

THE WORLD REFUSES TO LISTEN

I heard it again this very morning: “We should be thankful for the many different faiths in the world.” This is one of the many similar statements which have been made since I can remember. It goes along with the statement: “It does not matter what a person believes, just as long as he is sincere.” All this sounds real nice and makes a person “feel good” about himself, but is it the Truth which God has given us? Can we place our trust and confidence and salvation in it? Each of us has at least one copy of God’s Holy Word available to us, so let us see how that idea compares with what God wants for the world which He created for his glory and pleasure.

Do you have a love for the Truth of God? The Bible shows what HE said, and what HE wants. This is not just one man’s opinion or interpretation. Common words with which we are familiar will be used, as recorded in Scripture. How you respond to it will show your real self and will answer that question. Remember, Jesus said, “If you love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). For those who do not love the Truth of God, listen to what He said:

And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness (2 The. 2:10-12).

Paul said almost the same thing in Romans 1:28: “And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.”

It is vital that we love and receive the Truth in order to be saved. But, God will not force anyone to do different from what his heart is set on doing. We still have a free choice, and what we do in life determines our judgment at the end. For the most part, the world is going full speed against what God wants. Jesus told us that in the story of the many who would be on that broad, easy road and the few who would be on that narrow road which leads to life eternal (Mat. 7:13-15). He concluded that story, warning of false prophets which would come to deceive many. Well, they came and are still coming and deceiving many today. So we must have a love for the Truth of God, first and foremost, or we may be deceived, also. Now, let us turn to the Scriptures and see about the “many faiths” which are in the world today.

The Holy Spirit directed Paul to write for our benefit that “glory was to be in the church by Jesus Christ” (Eph 3:21). Notice, *the church* is singular—not churches. He said specifically that we must strive “to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3). Now, read the next few words, He gave us seven things and said of each, “there is one” (Eph. 4:4-6): “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” Did you see what inspiration said about how many “faiths” there were? There are just as many Gods and Lords and bodies (i.e., churches, Eph. 1:22- 23; Col. 1:18) as there are faiths.

Now, a big part of the world agrees there is only one God and one Lord, but, they refuse to listen to there being only one faith in the same context. Why? It all goes back to having the love for the Truth of God or not having it. Are we going to accept what God said, or will we give heed to what false prophets have said and continue saying? In order for us to be saved, we must submit to that one faith in obedience and be part of that one body. It is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps” (Jer. 10:23), Why not determine now to learn and love the Word of God, accept and obey it? It will be our judge on that last day (John 12:48).

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BELVEDERE BEACON
“Ye are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14)
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The Havoc He Caused

When we speak of havoc, we speak of the destruction, the ruin, the damage, the injury that was done. There is absolutely no question that such occurred. Luke said: “As for Saul, he made havock of the church” (Acts 8:3). He not only tells us that Paul was in the business of hurting people, he will also tell us to what extent. He will say, “entering into every house, and haling [dragging] men and women committed them to prison.” We have a record of the damage done to a man by the name of Stephen (7:58-60). We see him stoned to death, and Paul was party to it. In fact, you will find him later saying: “And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him” (22:20). One can read the record of this fact from the hand of Paul. He will tell you: “For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it” (Gal. 1:13). Here Paul describes what he has done.

There are times when Paul would tell why he made havoc of the church. Listen to what he had to say to Timothy: “Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief” (1 Tim. 1:13). Paul tells us exactly why he was doing what he was doing. He is saying he did not have the facts and thus did not believe. He had other facts but not the right ones. But there is also another reason here. That lesson is this: what one does not know can hurt him. It will not only hurt him, but it can cause great harm to others. Think for a moment what could have happened if Paul had never learned the truth about Christ. Suppose he had married and to that marriage children had been born. Then Paul would have been a husband and a father, but neither he nor his children would have known Christ. If his children grew to act the way he did, just imagine the terrible havoc they would bring to the church. You can have an adverse effect on the lives of your wife and children. His lack of knowledge certainly would surely hurt them, and spiritual damage done unnecessarily.

Here is a good place to see misguided zeal. One does not doubt the zeal of Paul. In fact, he spoke of “being more exceedingly zealous” (Gal. 1:14). He was zealous for “the traditions of the fathers.” He means the Jewish fathers, particularly the Pharisees. Yes, his zealousness is to be admired, but that zeal was misguided and based on a lack of knowledge. Paul was able to see later the wrong kind of zeal among his Jewish brethren: “They have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge” (Rom. 10:2). Paul could identify with these Jews. He saw exactly what they were doing and how enthusiastically they went about doing it. He knew these Jewish types and went first to persuade them as he had been. He wanted them all saved in Christ. He knew their entire endeavor was in vain.

That same thing can be said of the zeal of so many in religions in our day. They may be zealous in door-to-door campaigns. Some give years of their lives as missionaries in other countries also, but all to no avail for their zeal is misguided like Paul’s had been. Look at your own zeal or lack of it and meditate on why you are doing or not doing the right thing. And look at your knowledge, too.

Winfred Clark, Deceased

Sowing and Reaping

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in welldoing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Galatians 6:7-9).

Sowing and reaping are comforting thoughts the Christian. To the wicked people of world, this harsh teaching is disliked from every angle. This warning is to awake careless which makes it a cheerful and encouraging truth to the actively righteous. Of course fainthearted should take to heart the teaching, and begin to live an excited life in Christ. This not the only passage where this teaching is proclaimed. Here a few more:

Matthew 16:27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

Romans 2:6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds.

Romans 8:13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of body, ye shall live.

Romans 11:22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

I Corinthians 3:8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

II Corinthains 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

II Corinthians 9:6 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

Revelation 22:11,12 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

There is a separation of time between the sowing and reaping in the natural world. So it is in the spiritual but the time frame is much longer here. And did you notice there are two kinds of seed in the spiritual world: Good and Evil. The words of Eliphaz are true: “Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same” (Job 4:8). Let us meditate on these matters and proceed to sow only the seed that reaps eternal life.

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Ken Chumbley

NEWS AND NOTES

Keep in your prayers the following: Helen Culpepper, Pam Gossett, Lavonne McClish, Linda Chumbley, Maomi Aaron’s sister, Leann Rogers, who is having health problems, and Lanny Niver together with his daughter and son, and Tim Smith.

Jean Peebles and Lanny Niver were both unable to be out last Sunday because of health issues. Please mark you calendars for January 31. We will have a pot luck meal together after morning worship. Plan to stay and eat.

TRUST

He does not lead me year by year,
Nor even day by day,
But step by step my path unfolds;
My Lord directs my way.
Tomorrow’s plans I do not know,
I only know this minute;
But He will say, “This is the way;
By faith now walk ye in it.”
And I am glad that it is so;
Today’s enough to bear;
And when tomorrow comes, His grace
Shall far exceed its care.
What need to worry then, or fret?
The God who gave his Son
Holds all my moments in his hand,
And gives them, one by one.

Author Unknown