

THE FAITH OF A LITTLE CHILD : PART ONE

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As some of my regular readers know, I have a tendency to uplift the Lord and share His Word whenever, and wherever, the opportunity arises. Besides passing out Gospel tracts on the street whenever I am out, undoubtedly, my primary means of witnessing is via our online ministry; however, because the Internet is not the perfect medium for expressing one's thoughts and feelings, sometimes my motivations are called into question, and even misinterpreted. It seems that some people erroneously assume that the main reason why I am so forthright in my evangelical endeavors, is because, in my pride, I want to boast of my own spirituality, and impress people with my knowledge of the Bible.

To be quite frank, this assumption is the furthest thing from the truth; and may the Lord forgive me if I have ever yielded to such a temptation, and such vanity; although I honestly don't believe that I have. It seems to me that one of the reasons why some of these people make this silly accusation against me, as well as against other Christians, is because they are looking for any valid excuse, and any justification -- at least valid in their own minds -- in order to legitimize their resistance against the conviction, and against the truth of God's Spirit, which is often conveyed through ministries such as this one. This subtle tactic is nothing new. As we read in the Gospel of John:

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."

John 3:19-21, KJV

Speaking from my heart, what really motivates me to share God's Word, what really primes the pump of my personal zeal to impart His Word to others, is the simple fact that I have

complete trust, and unquestionable faith, in the powerful, liberating, and life-changing truths which it reveals. In my mind, there is nothing like the Bible. No other book even comes close to the magnificence of the Holy Scriptures. For me personally, the Bible is indeed the "Book of books". It contains every solution to the myriad of life's problems; it reveals the deepest secrets of the heart; and most important of all, it offers us the keys to true happiness, spiritual well-being and Eternal Life. There is no other collection of historical documents, or any modern work of man for that matter, which can boast of these attributes. Is it any wonder then that King David was inspired to write in part:

". . . for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name."
Psalms 138:2b, KJV

In truth, God's Word stands above all, without exception. While many people have been blessed, inspired and motivated by this ministry, every now and then, someone will comment to me, either while we are in private Internet chat, or else by way of an email message, that they feel a certain degree of inadequacy when it comes to their personal knowledge of the Word of God. This perception they have of themselves, is sometimes due to the fact that I can so easily share the Word of God with them, with very little apparent effort on my part. I just start talking, or typing, and the verses just begin to flow through my mind.

Such was the case this morning. After a brief Internet chat, a certain hungry, little sheep left a message on my screen, in which he honestly and humbly admitted that his knowledge of the Bible wasn't what he had thought it to be, or what he would like it to be. Such honesty is not only admirable, but it also reveals the heart of a true seeker; and such people will be rewarded by the Lord due to their hunger to know His Word. I will be sharing more on this topic in a moment.

To set the record straight, let me reiterate the fact that I am by no means any kind of a spiritual giant. While it is true that I have memorized a number of Bible verses over the years -- and have probably forgotten just as many as I have learned -- I still require the daily assistance of my "Online Bible" computer program while I am engaged in online chat, while I am responding to email messages, and particularly while I am working on a new article or series. This great little program is my constant companion, and I don't doubt that the person who wrote it will someday be greatly blessed in Heaven for having made such a wonderful tool available to fellow Christians. While Satan's children may use computer technology for destructive, ungodly and evil purposes, the Children of Light wisely use this same technology for God's glory, by reaching out to the spiritually hungry and lost of the world, in order to bring them to the saving knowledge of the Good News of Salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord. As the Apostle Paul was inspired to write:

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."
1 Corinthians 10:31, KJV

Although it should be rather obvious, allow me to also add that all of the information you find written in my articles,

is not something which I learned overnight. We all know that learning is a slow continual process which occurs throughout one's lifetime. It should come as no surprise to you then, that it has taken me literally years of seriously studying God's Word, in order to grasp the things which I understand today; and I continue to refine my ideas and beliefs as the Lord reveals more truth to me through His Word, as I am able to receive it. Furthermore, allow me to humbly admit, that what I understand today is still so very little, and does not give me any reason to boast of some personal greatness.

