

Straight Bible Talk

Manchester Church of Christ, Share Christ's Love and Share His Message

Disregarding the Bible

It never ceases to amaze me, the ways that people can devise to ignore and disregard what the Bible plainly says. At least some people will be honest and say, "I don't care what the Bible says, this is what I am going to do!" But there are those who claim to be Bible-believing, yet in their teaching and practice are just like the unbeliever who says, "I don't care."

I recently read a book by a professor of theology in what I would have once considered a conservative institution. He was making a point that the churches at Jerusalem and Antioch had differing views. In making his point he quoted from Peter, but because it would have destroyed his argument for the statement to have been made by Peter, he said it was Paul. One has to wonder where his editor was when he proof read the book! Whether it was carelessness or perversity that guided the theologian, I have no way of knowing.

That same professor "cherry-picked" the scriptures to prove his point. Ignoring massive amounts of information because such did not fit his theory, he made points that were simply absurd, based on his selective use of scripture. All of this was done to justify his theory without regard for God's message.

His argument centered in the idea that the church today does not have to be guided by Scripture. Being filled with the Spirit can lead to conclusions that get around the Bible. His contention is that the modern church needs to "follow the Spirit" even when such leads to conduct that is in contradiction with Scripture.

Great interest has been shown recently in the "lost" books of the Bible. I suppose

that means that those who have found these lost books have already digested and put into practice what is in the Bible and now they want to learn more so that they can apply the newly found teaching to their lives! No, it is just one more excuse for not accepting the Bible. If one does not care about the Bible we already have, what difference does it make if we find another book or a dozen more that we want to add to the Bible.

Why not just admit that one does not like the Bible. If one has no intention of obeying its commands why work up some far fetched tale about "lost books?" Why do people who want to do things their own way, irrespective of God, have to seek for ways to try and discredit the Bible?

I have always considered it incredible that a God who could create heaven and earth and keep it all operating according to His plan, could not manage one book, to keep it available to people who want to know the truth.

Several years ago, a lady visited services where I was preaching. Standing in the entryway to our building, she looked around and declared that the Holy Spirit had led her to that place. Sometime later, as I studied the Bible with her, she discovered teachings of which she had not been aware. Instead of obeying the Bible, she quit worshipping with us. I suppose it was the same "Spirit" that led her away. Whatever spirit it was that was leading her, was certainly not God's Spirit.

Perhaps it is for that reason that John told us to "test the spirits." Paul warns us about "doctrines of demons." Not every spirit that is leading people is from God.

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Editor/Writer – Steve Bastin
E-mail – manchrist@aol.com
manchesterchurchofchrist.org

Manchester
Church of Christ

Meeting at
595 Tolland Turnpike

Sun Bible Classes—9 AM
Sun Worship—10 AM

Sun Eve Worship—6:00 PM
Wed Bible Class—7:00 PM

"Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

Acts 17:31

All scripture quotations are from the
New American Standard Bible unless

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The devil has his own spirits as well. In addition, we have our own spirit that is often in conflict with God's Spirit.

How is one to test the spirits? How is one to know whether one is being led by God's spirit or some evil spirit? In spite of all the efforts put forth to find some other way, I only know of one way to test the spirits. The spirit that leads us to obey God's Word, as found in the Bible, is the right spirit. Every spirit that leads us to disobey the Bible is the wrong spirit. End of discussion!

Can people seriously believe that God inspired men to write the Bible and then said, "Whoops, I didn't mean that let me give you a different message." And then He whispers in the guys ear what He really meant!

When people take verses out of John, chapters 14 and 16 and interpret them to mean that God's Spirit is giving them private messages, then they ought to take Genesis, chapter 6 and start building an ark. Context means nothing to those who have their own personal agenda. "There's a verse I like. Let me see what I can do with that." John 14 and 16 are Jesus' words to the apostles, the 12 men whom he chose to be his witnesses. What they can do

is not necessarily what you can do. God spoke to them in order to give us the Scriptures. He finished the Bible and He is not going to tell you something that contradicts His word.

I have heard of preachers who spend no time in preparation for their sermons because they believe that Jesus' promise to the 12 is meant for them. Why did God give us the Bible? Why was Timothy advised to give attention to reading? What does all of this mean if God is going to speak to each person privately?

Then there are those who claim that tradition has the same authority as the Bible. They claim that the apostles did not write everything down in the Scriptures. They suppose that there are other truths that have been handed down from generation to generation that are just as binding as those found in the Bible. Of course, again, when the two stand in conflict, guess which one wins. It is tradition of course. One has to wonder why God caused anything to be written if tradition would suffice to make His will known.

Everybody has traditions. Most traditions are simply the way we

do things. Churches have traditions as well. There is nothing evil about traditions. There is a problem when traditions develop that are in opposition to what God says we ought to do. When a tradition causes us to disregard the plain teaching of the Bible, then the tradition needs to be discarded and the Bible obeyed.

Every person (including myself) comes to the Bible with presuppositions and assumptions about what it teaches. All of these can cause us to miss what God has said. The true meaning of a passage may be obscured by our misunderstandings. It is difficult to clear our minds and open our hearts to receive God's message.

When Jesus told his disciples that he would die and be raised again, Peter argued with him. Peter had a different view of the Messiah based on what others had taught him. The truth was unacceptable because it differed from what he had been taught. It took the death and resurrection of Jesus to convince him that he was wrong.

God is patient, but He will not overlook forever our unwillingness to change. His Word needs to be our guide. It will lead us to Him who alone can save us.