

Divine Couplets

A couplet has various meanings, but the main idea it conveys is that something is grouped or arranged in twos. For our lesson, we are going to be looking at divine commands that are linked by the coordinating conjunction “and,” which makes the two commands it connects have equal rank. Many of the commands found in Scripture are given in couplets or we could say pairs. There is no way we could study every couplet in the Bible, but for our time we will look a several of them and see what they mean to us.

1. Go and Preach

Mark 16:15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

This verse is part of The Great Commission given to Jesus’ disciples. While Jesus’ disciples were few, they did not allow this to keep them from following the command. We learn that during the lifetime, they did go and preach the gospel to every creature as Paul clearly states in Colossians 1:23.

This divine couplet consists of two parts: go and preach. Since both these commands are linked with the coordination conjunction “and,” these commands are bound together. The command to “go” is what I call generic command. Yes, we must go, that part is specific, but how we go is not. As, we look through the Bible, we can see how the disciple traveled however they thought was best. Sometimes they walked, rode animals, or took a boat. Of course we have many more options available to us today because we can drive, fly, or even take a bus. As long as going is accomplished by whatever means we choose, the command to go is obeyed.

Our second command “preach the gospel” is more specific than generic because it has several restrictions attached to it. For example read Galatians 1:6-8.

Read 2 Corinthians 4:5 and compare it to the philosophy of Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8:9).

Let’s consider several passages that show us what is involved in preaching the gospel (Acts 8:5; 2 Tim. 4:2; Acts 4:12; [Acts 3:16; 8:12]; Acts 3:19; [Acts 2:38; 22:16]; 1 Cor. 1:18; Col. 1:13; Eph. 2:17; Gal. 1:23; Acts 4:2; 1 Cor. 15:1-5).

When we preach, we must preach what God’s Word says, and we must not add to, change it, or take away from the pure message that comes from God’s Word. While the command to preach the gospel has many restriction it also a generic command because how long we preach or how loud we preach the message of the God’s Word is left up to the one doing the preaching.

2. Seek and Find

Jesus says:

Matthew 7:7 ...seek, and you will find...

If we read all the verse, we would see that there are three couplets in it, but I want to focus on “seek and find.”

To seek is to “hunt for, to search for, to pursue. This term is used many times in Scripture teaching people to seek out the Lord. Notice the following Scriptures: Isa. 55-6-7; 1 Chr. 28:9; 2 Chr. 7:14; Mt. 6:33; Col 3:1.

How do we seek out the Lord?

Seeking can be done in many ways, but only those seeking for the Lord will find Him and be pleasing to Him. Notice a few ways that others seek that will potentially cause them to miss heaven: (self-glory) 1 Cor. 13:5; (praises of men) Jn. 12:43; (riches) Psalms 62:10; 1 Tim. 6:9-12 (exploitation of others) 2 Cor. 12:14-19; Titus 1:10-11.

Note the example given to the elders in 1 Peter. 5:1-3.

There are many things in this life that if we seek long enough we will find them. On the other hand there are many things that we can seek for that we may never find. For example, those who continue to search for the missing link in evolution will never find the missing link because evolution is not true. However, when it comes to seeking the Lord, we can and will find Him. Once we find Him, we need to grab a hold of Him and never let Him go. We must have the attitude as expressed in Matthew 13:44-46.

Here are a few examples of those that seek and found the Lord: Acts 2:37-38; 8:27-39.

To seek and find the Lord has its benefits such as found in Jn. 14:6; Mt. 11:28; Heb. 4:16; Eph. 1:7.

3. Consider and be wise

Proverbs 6:6 Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise,

This well known verse tells us that we can learn a great deal from observing God's creation and what they do to live and survive. In fact, lets read about four different small creatures that the Bible says are wise (Prov. 30:24-28).

What is the wisdom of the ant according to verse 25? What wisdom can we learn from them?

The sluggard would do good to consider the ways of the ant and to be wise to follow their example. The Lord, has never been pleased with those that are too lazy to provide for their families or too lazy to labor in His kingdom.

Consider the following passages about the sluggard who does not consider the way of the ant: (Prov. 13:4; 24:30-34; 26:13-16).

Notice what the Bible says about the man who will not provide for himself, his family, or his own: (2 Thess. 3:10-13; 1 Tim. 5:8).

Notice what the Bible says about those who will not labor in the Lord's kingdom: (Mt. 25:14-30).

Notice what the Bible says about being diligent in your work just as the ant is: (Ecc. 9:10; Heb. 6:10-12; Col. 3:23-24; Eph. 2:10; 5:15-16; Jam. 1:22; 1 Cor. 15:58).

There are number things the Word of God tells us to consider. Let us take a look at some of them (Hag. 1:5; Mt. 6:28; [Heb. 3:1; 12:3]; Heb. 10:24; Ps. 41:1; Gal. 6:1; Ps. 119:95; Ecc. 7:13).

From our couplet, we should learn that we are not to be lazy when it comes to providing for our family or when we labor for the Lord. We learned that we should consider the wisdom of God creation and the wisdom found His Word, and we should take what we learn and use it so we can reap the benefits of that wisdom.

4. Repent and be baptized

Acts 2:38 "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins;

Many people in the religious world ignore the significance of this couplet. Again, the coordinating conjunction “and” makes repentance part of God’s plan of salvation and it shows that baptism is for the forgiveness of sins. Being baptized for the forgiveness of your sins was a new command, but repentance was not. Repentance, has been a recurring theme throughout the O.T. and N.T. (Jer. 25:5; Ezek. 14:6; Mt. 3:2; Lk. 13:3; Acts 8:22; 17:30; Rev. 2:5).

Repentance is best defined by the Bible (2 Cor. 7:9-10).

Even with John’s baptism, repentance had to take place before baptism (Mt. 3:7-8). The fact that one must repent proves that infant baptism is not a valid baptism.

Now lets take a quick look at the second part of our couplet baptism.

1. We must believe before we are baptized:

Mark 16:16 "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

Here is another couplet in which belief and baptism are bound together with the coordinating conjunction “and” and nothing can separate them. Both are required for salvation. Some will take the last part of this verse and try to separate this couplet, but it cannot. The only thing Jesus is stating in the last part of that verse is that if someone is not willing to believe then they are not certainly not going to be baptized our anything else God has asked them to do because belief is the first step in the salvation process. Without it, you will not be saved. Since the belief and baptism cannot be separated from salvation, it proves that one can just believe and be saved nor can one just be baptized and be saved.

2. We must repent before we are baptized:

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

3. We must confess Jesus as our Lord before baptism:

Romans 10:10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Here we have belief and confession combined together. The reason we can say that confession before baptism is because baptism is the point our sins are forgiven and salvation occurs.

Baptism requires going down in the water and coming up out of the water:

Acts 8:36 Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, *here is* water. What hinders me from being baptized?" ³⁷ Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." ³⁸ So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. ³⁹ Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.

This harmonize with the description Paul gives about baptism:

Romans 6:4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death,

Baptism is a burial. In fact, the Greek word behind baptism means immersion or to dip or plunge. Therefore this rules out sprinkling or pouring of water, which by the way have their own Greek words. So, we have learned from using several couplets that we must believe, repent, confess, and be baptized to have the forgiveness of our sins. We cannot take any of these steps out because the Bible clearly teaches that they are all necessary for salvation because these steps work together to bring about salvation through the grace of God.