

A Little Deceit

God's Word or Man's Tradition?

The purpose of this study is to determine the difference between truth and tradition. Satan knows how to combine enough sweet truth into his religion to make it palatable to most church going congregations. The unlearned and trusting (of men) followers will accept what sounds good as God's word. When one joins himself to a religion that adds to and/or takes away from what God specifically teaches he has accepted Satan's beguiling doctrines and allowed himself to become side tracked.

Satan cares not how you travel as long as you don't reach the right destination. Making it into the kingdom of God is like going on a long journey; it takes a long time and requires a correct map. The Bible is God's road map to eternal life. When one starts off from a wrong premise everything from there on is on the wrong path, even though the path may seem to be going in the right direction. To rely on and accept any other guidance other than God's word is to willingly become deceived. When we rely on our "ministers" and "organization" we are using them to guide us. Paul said, "follow me as I follow Christ" and we are also told to "prove all things". If we allow men to lead us we must first determine where they are heading. Then we must diligently study God's road map to follow the directions it gives us. 2Tim 2:15 To clarify this statement I will give you an example. Here is a statement made in a religious book titled, "What Does The Bible Really Teach?": In reference to the millennium reign (this is the only place in the Bible a future thousand year period is mentioned), this writer says, "During a period of a thousand years, the dead will be resurrected...." But the Bible says, in Rev. 20:4-5 (referring to the same period of time) "the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." Again, this writer makes a statement based on the calculations of men, "the fulfillment of Bible prophecy shows that in 1914 Christ became King and God's heavenly kingdom began to rule." But the Bible says that when Christ comes to rule he will be seen as lightening coming from the east to the west (Mt.24:27,42 - Lu.17-23-240) He also says, we don't know when he is coming.

Men like to set dates as to when the kingdom of God will or will not appear. But Christ said in Mt. 4:17 "the kingdom of God is at hand, (within us)". It starts in us as an attitude of repentance and submission to God's attitude. Jesus said, in Mt. 7:21-23, that many religious people present themselves as righteous but can be very deceptive. Rev.2:2

The writer I mentioned refers to "the short time Satan has left" (which he may have in this age), but there is a future age when Satan will be released from his prison of one thousand years, and the Bible uses this age for the final "short time" for Satan in Rev. 20:2-3, 7-9) where he will be "loosed for a little season". This same writer ignores the connection of this scripture with the same event in Eze. 37 -- 39 and on through chapter 48.

There is much to learn about God's plan in Eze. after the resurrection of Israel which does not take place until after the thousand year millennium reign. Most religious teachers ignore this future prophetic time, trying to spiritualize it away as if it is happening now. However, if one actually studies the book of Revelation it becomes clear that this prophecy in Ezekiel cannot possibly be fulfilled in this age before the return of Christ, nor can it be fulfilled during the millennium (Ez.38:14-22,39:23, Rev.20:7-9) . In Rev. 22:18-19 Christ condemns those who "add to" or "take away" from his words of his prophecy. When we accept man's traditions or ideas without proof we are as guilty as they are in "adding to or taking away". This writer, who wrote the book I referred to, does not understand the events, as made available to us in the Bible, of the 7 ages of mankind. Much has been left out and some has been added that are not sound scripture. However, so much of what has been written is true, and is actually based on scripture. This kind of false religious doctrine is the most dangerous; because part truth and part untruth can be more easily accepted as all truth. Christ says we are to live by every word that comes from God's mouth (Mt.4:4). If we believe and follow Christ we will also follow his Father and His ten commandments; that includes keeping the seventh day Sabbath. We will understand that the Old Testament was the scripture Christ and the apostles taught from; there was no "new" testament at that time. We will understand that Jesus did not "nail" his Father's laws to the cross, but did do away with the (eternal) death penalty invoked by breaking any one of his laws.

Religious organizations that teach that they are the one and only true church of God often base their main religious doctrine on an "added" or "taken away" man-made rule that is unique to their organization. God's church is made up of those "scattered" people whom God is calling out of this world's system (1Pe.1:1). These may, or may not (now or ever) need to know of, or belong to, any one particular religious organization.

Some of these organizations can be identified by their unique doctrines, such as: The Pentecostals who teach that unless you speak in tongues you have not received the holy spirit.

