

THE BLIND LEADING THE BLIND

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We are hundreds of years removed from the time of the apostles, but many of us believe God's Word is just as true and authoritative today as it was in the first century (Read Mat. 24:35; John 12:48; 1 The. 2:13). Based on what Jesus and the apostles said, God obviously wants all men to live in submission to His Word. If they will do this, God assures them they will be furnished completely to every good work (2 Tim. 3:16f; 2 Pet. 1:3).

Until about thirty years ago, this was a characteristic in the churches of Christ. We may not have been the darlings of the denominational world, but we also avoided many of the problems common to tile sectarians. Then a change began to take place—slow at first, but gradually accelerating.

Now, many brethren are so infatuated with denominationalism that they despise calling Bible things by Bible names and doing Bible things in Bible ways. They “ape” these false religions by teaching the same false doctrines and using the same unscriptural terms and practices. This betrays an unholy love for the wisdom of men, a lack of faith in the inspiration and authority of God's Word, and it feeds ungodly pride. They actually abandoned the perfect, divinely-revealed religion of Christ for a shabby facsimile devised by men.

It is common for them to not only ridicule almost every aspect of Christ's religion but faithful brethren as well who are determined to submit to God's revealed will. One can only believe the training these people received at the feet of denominational seminarians made a shambles of the simple, trusting faith they once had in their Lord and His Word. What a tragic loss!

The greatest losers were those who believed the lies and distortions they heard in sectarian schools and the gullible people in “our” colleges and congregations who now listen to and blindly accept their heresy. Paul had a word for such departures from the faith, He said they were “made shipwreck concerning the faith” (1 Tim. 1:19). It makes you want to weep when you consider the far-reaching consequences in store for these souls whose faith is now in shambles; to those whose faith they are even now devastating; and the infidelity they spread, like a cancer, throughout the church for which our Savior died.

Those who have abandoned the Word of God and refuse to submit to His will cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, be thought faithful to God. Faith comes by hearing God's Word (Rom. 10:17). This means that a person accepts what God says in His Word as being true. It is not a characteristic of faith to ignore the directions of the one he professes to believe and to substitute something else in its place (Luke 6:46); nor should he expect his Master to be pleased with his actions.

Such a person has faith, all right, but instead of it being based on the Word of God, it rests on the wisdom of men. If he were honest (which he professes to be), he would not call himself a “Christian,” for he has made a conscious decision not to follow Christ; i.e., he refuses to accept or abide by the directions, teaching, commands, doctrines, or promises of Christ and His apostles.

It is not surprising that he twists and/or ignores any scripture which describes his true nature or condemns what he practices. Having no faith in the verbal inspiration, infallibility, or authority of the Bible, it would be out of character if he respected it or the One who gave it. He may profess that he does, but Jesus denied that such was not possible: “He that heareth you (the apostles) heareth me; and he that rejecteth you (the apostles) rejecteth me; and he that rejecteth me rejecteth him that sent me” (Luke 10:16). In rejecting the teaching of Jesus and His apostles, he rejects the One who sent Jesus into the world.

The only true description for such a person is “infidel”—an unbeliever. Those who are infidels to the religion of Christ are spiritually blind. Consider the Pharisees. Jesus charged them with making the word of God void because they had replaced it with the traditions of men (Mat. 15:2-9). This disturbed the disciples, so they said to Jesus: “Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, when they heard this saying?”

They were similar to many brethren today. That their religious leaders were in rebellion to God’s will did not upset the disciples nearly as much as the fact that these men might be upset over what Jesus said to them. They were ready to do whatever was necessary to get in the good graces of the Pharisees.

Jesus did not speak to the “felt need” of the Pharisees or the disciples. It was painful to tell them and painful to hear it, but what Jesus said did not indicate a lack of love for the Pharisees. He told them what they needed to hear. Then He told the disciples in no uncertain terms: “Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they are blind guides. And if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit” (Mat. 15:12-14; Cf. also 23:16-26).

When unbelievers (infidels) practice today what the Pharisees practiced then, the same term Jesus used to describe them applies to the people of our time too. They are, indeed, blind guides. They have rejected the revealed will of God. Many brethren—spiritually blind because of self-imposed ignorance—follow such blind guides. Together, the leaders and the led are tripping down a primrose path of “felt needs” which has been paved with the lies of infidels. Jesus said they and their leaders will both fall into a pit. Paul, describing the spiritual blindness of the Jews, revealed the source of their problem: “And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled in them that perish: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them” (2 Cor. 4:3-4).

The Jews’ blindness was because of unbelief:

... their *winds* were hardened: for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remaineth, it not being revealed to them that it is done away in Christ. But unto this day, whensoever Moses is read, a veil lieth upon their heart. But whensoever it (their heart) shall turn to the Lord, the veil is taken away (2 Cor. 3:14-16).

This is what must happen if spiritually blind people are to recover their sight.

We fervently pray modern infidels in the body of Christ will “turn their minds back to Christ and His teaching” (believe in Christ and His teaching), but the prospects are not bright (2 Pet. 2:20-22).~