

Trusting The Source of the Gospel

by: Kris Brewer

In our last article, we examined Paul's warning to the Galatian brethren that they not follow after a "different gospel," which he declared to be a perversion or distortion of the one true gospel message.

After issuing this warning, Paul gave several reasons why the Galatian brethren could trust that the message he delivered to them was in fact the one true gospel message, and not a perversion or distortion.

It was not man's gospel. The first test of the true gospel was its source. Paul declared that he had not received the message of the gospel he taught from other men (Galatians 1:12), but that he had instead received it directly from the Lord.

After his conversion, Paul did not go directly to the other apostles or anyone else to learn the whole of the message that was to be declared throughout the world. Instead, he went to Arabia

(Galatians 1:17). Where had the message of the Judaizing teachers originated? It was clear that it had not come from Jerusalem (see Acts 15), which means it was not from the apostles. They had not received a new revelation that confirmed their proclamations (that was the point of Paul's initial warning in Galatians 1:6-10). Therefore, the source of their message was not divine in nature, but, rather, was from man.

There are really only two possibilities when it comes to the source of information. Jesus faced the same issue and confronted those who sought to challenge Him:

But Jesus answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: The baptism of John—where was it from? From heaven or from men?" (Matthew 21:24-25)

Every teaching is either from man, or from God. That which comes from God is what He expects His people to follow and obey. That which comes from man is at best a perversion of His message! Why would anyone want to follow that which is a perversion of God's will?

Paul had been a part of the failed system. Paul had been a part of the Jewish system before obeying the gospel message. In fact, he had been “advancing in Judaism beyond many of [his] own age among [his] people.” If there had been anyone who should have wanted to rely upon that system, it would have been Paul: he would have had much to gain from it!

The Jewish system, however, was flawed, and intentionally so. God never intended the Old Testament covenant to remain in effect forever. From the time of Adam and Eve, God had prophesied of the One who was to come (Genesis 3:15). By the time of Abraham, the promise was much more clear. Eventually, through Abraham's descendants, all nations of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:1-3). God fulfilled His promise to Abraham and blessed him with a land (Canaan was delivered to his descendants and became the nation of Israel). God also blessed Abraham with many descendants, the Jewish people. That special people, set apart as a holy nation to the Lord, was given the law of Moses. That law, however, was not intended to be a law for all people and for all times. It was not until the coming of Christ, the Messiah, that the perfect law was delivered for all mankind!

In Galatians chapter 3, Paul emphasized the point that the law of Moses was not God's law of salvation for all time. He showed the Galatian brethren that they had been obedient to the truth of the gospel, and they had no reason to turn back to the Old Testament covenant for that salvation. That Old Testament covenant was a “tutor” (Galatians 3:24-25) that was intended to serve the purpose of leading everyone to the Messiah. Once the Messiah had come, that law had served its purpose, and was not to be followed any longer!

If the law that had previously been delivered from God no longer provided a covenant relationship with him, how can a law, or a gospel, that has its source somewhere other than the revelation of God provide a covenant relationship with Him? Paul had to deal with “a different gospel” that had its roots in the Old Testament covenant, a law that God had at one time given to the Jewish people. The “different gospels” that we see today are not rooted in that at all, but most are a corruption of the gospel message delivered by Paul and the other inspired men of the first century. These corruptions are usually based on the selfish desires of mankind!

Paul had been accepted by the rest of the apostles. In chapter 2 of Galatians, Paul made the argument that he was teaching the truth because the other apostles had accepted him. When Paul had gone to Jerusalem (see Acts 15) to defend the truth of the gospel, he had presented his teachings to the apostles and elders there. When he was done, they “gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and [Paul]...” If he was teaching a message that was contrary to the will of God, these men who were spokesmen for God would never have accepted him!

As if to emphasize the point that he was making, Paul wrote of an incident in which Peter was not following the will of God. He refused to eat with Gentiles when certain Jews had come to him, because he was fearful of the “circumcision party” (ESV, Galatians 2:12). Paul said that he “withstood him to his face because he was to be blamed...” (Galatians 2:11). Consider what Paul wrote concerning this situation:

But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, “If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?” (Galatians 2:14)

Here Peter, one of the apostles, was not being “straightforward about the truth of the gospel...” Paul did not, in this instance, extend the right hand of fellowship. Instead, he “withstood him to his face...” This clearly shows the difference in how even inspired men would be dealt with based on whether they were teaching the truth or not! Paul had proven the truth of his message by that message being confirmed by other inspired men!