Not only that, but I am fully aware of the fact, that if I were so foolish as to set myself up on a pedestal, or to allow others to do this to me, and didn't try to discourage it, God would quickly humble me, and perhaps even bring an abrupt end to this ministry. Our God is a very jealous God, and He will not have any other gods before Him; particularly not the false gods of self, pride and ego, which in a sense, can be even worse, and perhaps even more destructive than the pagan gods which were worshipped by the ancients:

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me . . . Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;"
Exodus 20:3, 5, KJV

"For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God:"
Exodus 34:14, KJV

The Apostle Paul offers some very sound advice for those people who, because they have filled their minds and hearts with Earthly wisdom, foolishly become lifted up in their own pride and vanity. He tells them that if they truly desire to become wise, then they must forsake their worldly wisdom, as well as their pride, and basically become fools. In other words, Paul is stating that they must be willing to accept the fact that, like a fool, they really don't know anything of true eternal value. Therefore, they must start all over, in order to learn the true wisdom which only comes through a dedicated study of, and adherence to, God's Word:

"Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?"
1 Corinthians 1:20, KJV

"Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours;"
1 Corinthians 3:18-21, KJV

"Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."
2 Timothy 3:7, KJV

". . . we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know."

1 Corinthians 8:1b-2, KJV

In fact, as Paul also tells us, this is precisely what he personally had to do, after his life-changing encounter with the Lord that fateful day on the road to Damascus. If Paul's understanding had been correct, and had his heart really been right with God, he would never have begun his persecution of the early Christian church. That is why when the Lord smote Paul on his horse that day, He told him that it was hard for him to kick against the pricks; which was a reference to the Spirit of God jabbing at Paul's own heart, just as a rider would poke his animal with an iron goad in order to get it to move. In other words, similar to a beast of burden which stubbornly resists its rider, Paul was also resisting the Will of his one true Master, because his pride, his Jewish background, and the knowledge he had gained over the years as a Pharisee, was more important to him than the truth of God's Word. As Paul would later write to the brethren at Rome, he had the Law, such as circumcision, but he didn't have the Spirit:

"And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

Acts 9:5, KJV

"For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

Romans 2:28-29, KJV

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

Romans 8:14, KJV

Following his conversion, not only did Paul have to renounce his prestigious position as a Pharisee of the Pharisees, and whatever affluent lifestyle may have been associated with it, but he also had to admit to himself that much of what he had been taught as a dedicated Pharisee, and disciple of his teacher, Gamaliel, was now worthless to him, because his understanding was based upon his self-righteous zeal and blind pride, which had resulted in his faulty interpretation of the Scriptures. Paul realized that he was dead wrong. He knew that he had to begin anew from scratch. In the verses which follow, Paul describes his background for us, and then reveals his new perspective following his conversion:

"But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question."

Acts 23:6, KJV

"I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of

Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day."
Acts 22:3, KJV

"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,"
Philippians 3:8, KJV

In agreement with his own words, Saul had indeed become a new creature, with a new understanding of the Scriptures, and a new outlook on life, following his spiritual transformation into the new man, Paul:

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."
Romans 12:2, KJV

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."
2 Corinthians 5:17, KJV

Just as Jesus Himself had taught, new wine, or new doctrine, cannot be poured into old bottles; thus, the Apostle Paul had to be willing to forsake the old wine of his former teachers, and become a new, more flexible bottle, in order that he might be able to accept, with childlike faith, the new wine of the Spirit which would soon be revealed to him by the Lord Himself, through personal revelation:

"Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved."
Matthew 9:17, KJV

"For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."
Galatians 1:12, KJV

King Solomon, who according to the Bible was one of the wisest men to have ever lived upon the face of the Earth, summed up his thoughts regarding the obtaining of worldly wisdom and knowledge, when he wrote the following lines:

