

"Tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD!"-1King 22:16

"I Know What the Bible Says, But..."

Many times I have heard people make a statement along the line of "I know what the Bible says, but..." It is often that people find themselves under the wrong impression that God's word is subjective [modified or affected by personal views, experience, or background – Webster's New World Collegiate Dictionary; Fourth Edition]. God adequately answers this false premise through the pen of the Psalmist: "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven" (**Psalms 119:89**). The word of God is eternal and stands firmly in Heaven. The word of God is not subject to the flawed reasoning of mankind (**Isaiah 55:8-9**).

Jesus said: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (**John 12:48**). Rejecting Christ, as noted in the quote above, includes rejecting His word. Many today want to profess that Jesus is Lord, but they do not want to follow His instructions. In response to that mindset, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ said: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say" (**Luke 6:46**)?

Affirming Christ – Without Accepting His Word?

With many today they want Jesus, but not His word. Such is impossible. You cannot separate Jesus from His word. The only way we know about the Lord is through the word of God. Jesus is referred to as the word: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (**John 1:1**). Jesus, the Word, became flesh: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (**John 1:14**). If someone is ashamed of the word, they therefore are also ashamed of Christ. As noted in our introduction, if one denies Christ they deny the word and vice versa. It is the word of Christ that brings forth spiritual life: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (**John 6:63**). Thus, when one rejects the word of the Lord they are rejecting eternal life!

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (**John 14:6**). In one opportunity that Jesus had to teach the Jews who were rejecting Him, He said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life" (**John 5:25; 36-40**). Those whom reject the word of God are rejecting Jesus. Those who do not find Christ through the Scriptures do not know the Lord at all. Truly, there are many that affirm Jesus, but are completely ignorant of who He is!

Will Ignorance Be an Excuse?

When Paul entered into Athens "...his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry" (**Acts 17:16**). He had passed by and found an altar with this inscription, "To the Unknown God" (**Acts 17:23**). From that point he began to teach about the true and living God. In that lesson he declared: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (**Acts 17:30-31**). If this single account wherein Paul rebukes the ignorant worship of idols in Athens were the only account denying the acceptability of ignorance, we would have enough to show ignorance is not acceptable to God. This however is not the only text wherein ignorance of the truth is condemned.

Peter, when preaching at the temple at an area called Solomon's porch (**Acts 3:11**), preached about those who killed Jesus. In that lesson he

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said: *“And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:17-19).* Ignorance alienates man from God (**Ephesians 4:18**). Ignorance will never be an excuse, for we can all know Christ through the Scriptures and obey what He says. We must know what the Bible teaches, and we must do those things we find acceptable unto God.

We Must Know and Do!

Having knowledge of the Scriptures without obedience to them is not sufficient in pleasing the Lord. James writes: *“Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed” (James 1:21-25).* Hearing, believing, and obeying the word of God is exactly what the Lord requires of man. In obedience to the word of God we must do all, not leaving any part undone (**Matthew 23:23 and James 2:10-11**).

“For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding” (Proverbs 2:6). The words that come from God give knowledge and understanding. All the words that the Lord has desired us to hear from Him have been recorded in what we commonly call the Bible (**Deuteronomy 29:29, John 20:29-31, John 21:24-25, and II Peter 1:3**). Thus, we can know what pleases God and we have every opportunity in this life to fulfill what has been written through men by God (**II Timothy 3:16-17**). We have no excuses for disobedience. We must know what the Bible says and do it!

Conclusion

There are no exception clauses within the word of God to allow us to disobey the Lord. Sin is transgression of the law (**I John 3:4**). Sin will lead to eternal punishment (**Romans 6:23; cf. Revelation 21:8**). Towards the very end of what we know as the “Sermon on the Mount” Jesus taught the following: *“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it” (Matthew 7:24-27).* Jesus is clear in what he says and means. There is no room for mixed interpretation. We must hear and do all that the Lord demands of us.

There would be some who would read an article such as this one and respond by calling me a legalist. They would say that the grace of God is sufficient in covering up ignorance. They read the Bible just like I do the newspaper, reading only what I want to read. For the Scriptures do reveal the beauty of the grace of God. However, as we have seen in the Scriptures listed above, God desires obedience. Knowing Christ includes knowing and doing His will. The grace of God removes sin from mankind, but only those sins that are repented of (**Luke 13:3; 5, Acts 3:19, Acts 26:20, and Romans 6:1-2**). From the very simplistic plan of redemption of hearing the word of God, believing it, repenting of one’s sins, confessing Christ, and be immersed in water (**Romans 10:17, Hebrews 11:6, Acts 2:38, and Acts 8:35-39**), to the weightier matters of the law of Christ – WE MUST OBEY! *“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21).*

- By Brian A. Yeager

“In the LORD I take refuge...” (Psalm 11:1)

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