While these points do not express the totality of Paul’s argument to convince the Galatian brethren that he held the truth, and not a distortion of truth, they do summarize some of the important ideas he used to prove that truth. Truth does not come from man, it comes from God. Truth was delivered by God through His inspired writers (See Ephesians 3). Truth is always consistent with what God has revealed in His word. It will agree with all other inspired men and their writings!

The Galatian brethren could have confidence in their salvation. They could rest assured that they had done all that God required of them, as Paul was teaching them the truth. Today, we can have the same confidence, but only by comparing what we are being taught to God’s revealed word. When there are conflicts between what is taught and what we can read in scripture, we know that what we are being taught is untrue. It can only be a perversion of the true gospel of Jesus Christ!

Blasphemy Against Our Most Cherished Idol

by: David Maxson

They assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron and said to them, "You have gone too far! For all in the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?" When Moses heard it, he fell on his face... (Numbers 16:3-4)

Disrespect...

To many, this is the greatest sin. Every other sin can be forgiven, but if someone disrespects them, that is simply unforgivable.

Why?

Because we are idolaters. We do not worship idols made of wood or stone; we worship ourselves!

When someone attacks our reputation or does something to diminish the honor we feel is our due, that is counted as blasphemy. They have profaned our idol. They have attacked the thing we hold most dear. They have committed an unforgivable sin.

Moses didn't worship himself, he worshiped God. He wasn't concerned with defending himself. When his honor was attacked and his authority was questioned by his enemies... he fell on his face. He was not so consumed by pride that he felt he had to fight back because he had been "dissed"... he fell on his face.

Most conflict starts with an inflated (and idolatrous) view of self. Few of us can humbly fall to our face before those who unfairly criticize us.

Moses understood something most of us fail to see, and that is we can only truly be exalted when we humble ourselves before the Lord (James 4:10).

O Father, forgive us for our selfish pride. Help us to give up our idol. Help us to crucify self.

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habits and muscles that have to be developed and trained over time. Self-deception can be evident in any or all of the categories of sin: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life.

Awareness of self-deception comes through confession of one's sinfulness, personal submission and obedience to God with diligent, fervent prayer. If we examine ourselves honestly using The Christ "who is the exact imprint of His nature" (Hebrews 1:3) as the standard, our knee will be bent at the foot of the Cross. We will voluntarily submit to God's will rather than continuing our own selfish desires. In order to examine ourselves, we must acknowledge our sinfulness and be completely willing to die unto ourselves. This within itself is extremely challenging and requires much soul-searching. In II Corinthians 7:10-11, Paul says "godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation." The examining of ourselves, the indignation, the fear, and the avenging leads to becoming pure in heart. David's broken and contrite heart in Psalm 51 is a moving example of repentance.

Galatians 5:19-21 lists the works of the flesh which we strive to put off, and verses 22-24 detail the fruit of the Spirit that produces Christ likeness in our lives. "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me...." (Galatians 2:20). James 1:22-26 warns about self-deception and gives another look at the reformation in order to abandon our self-seeking life. We cannot merely listen to the word without doing what it says or simply look at ourselves in a mirror and walk away. The Word of God is meant to change our character. We can now carefully behold the perfect law not forgetting what we see, but transforming ourselves into a full-grown man in Christ. "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12:2).

Nothing can deceive unless it bears a plausible resemblance to reality. C. S. Lewis

Study Opportunities

Sunday Bible Study: 10:00 AM
Sunday Worship Assembly: 11:00 AM

Meeting At

Homewood Suites of Bozeman
1023 E Baxter Ln,
Bozeman, MT 59715

Everyone Welcome!

The Blindness of Self-Deception Ladies

by: Ramona Olson

Corner

Throughout the scriptures God warned His children about the dangers of self-deceit and self-delusion. Notice a few passages that mention the problem of deception:

Deuteronomy 11:16 – “Take care lest your hearts be deceived...”

Job 15:31 – “Let him not trust in emptiness, deceiving himself ...”