"And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."
Ecclesiastes 12:12-14, KJV

Imagine that. One of the wisest and richest men the entire world has ever known, who was greatly admired by his peers because of his excellent counsel, encapsulated the sum of his lifelong learning process in that one magnificent

phrase: "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." Unlike vain men of our modern day who strive to exalt human intelligence and knowledge with their unique phrases, axioms, and many books filled with great swelling words of man's wisdom and accomplishments; this noble king was willing to humble himself and basically say "If you really want to be smart, then obey God, keep His Rules, and you will do well." Can you imagine a college professor, or the president of a country saying such a thing today? Well, in essence, Solomon was both; because he was the leader of his country, and a great scholar as well.

In their Epistles, Peter, Paul and Jude warn us to beware of those corrupt men, who speak great swelling words of man's wisdom and philosophy -- which included both scientific and religious reasoning -- in order that they might lead God's children astray from the truth of His Word, and the path of righteousness, and into the subtle net of deception and sin:

"For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error."

2 Peter 2:18, KJV

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

Colossians 2:8, KJV

"These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage."

Jude 1:16, KJV

Jesus also accused the self-righteous Scribes and Pharisees of these very same sins. In fact, the Lord stated that once they lure their victims into their doctrinal net with their impressive speeches, their eloquent teaching and their long prayers, they then convert them into children of hell even worse than themselves. So much man worship, and so little of the true Spirit of God! Consider the following verses:

"Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees . . . How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees."

Matthew 16:6, 11-12, KJV

"And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces, And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation."

Mark 12:38-40, KJV

"Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him,

lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."
John 12:42-43, KJV

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves."
Matthew 23:15, KJV

In contrast to the vain, worldly and deceptive wisdom and doctrines of men, while discussing the profundity and wonder of God's Wisdom and Divine Purposes, which far surpass our limited human wisdom and understanding, the Apostle Paul was inspired to write the following to the brethren in Rome:

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"
Romans 11:33, KJV

In writing the previous words, perhaps Paul was reminded of the following verses from the Old Testament, where we also find the Prophet Isaiah writing under the inspiration of God's Spirit:

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."
Isaiah 55:8-9, KJV

Returning to King Solomon, it is undoubtedly because of this very same reason, that is, because he obviously recognized the supremacy of the Lord's Wisdom and Divine Purposes, that in his book of Proverbs, he instructs us to not trust in our own wisdom or human rationale, but to place our faith, our trust, our very confidence, solely in the Lord. If we do, Solomon tells us, He will indeed direct our every step, and ultimately, the course of our lives. In fact, Isaiah takes it a step further by telling us that if we do trust in the Lord, it will bring peace to our lives, such as we have never known before:

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."
Proverbs 3:5-6, KJV

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."
Isaiah 26:3, KJV

"And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left."
Isaiah 30:21, KJV

So as can be clearly seen, when it comes to God's Wisdom, and understanding His Ways, we are all like little children. The best thing that we can each do, is to forsake our silly pride, our stubbornness, and our preconceived ideas of what

we think is right, and humbly take the Hand of our Heavenly Father, and allow Him to lead the way. That is why in the Gospels, Jesus tells us that we must have the faith of a little child in order to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. The Lord said:

". . . Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."
Matthew 18:3b, KJV

". . . Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God."
Mark 10:14b, KJV

From the Scriptures, we know that not everyone understood what Jesus meant when He uttered these cryptic words. One such man was the Pharisee, and secret follower, Nicodemus. As I explain in other articles, such as "The Born-Again Experience: Now Or Later?", Nicodemus came to the Lord by night -- possibly because he feared the opinions of his contemporaries, as was common at that time -- and asked of Jesus, exactly what He had meant by the above statements. In John chapter three we read the following:

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."
John 3:3-8, KJV

Thus we see that to "be converted, and become as little children", requires that we be born again in a spiritual sense. But there is more to this than what meets the eye; and I don't doubt that Jesus knew this full well. Exactly what is the faith of a little child like? Well, for one thing, he obeys his parents, even though in his young mind, he may not fully understand why they are telling him to do something. That little child has full faith in his parents. He has an inner confidence which tells him that they will not ask him to do something which will bring harm to his being. Faith in their word, is basically synonymous with faith in their love for him. If he cannot trust in their love for him, which guarantees his protection, then neither will he be able to trust in their word. Can you see that?

