

The Fact of the Matter

One of the big differences between man and the rest of God's creation is man's ability to reason and make rational decisions. That being the case, God demands that man use his mental faculty to make proper conclusions based upon facts and evidence. Through His prophet Isaiah, God stated:

Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool (Isa. 1:17-18).

God requires His people to learn that which is right, seek after that which is right, and make proper conclusions based on that which is right. Sadly, many today make their conclusions based upon standards other than the truth, while others make decisions based solely upon the facts they like.

It is extremely unfortunate that many decide to be ignorant in regard to certain facts which are relevant to making a particular decision. The Law of Rationality demands that one make only such conclusions as are warranted by all of the available evidence. By choosing to be ignorant about some of the facts regarding a matter, an individual is doomed to make an irrational decision. God teaches that those who make decisions, despite evidence to the contrary, "are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20). God also teaches that, just as ignorance is no excuse today, it will not be an acceptable excuse on the Day of Judgment either.

In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power (2 The. 1:8-9).

Just as unfortunate is the knowledge that there are also those who simply reject the facts. These individuals have the evidence they need in order to make a rational decision, but choose to make a conclusion contrary to the available facts. Such was the case with the Jewish leaders in the first century.

And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus (Acts 4:14-18).

Rather than concluding the truth, that these men must have been from God since they were able to perform such a miracle as healing a man lame from his mother's womb" (3:2), they chose to reject the facts and demand that the men cease their preaching of the Christ. Jesus told the Pharisees, "ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition" (Mark 7:9).

Perhaps that is the reason why many reject facts today—that they may do as they desire rather than what God commands. God desires that all men come to a knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4), but He will allow men, as free moral agents, to lie to themselves so much that they believe the lie rather than the facts (2 The. 2:11).

In contrast to those who ignore and reject evidence, let us be fact finders. Jesus implores, "seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness" (Mat. 6:33). He also declares, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (7:7-8). We need to continually examine and prove ourselves to ensure that we are being honest with the facts and making only such conclusions as are warranted by those facts (2 Cor. 13:5).

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BELVEDERE BEACON
"Ye are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14)
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535 Clearwater Road, Belvedere, SC 29841-2574
(Greater Augusta, GA area)
SCHEDULE OF SERVICES
SUNDAY: WEDNESDAY:
Bible Classes for all ages 10:00 am Bible Classes for all ages 7:00 p.m.
Morning Worship 11:00 am
Evening Worship 6:00 p.m.
EVANGELIST: Ken Chumbley – Tel. No. (803) -279-8663
www.belvederechurchofchrist.org E-mail church@belvederechurchofchrist.org

Be Faithful

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life (Rev. 2:10).

At the time this strict law of Christ was delivered to the Christians at Smyrna, both men and women were dying as martyrs for the name of Jesus Christ. In past ages thousands had given up their bodies in death. The Lord here shows His disciples in the face of cruel death the crown of life they will receive at the end of a faithful journey.

Consider what our brothers and sisters endured for their faith:

Beneath the city of Rome there is a long succession of subterranean streets and galleries, quarried from the rocky strata of the soil. These are now opened, and strangers may visit them. They are remarkable; they are even wonderful; they are the most astonishing cemeteries in the world. They are called the Catacombs, and are the burial places of the martyrs of the young Christian faith.

The inscriptions over the innumerable tombs are to be read even yet; they seem fresh, almost as if painted yesterday, and they are fragrant with the flowers of immortality (Pulpit Commentary).

We know that faithfulness is exercised for man. God is faithful, for He is called "*the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments*" (Deu. 7:9). Christ is faithful. Paul said, "*the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil*" (2 The. 3:3). Again, "*Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)*" (Heb. 10:23). It was revealed to John on Patmos that Christ's name is called Faithful and True. Since faithfulness is always exercised by God and Christ, it is reasonable that faithfulness must be exercised by man.

There are many warnings against unfaithfulness. Jesus said at the close of His parable of the pounds, "*cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*" (cf. Mat. 25:30). Again, He said when He had spoken about His second coming: "*Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*" (25:41). Just before He died, one of the saddest verses of all: "*Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled*" (26:56). It is tragic to see wasted lives in this world and to know that unfaithfulness will cause precious souls to be lost in eternity.

His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord (25:23).

Author Unknown

HUMAN CREEDS VS. THE BIBLE

Of the thirty-nine books that make up the Old Testament and the twenty-seven books that constitute the New Testament, is composed the complete collection of sacred documents that is called, by way of distinction, the Bible. And in this volume we find all that has been handed down to us as “divine revelation.” And notwithstanding the ill-advised procedure on the part of men and of organized groups of men to formulate and adopt creeds, disciplines, confessions of faith, and church directories to tell people what God would have them to do, and to direct them in their religious service and discipline, it is generally agreed by those who accept the Bible as a book of divine revelation, that “whatever cannot be found therein and proven thereby, is not to be made binding on the conscience of men.” If we accept any of the Bible, we must accept all of it. When God has spoken, who are we that we should discriminate as to what part of His Word we are willing to accept. Who are we that we should pick out the part we are going to believe and arrange that as our creed, or our articles of faith? Any creed that does not contain and include all the Bible is entirely too small. And any creed that contains more than the Bible, contains too much, and is entirely too large. All human creeds are obstacles and barriers to the unity and peace of those who profess to be the people of God and the servants of Jesus Christ. People in their religious life, faith, and practice would be infinitely better off if all the creeds, disciplines, and confessions of faith, as bonds of union and communion should pass out of existence, disappear from the earth, and their very names pass into oblivion. They do not consolidate nor unite the people of God. They divide and dismember them. They segregate groups into sectarian parties and denominational churches. They refuse to accept into their fellowship those who cannot conscientiously subscribe to their creed, and thus the creed becomes an insuperable barrier to unity, harmony, and peace.

Creeds are fruitful sources of envy, strife, and of every evil work. They are fundamentally the fountain, the fountain of bitter waters, from which flow all the untold and multiple evils of alienation, separation, and discord among peoples once happy and united in their works of faith and labors of love supported and sustained in the advocacy of the one God, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one book of divine revelation called the Bible. Human creeds and confessions of faith are the one source and origin of “enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties” and abominable spiritual idolatries and schisms which drown men in perdition and destruction (Gal. 5:19).

*G.H. P. Showalter
Deceased*

Ken Chumbley

NEWS AND NOTES

Keep in your prayers the following: 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 daughter, Betty returned from Charleston during the week. Friday she had surgery to drain the cyst and remove her gall bladder. She came through the surgery well and is in University hospital where it is anticipated she will be for a few days recovering. The family appreciate the prayers that have been offered and would ask they continue.

Kathy Treadway has been in Edisto this week but plans to be here today before returning.

.....JESUS IS.....

.....(DON'T YOU KNOW).....

Jesus is the Maker of the world, don't you know;
Jesus is the Maker for the Bible tells us so;
Jesus is the Maker of the world, great and small,
Jesus made the people: young and old and one and all!

Jesus is the Keeper of the world, don't you know;
Jesus is the Keeper for the Bible tells us so;
Jesus is the Keeper of the mountains so tall,
And He keeps the valleys, sun and moon and stars and all...

Jesus is the Savior of the world, don't you know;
Jesus is the Savior for the Bible tells us so;
Jesus is the Savior of the world, one and all:
And he may be saved who will but hearken to His call!

.....H. L. Gradowith.....