The "Jesus Only" churches teach you must use the name of "Jesus" when being baptized (according to Acts 2:38) or you will not be given the holy spirit. However, Mat.28:19 makes it clear that the meaning is "into" the Father, the son, and the holy spirit.

The Catholic church is the largest and most notorious of all who requires their members to accept the Pope as their spiritual "Father". Christ says we are to call no man our (spiritual) "Father". Mt. 28:19.

The Mormon church (L.D.S) requires one to accept Joseph Smith as their spiritual leader, along with his "added" Bible.

There's the Sacred Names churches and the Jehovah's Witnesses who puts special emphasis and spiritual importance on how one pronounces the name of Jesus and/or of God. But we can read in Isaiah 9:6 where Emanuel, (Mat. 1:23) as "The Everlasting Father" will have several "names".

This is but a short list of religious organizations who imply that if you are of any other religion than that which they embrace and teach, you are not a true

believer, which implies that they are the only “true” church of God. Some “splits” will not allow you to fellowship with their congregation unless you accept their beliefs and teachings (as a unique truth) that only they have.

I am of the opinion that God has, and will have, people who are, and will, yet, answer his calling. We, and they, are warned against “judging” our potential brethren. How can they pretend to “love” even their enemies, if they can’t love those whom they have much in common with?

Most of these “True Church” groups have started from one “founder” (modern day Pharisees) who was/are deep into “control”, prestige, and greed. Most of their followers have been educated to accept their teachings from childhood by Biblically illiterate parents. Therefore, many become and remain deceived, willingly, going on to teach others the same half truths with Satan’s gleeful approval.

God’s people are encouraged “to work out your own salvation” (Phil.2:12).

We are not to rely on “leaders” to do this for us (Phil. 3:2-3). Paul says that we, as mature believers, should be teachers, being able to discern between right and wrong. He goes on to explain that a mature Christian should graduate from the foundational doctrines to the higher level of perfection.

There are many more truths to explore in God’s living word. Also as a mature believer we should not be relying on man to feed us milk when we should be feasting on spiritual meat (food) prepared for us by our Father in heaven. We should be teaching instead of being taught. The so-called “Christian” should be followers of Jesus Christ and should know better than to follow these “themes” of man. It is sad to say that most proclaiming Christians know very little of what God is all about, what his plan is, and how we fit into it.

Their organization may preach that their congregations are to study their Bible. However, if one does study and begins to grow in spiritual knowledge, and shares new found truths, that are not being taught in their group, they will soon find themselves ostracized. Why then, you might ask, am I told to “search the scriptures?” We all want to prove that what we believe is true. On the other hand, we all hate to admit we are wrong, or that we need to change. Even more so, we hate to change. Since most teachers may, or may not, believe what they teach, they hope that what they have taught will be accepted as truth. Telling their congregation to search the scriptures sounds as if the leader is concerned about their spiritual development, and is a spokesman for God. The leader realizes that you want to believe the Bible supports what they have been teaching you, since you have joined their group. The leader is confident that you will read the Bible not to disprove his or her teaching, but to support what you have been told. They also know, from experience, if they have been leading for a few years, that most people read the Bible so very seldom that they don’t really know what they believe, or why they believe what they think they believe. Even fewer really do serious studying of the Bible. If the leader actually believes what he or she teaches he hopes the Bible student will see the scriptures as he does. Most preachers are loyal to the teachings of their organization, so they don’t want anyone to know more than the organization has handed down to be taught. This is a method of control. You are led to believe that the teacher always knows

more than you. If you don't understand a scripture, you are encouraged to go to a teacher or leader for an answer. Instead you actually should go directly to God in prayer and devote yourself to more intensive study. If you are sincere enough to fast with prayer asking God for understanding it will eventually be given to you. If, on the other hand, you are content to believe unscriptural preconceived and taught ideas, you are willingly being deceived. God will say, "I'm sorry, I never knew you--depart from me" when you stand before him with your defense. It's time consuming and hard work digging into the Bible and making changes, as we see a need, but anything worth having is worth working for. Nothing is of greater value than finding and receiving God's truth. To do that we have to "prove all things" as found in God's word. 2 Pet.3:17

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