In the case of very young children, they accept the words of their parents as absolute truth in their lives. If mommy or daddy says that something is true, then it must be true; after all, they ought to know, right? Sadly, in our modern day, due to serious compromise by some parents, even by some Christian parents, this kind of childlike "blind faith" has had a detrimental effect on the lives of many children. It

has resulted in the widespread belief in Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny, and a host of other pagan beliefs, traditions and practices which are contrary to the Word of God; and someday, the Lord will hold those parents accountable for their irresponsible actions and weak faith.

Just like these young children who place their faith in their parents, we must do likewise when it comes to our Heavenly Father and His holy Word. While we may not always be able to understand everything with our carnal minds and human understanding, and while we may sometimes not know or see where He is leading us along life's rugged road, we must still accept His Word as absolute, immutable truth, and take His Hand by faith. We must believe that He loves us so much, that He will not allow anything to happen to us, unless He knows that it is for our own good, and that it will result in good fruit in our lives in the end. A few verses which I quote in some of my other articles include the following:

"The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."
Psalms 34:7, KJV

"Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved."
Psalms 55:22, KJV

"A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee."
Psalms 91:7, KJV

"Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows."
Luke 12:6-7, KJV

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."
Romans 8:28, KJV

"Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."
1 Peter 5:7, KJV

". . . for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."
Hebrews 13:5b, KJV

To expand a little further upon this idea of accepting God's Plan and Purpose for our lives by faith, allow me to ask you a question: What is the most important truth of the entire Bible which our Heavenly Father calls upon us all to accept? It is that Jesus Christ is the only-begotten Son of God, who died for the sins of the world, in order that we might be reconciled to God, and thus inherit Eternal Life. Sadly, as it was prophesied some 2,750 years ago by Isaiah, it was this very truth which the Jewish religious Elders of old rejected; and thus they were offended by, or stumbled upon Christ, the True Rock from Heaven. Jesus Himself, as well as Peter and Paul, all referred back to Isaiah's prophecy in their teachings, as we see by the following verses. Please

note that Paul even clarifies for us that during the time that the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness, it was Christ the Living Rock who followed them; the very same Rock who they, and their descendants, would eventually reject:

"And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."

1 Corinthians 10:4, KJV

"And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken."
Isaiah 8:14-15, KJV

"And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me."
Matthew 11:6, KJV

"Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them."
Matthew 21:42-45, KJV

"But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."
Romans 9:31-33, KJV

"If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed."
1 Peter 2:3-8, KJV

Please go to part two for the conclusion of this article.

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THE FAITH OF A LITTLE CHILD : PART TWO

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Why God Ordained For Jesus To Be A Stumbling Stone To Jews, Knowledge Can Keep Us From The Truth, Jews Ignored The Signs No Righteousness By Keeping The Law, Misguided Knowledge And Religious Zeal, Paul's Deception, Right Foundation, Modern Day Sauls, Herd Mentality And Political Correctness, Endtime Apostasy, God Rewards The Hungry, The Truth Is In The Word, Importance Of God's Word, Cleansed By The Word, Ask In Faith The Spirit Of Truth, Knowledge And Wisdom By The Holy Spirit Liberated Through The Word, Destroy The Old To Build The New

From the High Priest, Caiaphas, to the hardened Pharisee, Saul, the Jewish leadership did indeed reject their Messiah when He arrived. Why did this happen to them? Notice that Peter tells us that "they were appointed". As I also discuss in "Is God A Racist?", Paul explains to us in Romans chapter eleven, that God allowed this rejection by the Jews in order to bring about the Salvation of the Gentile world; a process which has been ongoing to this very day. He writes:

