

The Doctrine of the Forked Tongue

"Now the Spirit clearly says that in the latter days some will fall away from the faith and follow deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a branding iron." 1 Timothy 4:1-2

The Native American Indians have an expression called "speaks with forked tongue" to describe someone who says one thing but means another thing. The Bible's term for "forked tongue" is "double tongued," which means hypocritical and deceitful (1 Timothy 3:8). Teaching with a "forked tongue" fittingly describes a counterfeit doctrine commonly taught in churches today concerning our co-crucifixion with Christ. Since this doctrine is central to the divine purpose and provision of Christ's death on the cross, this is not just a minor theological issue of no great consequence. So before we go any further, let us look at what the Bible teaches about our co-crucifixion with Christ.

The Bible says that every person is born with a sinful nature, which the Bible also refers to as the "old man." This sinful nature is like a "sin factory" inside unregenerate man that continuously produces sinful attitudes and actions that are hostile to God. Since we were born into sin and were, therefore, sinners by nature, God's plan of redemption was to spiritually include us in His Son's death so that we could be freed from sin. Therefore, when we were born again, God spiritually immersed us into Christ's death (Romans 6:3). Consequently, the Bible says that "our body of sin - our sinful nature" was destroyed and done away with when we were saved (Romans 6:6). In fact, the Greek word *katargeo*, which means *destroyed and done away with*, can also be translated as *removed*. In other words, when we were saved, God *removed* our sinful, evil nature so that Christ's Holy Spirit could dwell in us (Colossians 1:27; 2:11). This is the miraculous transformation that occurred within us when we were born again of God's Spirit (John 3:3-7).

Although many pastors today say they teach that our sinful nature died when we were co-crucified with Christ, they do not really believe it or mean it. How do we know this? Because they also teach a contradictory doctrine that Christians still have the "old man of sin" or sinful, evil nature indwelling them after they have been saved. We call this teaching the "doctrine of the forked tongue" since they say one thing (*our old man of sin/our sinful nature died*) when they really mean another thing (*our old man of sin/our sinful nature still lives in us*). This false doctrine promotes the devilish idea that our sinful nature is not really dead and extinct but instead resides in us like a dormant volcano that can spontaneously erupt into life and cause destruction and havoc in our life at any time. This teaching is what the Bible calls a "doctrine of demons" since it undermines the truth of Christ's completed work on the cross and keeps God's people ignorant, confused, fearful and enslaved to sin so they cannot walk in the fullness of Christ's life and power. As God declared, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6)."

Deceiving God's people by speaking with a forked tongue is not new. Satan, who is the father of lies (John 8:44), used the serpent (who had a forked tongue) to deceive Eve into believing a lie, which cost her and Adam their faith and fellowship with God (Genesis 3:1-13). In the same way, as a result of this present-day doctrine of the forked tongue, many Christians believe a demonic lie that they have two natures within them, a new Christ-like nature and an old satanic-like nature, and these two fight against each other daily like a white dog and a black dog. They think that their Christian life reflects which one of these two natures ("or dogs") they feed the most. This lie puts the burden for living the Christian life on their own self-effort instead of their faith in Christ and His completed work on the cross. This lie is one of the greatest deceptions the devil has foisted on the church. Many Christians have become hopelessly discouraged and overcome by sin because they swallowed this lie; while others are deceived by self-righteousness that they can overcome the old sinful nature. This false teaching that we still have

a sin nature inhabiting us also provides a religious excuse for those who want to keep on sinning.

God knew that man's sinful nature was his Achilles heel, which Satan could use to continually snare him into sin. If born again believers still had a sinful nature, the devil would always have a spiritual foothold of sin within us to defeat us. This would have been an incomplete and pitiful salvation that would have left us powerless to overcome the sin of this world. This is why God had to use the crucifixion of His only Son to destroy and remove our sinful nature so that we would be born again with His divine nature and be able to fully serve Him without a divided heart.

Anyone who teaches that Christians have two conflicting inner natures of good and evil, or that God never actually removed our sinful nature through Christ's death, is impeding the church from entering into Christ's fullness and God's eternal purpose. Although some teach this falsehood out of spiritual ignorance, others teach it because they themselves are willfully practicing sin. In their case, Jesus' warning is appropriate, "Woe to you... for you have taken away the key of knowledge; you yourselves did not enter, and you hindered those who were entering (Luke 11:52)."

Now that we are a new creation in Christ, we no longer have the malignant presence and power of sin indwelling us; instead, we have the holy presence and power of Christ indwelling us (Galatians 2:20). If we teach anything less than the complete destruction and removal of our old sinful nature by the power of Christ's crucifixion, we are guilty of rendering powerless the true gospel of Christ and treating as unclean the holy blood of Christ (Hebrews 10:26-31). All who subvert the truth of our co-crucifixion with Christ by teaching with a forked tongue will be judged by God.

"Some people are throwing you into confusion and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!" Galatians 1:7-8