Proverbs 14:8 – “... but the folly of fools is deceiving.”

Isaiah 44:20 – “... a deluded heart has led him astray...”

Isaiah 47:10 – “... your wisdom and your knowledge led you astray, ...”

Jeremiah 17:9 – “The heart is more deceitful above all things...”

Jeremiah 37:9 – “Thus says the Lord, Do not deceive yourselves ...”

Jeremiah 49:16 – “The horror you inspire has deceived you, and the pride of your heart...”

Mark 7:21-22 – “For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, ... wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride...”

I Corinthians 3:18 – “Let no one deceive himself ...”

Galatians 6:3 – “For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.”

Galatians 6:7 – “Do not be deceived: God is not mocked...”

James 1:16 – “Be not deceived my beloved brothers...”

James 1:22 – “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”

James 1:26 – “If anyone thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this person’s religion is worthless.”

I John 1:8 – “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”

Self-deception involves believing something about oneself that is not true. Embracing beliefs that one feels or wants to be true instead embracing beliefs that one thinks are true leads one down the path of self-deception and delusion. By definition, self-deception is when an individual takes part in an act or believes in an idea that results in a false view of his situation. This is blindness to the truth. Blindness to the truth includes two aspects: (1) seeing the truth falsely, and (2) being blind to the fact that one's own actions have contributed to the false view. With this type of blindness, a person cannot see the truth and will ignore anyone who attempts to show him/her that he/she is in error.

Self-deception is a powerful tool of Satan that impacts every relationship in our lives: husband-wife, parent-child, friendship, co-worker, and most of all, the relationship with our Heavenly Father. For example, problems between husbands and wives usually revolve around selfishness; because of their self-centeredness, they cannot 'see' the problem within themselves because they are self-deluded. Often, husbands and wives do not admit the problem, which leads to neither party asking for forgiveness. Additionally, there is no humbling of oneself before God.

The very nature of self-deception implies a lack of introspection on behalf of the individual leading to incorrect conclusions regarding the condition of a person's character. Some people develop the ability to turn off their conscience, turn a blind eye, or deceive themselves, which often hinders their mental and physical health and prevents further growth. In fact, individuals that do "turn off their conscience" often decry others for being judgmental; however, in reality individuals that "turn off their conscience" only want to be judged by those that approve of their behavior. Put another way, those that are under the bondage of self-deception are doing precisely what Paul states in II Corinthians 10:12, which is that "...unwise people measure and compare themselves by themselves."

However, we can also fool ourselves because our hearts are deceitful as Jeremiah states in chapter 17:9. Obadiah says the pride of our hearts can deceive us. Human pride always blinds us to truth and will eventually lead to a fall (Proverbs 16:18). As such, the fallibility of our heart is precisely the reason that those who are older are told to instruct those that are younger; "youthful passions" usually need to be corrected rather than followed. Isaiah 44:20 explains that an idolater is often misled by his own deluded heart. Pride is at work in all of areas of life and is difficult to identify if one isn't carefully examining his heart. Pride and self-deception are difficult to identify within oneself; however, introspection and self-honesty are

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Daily Bible Reading

March 2017

March 1 Ephesians 5:22–6:24
March 2 Philippians 1:1–18
March 3 Philippians 1:19–2:11
March 6 Philippians 2:12–3:11
March 7 Philippians 3:12–4:23
March 8 Colossians 1
March 9 Colossians 2:1–3:11
March 10 Colossians 3:12–4:18
March 13 1 Thessalonians 1
March 14 1 Thessalonians 2
March 15 1 Thessalonians 3–4
March 16 1 Thessalonians 5

March 17 2 Thessalonians 1–2
March 20 2 Thessalonians 3
March 21 1 Timothy 1
March 22 1 Timothy 2–3
March 23 1 Timothy 4:1–5:16
March 24 1 Timothy 5:17–6:21
March 27 2 Timothy 1:1–2:13
March 28 2 Timothy 2:14–3:17
March 29 2 Timothy 4
March 30 Titus 1–3
March 31 Philemon

Gallatin Valley Church of Christ
C/O Kris Brewer
PO Box 11111
Bozeman, MT 59719

Mail To:

www.gallatinvalleycoc.com