"I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy . . . For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."
Romans 11:11, 25, KJV

As I explain in the aforementioned article, once the full harvest of Gentile souls has been brought into the Lord's symbolic garner, or granaries, being as we are referred to as wheat in the Scriptures, then the Lord will concentrate His efforts on redeeming a remnant of the seed of Israel as well. As I explain in "The Woman in the Wilderness and the 144,000", it is my current belief that this small remnant of saved Jews may be the 144,000 sealed servants of the Lord who are mentioned in the Book of Revelation.

Returning to our main topic, the Lord had to use a mechanism in order to cause this obstinate rejection by the Jews; and that mechanism, or catalyst, was sin and rebellion in their own hearts. Exactly what was the nature of their sin? As the previous verses from Paul's Epistle to the Romans indicate, in its simplest form, the sin was that they were so filled with their own wisdom, and knowledge of the Law, and what they felt was necessary for Salvation, that they no longer

had the faith of a little child; and ultimately, this kept them from the truth. In other words, instead of having the simple faith to believe that the Messianic Prophecies of the Old Testament were being fulfilled in their very sight, and that the Messiah and Sacrificial Lamb had finally arrived, they purposely ignored the clear signs, and went about to establish their own form of righteousness, through their self-righteous works, as they pretended to adhere to the unbending and merciless mandates of the Mosaic Law. Jesus Himself chided them for ignoring the signs, as we see here:

"The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven. He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times? A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed."
Matthew 16:1-4, KJV

Because of their pride, it was impossible for the Jews to accept God's simple Plan of Salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. In other words, they didn't want Jesus to save them. They were so deceived, that they thought that they could actually save themselves; but as Paul also makes very clear, that is totally impossible to do, because righteousness only comes through Jesus Christ, and not through anything which we might try to do. Consider the following verses:

"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."
Romans 10:3-4, KJV

"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:"
Romans 3:21,22, KJV

"That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."
Romans 5:21, KJV

"I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."
Galatians 2:21, KJV

"And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:"
Philippians 3:9, KJV

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any

man should boast."
Ephesians 2:8-9, KJV

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;"
Titus 3:5, KJV

It should be quite clear then, that our own righteousness, or better said, our vain attempts to attain to some state of righteousness and sinless perfection through our own works, absolutely stinks. In fact, the Prophet Isaiah wrote:

"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."
Isaiah 64:6, KJV

One of the reasons why the Apostle Paul was able to write so eloquently regarding faith and the Law, is because he knew well the heart and mind of his Jewish brethren. Prior to his conversion, he was living the very same delusion as the rest of them. In fact, as we all know, Paul was so convinced that he knew the truth, and that his knowledge of, and obedience to the Law would save him, that in his zeal, he even went about persecuting and killing those who opposed him; which of course were the First Century Christians. As I point out in other articles, Jesus warned His first followers that this would happen; just as they persecuted, and would eventually killed Him; all the while thinking that their religious zeal was pleasing to God:

"They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service."
John 16:2, KJV

"And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem."
Acts 9:1,2, KJV

Through an abundance of Scriptural evidence, we have now seen that some knowledge, whether we're discussing worldly wisdom, philosophy and science, or spiritual knowledge, such as certain religious doctrines and preconceived ideas, can be deceiving and harmful both to ourselves, as well as to others, and it can even keep us away from the real truth of God's Word. In fact, as I explain in the article entitled "Science and Technology: The Forbidden Knowledge?", knowledge wrongfully applied can be downright evil.

