

When We Reference Verses. . .

One of the problems I see among those who decide to adopt Statements of Faith, or write articles in which Scripture is referenced and quoted, is a decided lack of care about who said what in Scripture. What I mean by this, is when a verse is needed to support a point, frequently little care is taken about which verse is used, so long as it supports the point the author or church wants supported.

For instance, my personal Statement of Faith, and consequently Ebenezer Baptist's Statement of Faith were adopted, corrected (duplicate and obviously incorrect verse references) and then modified to accurately reflect what is believed. However, at the time this was done, there was not extensive study done about what certain books of the Bible were about (specifically Job and Ecclesiastics) other than what was immediately obvious.

Hence, verse references were retained from those two books in the Statements of Faith, and not properly vetted as to applicability. The verses seemed to make the point that was desired to make, and that was the "end" of it, so to speak.

But, it is not the end of it. Rather, it is entirely unsuitable to reference someone in Scripture who said something that was correct, but nonetheless had wrong doctrine, to support a point of right doctrine. You are, or will be, shooting yourself in the proverbial foot.

For instance, in making the point about Justification in Christ, the very first passage referenced came from the book of Job and stated this:

Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said, Dominion and fear are with him, he maketh peace in his high places. Is there any number of his armies? and upon whom doth not his light arise? How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean

that is born of a woman? Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight. How much less man, that is a worm? and the son of man, which is a worm? (*Job 25:1-6*)

Because the passage speaks of man's justification (or lack thereof) before the LORD God, it was used in the original Statement of Faith to support the point that man cannot justify himself before the LORD by his own power. Seems fair enough, and was retained as scriptural support. However, as we read further on in Job, perhaps that is not the wisest position to take:

And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, **My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right,** as my servant Job hath. (*Job 42:7*)

As the LORD God makes clear here, Bildad the Shuhite did not speak the things that were proper doctrine concerning the LORD, as Job had. Specifically, the LORD is here referring to the salvation that is in Christ. Job argued for justification by faith in the Redeemer to come – which is Jesus Christ. Eliphaz and his friends, one of which is Bildad the Shuhite, did not. Rather, they argued for *quid pro quo* with the LORD, or what is better known as the “Prosperity Gospel.”

Not exactly a sterling reference. Also, not someone I would want to lean on to prove my point about a doctrine that he, Bildad, obviously rejected.

Suffice to say, when the article on Justification was updated, that verse reference was removed.