZ was a tall African American man in his early 40's, who played college basketball at Duke, Stanford, or someplace like that. Well, he did not want to doubt her but if he were a minority CEO, wouldn't the XYZ Company publicize this fact?

Bruce knew a contact at a direct competitor of the XYZ Company. He would ask him. He told Bruce that OCZ was an Asian "whiz kid" in his thirties who had formerly started and headed up some tech company before taking over at XYZ. Now Bruce had a good portion of his 401K invested in technology firms. He followed this sector of business very closely and would have read about this occurring if this information was correct.

Finally, Bruce had a cousin that worked at the XYZ Company. He would try him. The cousin still worked for XYZ Company but not at the corporate headquarters in New York. He told him that OCZ was a tall white guy in his early 60's, who was a "playboy." This did not seem right to Bruce either, because the news media would certainly "catch him" in one of his exploits if this were so. So now he is stuck with three different descriptions of who OCZ is and none of them make sense to him.

Finally, he decided to contact OCZ's office and ask what he looks like, so he can keep their appointment. His office was happy to reply and sent him a picture of a short man of Jewish decent, in his 50's. Bruce was glad that he finally decided to go to the source to find out the information he needed, rather than trust on unreliable second-hand information. Trusting the wrong information on who Oscar C. Zelding was, would have resulted in disastrous consequences for Bruce.

Doctrine Leads to Jesus

What is the definition of doctrine? The word doctrine appears forty-three times in the New Testament. Twenty-eight of these times, "didache" is the word used and it refers to an act or manner of instruction. Fourteen times the word "didaskalia" is used and it refers to the actual material being taught.¹ In the Old Testament, the word doctrine appears six times. Four of these times the word "leqach" is used and it means something received, specifically instruction. Another word "shmuwah" means something heard, as in announcement, news or doctrine.² If we put all of this together to form a definition, then Biblical doctrine is the commands, principles, and precepts from the Holy Scriptures that is taught by personal study or under the teaching and/or preaching of another.

What is the purpose of Biblical doctrine? Biblical doctrine is to guide us in living an obedient life that is pleasing to God. But there is more! I was listening to an excellent message by Missionary Spencer Smith on YouTube, entitled “Doctrine Matters”³. In the message, he made the statement that Doctrine Saves. My immediate thought was: “No it does not, Jesus does!” But he went on to correctly expound you must have the right Jesus in order to be saved. There are many different variations of Jesus being presented today. Only the Jesus who is presented in the Holy Scriptures is the Jesus who can save your soul! I will concisely present to you the Jesus of the Bible in this chapter.

Jesus was, is, and will always be God

It has been said that all heresy begins with a misconception, misunderstanding, or misrepresentation about the character, nature, or attributes of God. Nowhere is this more evident than with the Lord Jesus Christ. If you asked a hundred people who was Jesus Christ, then you would get a variety of answers ranging from He is Lord of all to he was a religious deceiver. Probably the most common answer, in some form, would be that he was a great moral teacher. This answer may sound good and may suffice for those who want a quick, easy answer without much thought. This answer, however, does not stand up to scrutiny.

Jesus did present radical and new moral teaching, as well as expound upon Old Testament commands, principles, and precepts, but Jesus never presented Himself as such. The Lord Jesus gave a clear and presentation of who He was (is) to the Jews. They understood!

*“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. **I and my Father are one.** Then the Jews took up stones to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shown you from my Father, for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy, and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.*

John 10: 27-33 (emphasis mine)

He reaffirmed this before the High Priest and the Sanhedrin and they recognized this in Mark 14:61-64. The Bible clearly teaches Jesus was always God.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.”

John 1:1-2

The Word of God tells us Jesus was the Creator and sustains creation.

“For by him all things were created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”

Colossians 1:16-17

The Holy Writ informs us Jesus will judge all things.

“For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but has given all judgement unto the Son: That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honereth not the Son, honoreth not the Father which hath sent him.”

John 5: 21-23

Jesus was born of a virgin

The miracle of the incarnation is literally mind-blowing! When you start to contemplate how could an infinite God be “conceived” and then born of woman, your mind can only go so far before it overloads. This aspect is often criticized, minimized, or overlooked. But we dare not do that!

The major consequence of the fall is that ALL of Adam's progeny would be born with the sin nature. This sin nature separated us from a Holy God.

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered the world, and death by sin; and so, death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

Romans 5:12

There had to be a sacrifice for sin. God's requirement for this sacrifice was perfection! This is seen in His requirements for all the animal sacrifices in the Old Testament.

“Thou shalt not sacrifice unto the LORD thy God any bullock or sheep, wherein is blemish, or any evilfavouredness: for that is an abomination unto the Lord thy God.

Deuteronomy 17:1

All of these sacrifices were a prototype and pointed to the Lord Jesus Christ. The innocent who died for the guilty. God took these requirements seriously.

“And if ye offer the blind for the sacrifice, is it not evil? And if ye offer the lame and the sick, is it not evil? Offer it now to unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee or accept thy person? Saith the LORD of hosts,”

Malachi 1: 8

Only a perfect sacrifice would be able to pay for sin!

Jesus lived a sinless, perfect life

Jesus had to be born of a virgin in order to come into this sin-filled world without a sin nature. In this sense, Jesus was just like Adam and this is why Paul refers to the Lord Jesus as the “second Adam.” If Jesus was to be the sacrifice for sin, then He had to live a perfect, sinless life.

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

II Corinthians 5:21

Can you even comprehend this? Going through a normal childhood without disobeying his parents. Going through the teenage years, with all the raging hormones, without having one lustful thought. Going through the pressures of running a carpentry business and not cheating one customer one cent or not paying his full shares of taxes to the hated Romans. This is another one of those things about God, and the Lord Jesus, that my mind just cannot comprehend, no matter how hard I try. I just accept it by faith.