In the case of the Apostle Paul, it wasn't until the Lord humbled him on that road to Damascus, so that he was finally willing to forsake his pride, and his erroneous teachings, and become a born-again child of God, that Paul was able to take the Lord's Hand, and with childlike faith say, "Okay, Lord; you lead, and I will follow. You teach me your ways,

and the things which I need to know, in order to be used by you." Up until that point, Paul's knowledge stood in the way of his faith, and thus in the way of his spiritual growth. He couldn't become a child, as Jesus had taught, because in a spiritual sense, he had deceived himself into thinking that he was already a man. The truth of the matter is that he was spiritually stagnant; just like his Jewish brethren; but one powerful jolt from the Spirit of God put him on the right track.

Once Paul humbled himself and became a child who quietly listened at the Lord's feet, he began to grow. Once he rejected, and discarded, the false foundation upon which he had built his life as a dedicated Pharisee and keeper of the Law, the Lord could set him upon the one true Foundation, that is, the Rock of Jesus Christ, and begin to teach him anew; but this required childlike faith. It is for this reason that Paul would later write the following in his first Epistle to the Corinthian church:

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

1 Corinthians 3:11-15, KJV

Today, there are still many Pauls in the world, or perhaps better said, Sauls. Some of these people are filled with worldly wisdom and the cherished teachings of men. Others are trapped by religious indoctrination and traditions which have been passed down in some cases for many generations. After a while, something is passed along for so long, that it is automatically assumed to be true without question. No one, or at least very few, pause to really investigate what they believe, and why they believe it. They have become a part of the vast crowd which follows the herd mentality of political correctness. If certain community or government leaders say that something is true, then it must be true. If the local priest, pastor, minister or preacher asserts that something is no longer true, or that we have misunderstood it, or that we are living in modern times and must therefore "adjust" our religious beliefs a little in order to remain acceptable to society, then most people simply nod in assent; after all, just like the Scribes and Pharisees of old, if anyone ought to know the truth, they should; right? Not necessarily.

What about you? Have your head and heart become so stuffed with vain worldly knowledge and wisdom, or with misguided religious indoctrination, that your faith has died? In your confused, darkened mind and alienated state, has God merely become something in which foolish, ignorant and backward people believe? If this is how you truly feel, then be it known to you that Jesus Himself, and even the Apostles Peter and Paul, saw this sad day coming; for they indeed said of the Endtime:

". . . Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"
Luke 18:8b, KJV

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [Christ's Second Coming] shall not come, except there come a falling away first . . ."
2 Thessalonians 2:3a, KJV

"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? . . ."
2 Peter 3:3-4a, KJV

On the other hand, if you recognize your sad, dismal state; if you realize that your pursuit of worldly knowledge and wisdom has left you feeling spiritually dry and empty; and if you are willing to abandon your preconceived ideas and false erroneous beliefs; if you are willing to tear down the false idols of ungodly education and modern wisdom which you have foolishly constructed in your life; and if you sincerely desire to learn and know the truth, God will certainly not disappoint you. He will reward you if you seek after it with your whole heart with childlike faith. He will surely reward you if you dedicate yourself to a serious and open-minded study of His Word, because that is where the truth is to be found. As Jesus said, and as the Apostle Paul wrote:

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."
John 17:17, KJV

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
2 Timothy 2:15, KJV

Notice that while King Solomon advises us to abandon our vain study of the many books written by worldly men, Jesus and Paul instruct us to delve into the wonders of God's written Word. Thus, we have the problem revealed to us, as well as the simple solution. Solomon's father, King David, was definitely in love with God's Word. This is why his Psalms are filled with such verses as the following:

"BETH. Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word."
Psalms 119:9, KJV

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."
Psalms 119:11, KJV

"More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb."
Psalms 19:10, KJV

The Old Testament Patriarchs Moses and Job also realized how important it was to maintain God's Word as a central part of one's life. In fact, Jesus was repeating something which He had instructed Moses to tell the children of Israel, when He responded to Satan in Matthew chapter four:

"And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live."
Deuteronomy 8:3, KJV

"Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food."
Job 23:12, KJV

"But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."
Matthew 4:4, KJV

So from these few verses, we can see that the Word of God should be a very important part of our lives. Sadly, it is because many people have cast God aside, and because they have rejected the truth of His Word, that the world is in such a terrible state today, filled with fear, confusion, widespread violence, unbridled passions, selfishness, etc. Many people have swallowed Satan's lies, and accepted his pleasures of sin for a season, instead of accepting God's truth. When we neglect God's Word, we are no longer clean. We became filthy from sin, and from the ways and spirit of the world. This is why the Bible teaches us that when we believe in Jesus, and accept the truth of His Word, we become spiritually cleansed:

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."
Isaiah 1:18, KJV

"Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."
John 15:3, KJV

Throughout the New Testament, we are repeatedly told that receiving things from God is simply a matter of exercising our faith, and believing that we receive them; knowing that, as King David was inspired to write, God will not withhold any good thing from them who walk uprightly. In fact, Jesus said that our Heavenly Father already knows our needs even before we ask. Of course, as John writes below, we must ask according to His Will; and it is in this context that we must understand the words "good thing". Consider the verses which follow:

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

Matthew 7:7-11, KJV

"(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."

Matthew 6:32, KJV

"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

Matthew 21:22, KJV

"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."

1 John 5:14-15, KJV

". . . no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."

Psalms 84:11c, KJV

If there is one thing which God certainly desires to give us, it is the truth. In order to know the truth, the Bible teaches us that we must be filled with the Spirit of Truth; that is, with the Holy Spirit. As with other things, Jesus taught that the Holy Spirit is freely available to those who ask for it:

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

Luke 11:13, KJV

Both Jesus and Paul explain to us that the Holy Spirit acts as a type of Guide and Teacher. It is like the Voice of God quietly speaking within our hearts. In fact, Paul informs us that two of the various Gifts of the Spirit are Wisdom and Knowledge; and in his Epistle, James also tells us that we must simply ask in faith in order to receive these Gifts:

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

John 14:26, KJV

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."

John 16:13, KJV

"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;"

1 Corinthians 12:7-8, KJV

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the

wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways."
James 1:5-8, KJV

So as you can see, in order to receive the Holy Spirit, and the Wisdom and Spiritual Guidance which accompany it, all you have to do is to sincerely ask for it, and the Lord will indeed fill you up; and as He does, and as you continue to read and study His Word, He will begin to open the eyes of your spirit, so that you will begin to understand things, not just with your mind, but with your heart as well. Many doubts and questions which have lingered in your mind will finally be answered. You will begin to learn the Wisdom of God, and not just the wisdom of the world; and it will be a truly liberating experience for you; for as Jesus said to those Jews who did accept His message:

". . . If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free . . . If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."
John 8:31b-32, 36, KJV

So what about you? Are you ready to accept the spiritual freedom which God offers you through the truth of His Word? Are you ready and willing to be liberated from the false ideas, erroneous misconceptions, and vain wisdom of men which have enslaved you? Are you willing to pay the price in order to gain such freedom? Are you willing to admit to God and to yourself, that you have been wrong in some ways? Are you willing to allow God's Word to tear down and destroy the idols in your life, in order that He might build you back up upon His foundation of truth? When God sent the Prophet Jeremiah to expose the lies and the deception of his day, this is basically what He told him as well:

"See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant."
Jeremiah 1:10, KJV

As we have seen throughout this article, sometimes God has to destroy what we think is true, before He can show us what is really true; and this is not always an easy process. Our pride and rebellious heart do not like to be exposed. For most people, it is simply easier and more comfortable to live in a state of delusion, than to receive the truth. This is why the Apostle Paul also wrote concerning the deceived Jews of the Endtime who will accept their false messiah:

". . . because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:"
2 Thessalonians 2:10-11, KJV

In conclusion then, are you willing to accept the New Wine of the Spirit with the faith of a little child? That is what it will take. The choice is really up to you. I pray that you will do the right thing. And remember; the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

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