

THE BIBLE VIEW

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Theme: False Teaching

Free from False Religion

Bill Brinkworth

One of the most deceptive, dangerous forces hampering the growth of Christianity has always been the false teachings and intents of some “spiritual” leaders. Jesus battled those that claimed to be of God but were not. It was even the “religious” leaders who orchestrated His death.

Paul warned of wicked leaders and had to battle their attacks against him and his stand for the Word of God. In II Peter 2, Peter also warned his readers of those that claim to be of God but are not!

Peter red-flagged false prophets (II Peter 2:1-3). They claim to be knowledgeable about God’s Word and His way but sometimes subtly stray from the truth and promote their philosophies. Often their motivation is not to advance God’s way, as they advertise, but for their gain (II Peter 2:3). They sometimes try to take advantage of God’s blessings on His people for their benefit.

Today, we see “Christian” celebrities often with their hand out trying to get the money that should go to support a local church to reach their local community. Instead, they get hold of that money and use it for their cause. In the last 40 years, many Christians have been disappointed when they discovered the offerings they sent to radio or television preachers were absconded for personal rather than ministerial use. Too many have deceptively made “God their belly” (Phil. 3:19).

No matter the lies the false prophets and teachers sow and the destruction (“pernicious ways” – II Peter 2:2) they commit, they will not get away with it. The fallen angels did not get away with their sin (II Peter 2:4). A godless people of the time of Noah did not get away with their sin (II Peter 2:5). The wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah did not continue unchecked. An all-seeing God will only sit by for so long. One day, His judgments will fall on those that oppose Him by teaching false spiritual doctrine (II Peter 2:9). No one gets away with iniquity!

No false prophet or teacher will ever stand in their position of authority and admit, “I am teaching you false doctrines.” They will hem and holler at any suggestions they are wrong. They will insist that they know the truth (“presumptuous” – II Peter 2:10), and one that is opposing them does not know the truth as they do.

It can be a no-win situation if believers do not know “thus saith the Lord.” If man would search the Scriptures for himself like he is commanded in the Word of God (II Tim 2:15) and know and

live the truth, false prophets, teachers, and other religious leaders would have little audience for their often blasphemous teachings.

The cure for false teachings inside the local church's doors is wary, Bible-educated believers and followers. When believers shirk their responsibility to study the Scriptures, false teaching will prevail and grow. It is long past the time that we as Christian people should learn the Scriptures for ourselves and stand up for its truths.

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32

Free from What?

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When you know and follow the truths preserved in God's Word, you will be free, but free from what?

You can be free from:

- The penalty of sin in a tormenting Hell and later in the Lake of Fire.
- The hopelessness of not having guidance and help from the Lord.
- The bondage one's sin has on a person.
- Making wrong relationships, decisions, and doing things you may regret the rest of your life.
- The uncontrollable demand to heed sinful temptations.
- Falsehoods that are taught or believed are often contrary to what God's Word commands. Believe and obey the Word of God, and you will have your eyes opened to the deceptions and dishonesties that are peddled as truth and fact. God can give much discernment to the believer, and it will change how he sees what is happening around him.
- A troubling, worrisome future with little hope.

It often is not an easy road to be untangled from sin's grasp and to follow God's will and way. There may be many failures, weak moments, and struggles, but the freedom one gains by following God's truths is worth it all!

"The appearance of religion only on Sunday often proves that it is only an appearance."

— Author Unknown

They Looked "Religious." They Acted Righteous.

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The Pharisees were a powerful, controlling, Jewish group that boasted about and led "spiritual" activities in Jesus' time. They were known for their separation from the scripturally "unclean" practices of the worldly Gentiles. Their roots came from the intellectual scribes that had much to do with understanding and preserving the Scriptures. At the time, if anyone were considered to be "godly" people, certainly it would have been the Pharisees.

However, Jesus had much to say against this sect. It was some of these “religious” people that opposed Jesus and tried to stop His preaching. This group taught contrary to what the Word of God taught. It was the Pharisees that led people in the wrong direction about spiritual matters.

John 8 tells much of what Jesus knew about this religious but unrighteous group, including:

- Their judgments and discernments were often determined by their weak flesh and not by God’s influence (John 8:15).
- They did not know God (John 8:19). Although this group was known for their wisdom of the Scriptures, Jesus knew that they were not of God. They did not even know the true God, and He was not their Father (John 8:44).
- Their garb and practices led people to believe they were religious, but Jesus knew that they were not of God but of the devil (John 8:23, 44).
- Their man-made “religion” would not save them. Unless the “religious” believed in Jesus alone, they would die in their sins (John 8:24).
- They did not realize that they were held captive by their sins. They were not spiritually free (John 8:31-37).
- The truth of God did not direct their lives (John 8:37). They were not obedient to the Word of God they had claimed to follow (John 8:37-39).

Today, we may not be controlled by the Pharisees, but we still have “religious” among us that are not righteous. Even if they are faithful in going to church, doing “spiritual” things, or even talk the “Christian talk,” they may be as spiritually dead as were the Pharisees.

God’s Word reveals that today’s “religious” errors are often the same as the Pharisees clung to and that Jesus rebuked. “Religion” does not save or change anyone! Only a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and trusting in God’s Word will change anyone — from the inside out!

“A religion that is small enough for our understanding is not great enough for our need.” — Balfour

What Is Not Salvation

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The Bible **DOES NOT** say that salvation can be gotten by:

- Doing many good works and earning one’s way to Heaven.
“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
- Believing there is a God and Jesus. Satan knows and has talked to both the Father and Son, and he is certainly not going to Heaven. Believing and knowing there is a God is not enough.
“Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:” Matthew 25:41
- Believing you are a good person and worthy of Heaven.
“As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:” Romans 3:10
- Obeying all the doctrines of a church, or even the Bible. Without Jesus as one’s Saviour they are just good deeds. Unless one receives Jesus as personal Saviour, all “religion” is in vain.

“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

“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

Matthew 7:22-23

- Being a member of any church or religion alone will not guarantee anyone Heaven.
“This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” Matthew 15:8-9
- Just having a saved mother, father, or a “grandfather that was a preacher.” The salvation of others cannot get anyone into Heaven. Salvation is a personal relationship with God. No one can get saved for us.