“And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.”

I John 3:5

I believe the Lord Jesus was tested and tempted far above anything that we could ever imagine while he walked the earth. Do not think for one moment that the only time that the devil tempted the Lord Jesus was in the wilderness! I would imagine that as much as God the Father allowed, the devil was constantly with Jesus tempting Him. From Satan's point of view, it was the perfect opportunity to derail God's plan. If he could tempt Jesus to have one wrong thought, then God's plan was destroyed!

“But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

I Corinthians 15: 57

Jesus died

God appoints a time for all things.

“To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the heaven:”

Ecclesiastes 3: 1

The next eight verses expound upon this fact. There came a point in human history where God's sacrifice for sin had to be offered up. This happened on a hill outside of Jerusalem, on a day we now call Good Friday. That was the day the Lord Jesus offered up His life as the payment for sin.

“For when we were yet without strength, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly.”

Romans 5:6

The Swoon theory is a false teaching that Jesus did not really die on the cross but was unconscious when He was laid in the tomb. This is invalid for at least three reasons:

- The Soldiers (Matthew 27: 27-36)
 - Roman soldiers were very good and efficient in their jobs.
 - These soldiers were experts in crucifixions.
- The Sanhedrin (John 19: 31-33)
 - The religious leader of the Jews did not allow the bodies of the condemned men to be left hanging on crosses on the Sabbath day
 - The next day was a particularly important Sabbath
- The Spear
 - *“But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side and forthwith came there out blood and water.”*

John 19:34

- Now if Jesus was not dead from being crucified, would He have not died from an unattended wound like that?

Jesus was buried

“And after this Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take

away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. And there came also Nicodemus, which at first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred-pound weight. Then they took the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with spices, as is the manner of the Jews to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new sepulchre, where never a man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.”

John 19:38-42

The body of Jesus was taken down and tightly wrapped head to foot in folds of linen cloth intermingled the myrrh and aloes. Do you think a person still alive could survive the time that Jesus was in the tomb without dying?

Do not forget that the women were going to the tomb on that first Easter Sunday to further prepare His body in the above manner. But God!

Jesus was raised from the dead

The most important event in human history is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was God’s validation and acceptance of Jesus payment for the mankind’s sins.

The Bible records twelve different instances of the Lord Jesus appearing to others after His resurrection and before His ascension 40 days later:

1. Mary Magdalene (Mark 16: 9-11)

2. The other Mary (Matthew 28: 1-10)
3. The road to Emmaus (Luke 24: 13-35)
4. Simon Peter (Luke 24: 33-35)
5. The disciples without Thomas (John 20: 19-25)
6. The disciples with Thomas (John 20: 26-29)
7. Seven disciples (John 21: 1-24)
8. Eleven disciples (Mark 16: 14-18)
9. Five hundred people (I Corinthians 15: 6)
10. James his half-brother (I Corinthians 15: 7)
11. A commission for the disciples (Luke 24: 44-49)
12. A restatement of the commission to the disciples (Acts 1: 3-8)

The importance of the resurrection is given concisely in the following;

“And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins.”

I Corinthians 15:17

I have only presented a brief view of the highest mountains in the mountain range of information about who Jesus Christ is according the Bible.

Summary

I am not saying that you need to know all these things about the Lord Jesus Christ in order to be saved from your sins and become a Christian. All you need to know is that you are a sinner on the way to hell for your sins and Jesus paid the price for you on the cross when he died, was buried, and rose again.

“And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the Word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.”

Acts 16:30-32

The same Jesus that initially saved you is the same Jesus that keeps you saved.

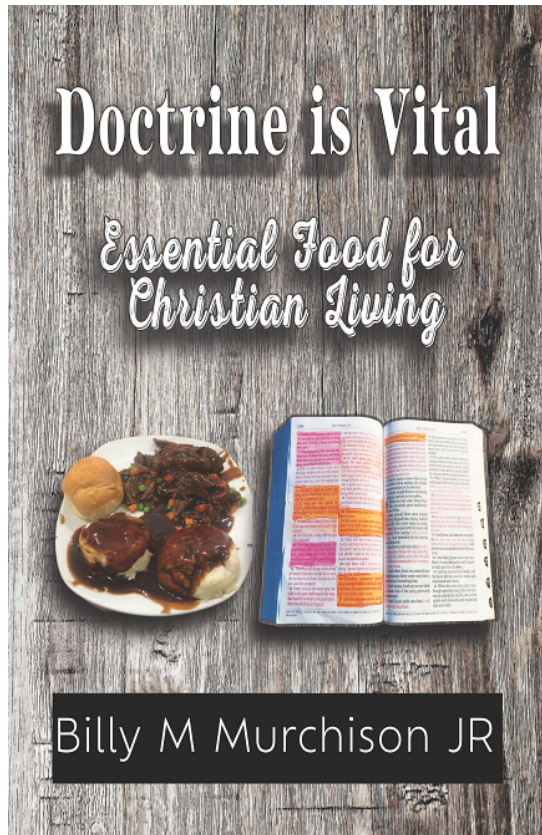
There are many different Jesus' being presented to people today. Most have some resemblance to the Biblical Jesus, albeit exaggerated or taken out of context. So, is the Jesus that you are trusting in now to get to heaven the one that is presented here? More importantly, is He the one presented in the pages of the Holy Bible? Your eternal destiny is too important to be wrong about this!

References

¹ “Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible”; James Strong; 1989; Holman Bible Publishers

² Ibid

³ <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=pdAtLlXS4qk>



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