

*Are We Blinded **to** the Bible*

or

*Are We Blinded **by** the Bible?*

INTRODUCTION:

- 1 In 1984 Garland Elkins traveled to Chicago, Il. and taped the Donahue talk show. Brother Elkins was defending the truth against the attacks of the world. On this occasion elders in a local congregation in Oklahoma. were being sued because they withdrew from an erring member of the church.
 - a Donahue manipulated the audience, ridiculing the church, ridiculing the Lord who bought the church.
 - b Brother Elkins repeatedly quoted Scripture in his defense of the elders' actions. Over and over, Donahue would make sly comments about the quoting of the Bible.
 - c At the conclusion of the program a woman in the audience stood and made the following summarizing statement about Brother Elkins' defense, "**THESE FOLKS ARE BLINDED BY THE BIBLE.**"

- 2 The woman meant the comment in derision because of the number of passages sited by brother Elkins. However, in her comment which she meant to be degrading, she was actually paying him and us a high compliment.
 - a Brother Elkins did an excellent job as he defended what the Bible said about church discipline.
 - b One thing was apparent, the woman in the audience was aware that we depended upon the Bible.

- 3 The Bible has much to say about blindness and being blind. Jesus pointed out:
 - a Jesus spoke of those religious leaders who were blind: "**Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.**" (Mat 15:14). This rebuke was uttered in the context of the Pharisees who placed their traditions on the level, and even elevated them above, the word of God. In this case Jesus said it was possible to be blind spiritually and to lead others away into that same blindness.
 - b Again Jesus rebuked the Pharisees calling them blind: "**Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.**" (Mat 23:25-26).. In fact, five times in that discourse, Jesus called them blind. He was driving home the point that they had purposely blinded themselves to the word of God in favor of their traditions.
 - c When Jesus spoke and explained the parable of the sower, He pointed why these were blind: "**For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.**" (Mat 13:15). They were not blind because they had been predestined to be blind, or because they had not received their direct operation of the Holy Spirit (as some, even erring brethren contend), but they were blind because they had closed their own spiritual eyes!!!

- 4 Peter spoke of those who had not been diligent in adding to their initial faith, calling them blind also: "**But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.**" (2 Pet 1:9). These had closed their eyes in his day, much as those had chosen to close their eyes in Jesus' day.

- 5 Paul revealed the source of this blindness as he wrote to his brethren in Corinth: "**But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.**" (2 Cor 4:3-4). Through his deceit, deception, craftiness and guile, the devil had caused the gospel to be hidden from the blind. Those who were blind had chosen to allow the gospel to be hidden due to the devil's trickery. There are those today who chose to allow the devil to blind them to the gospel.

- 6 The woman who make the statement in Chicago thought she was slandering members of the church, but in truth, she paid us a high compliment. The truth is, **the devil blinds us to the gospel**, but we are blinded **from the world by the gospel**.

I BLINDED TO THE BIBLE

The devil has many agencies which he uses to blind people to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

A He uses the **pleasures, power and prosperity** of this world in an effort to cause many to turn their eyes from the God of heaven to the “gods” of this world.

1 Creating a generation to think only of themselves, Satan has been highly successful. He has created a people who do not care about others, only of themselves. Their main aim is to have money, money, and more money! They want what they want, when they want it and the way they want it. Teaching this people to say, “I deserve it,” or “it is not fair that I do not have it,” Satan has molded the minds of young and old to have a disregard for authority in general, and God in particular.

2 Therefore, Sundays are meant to be days of rest and recreation to these people and they do not want God and His people “cramping their style.” Members of the church often fall into this trap. Some reason that since they must work hard Monday through Saturday to pay for all their “toys,” they have a right to rest and relax on Sunday.

3 Too often the Lord and His treasury go lacking because the “toys” get more and more expensive each day. People often fall into the trap and seem to never get out of it. The thing “they think” which is expandible is their contribution. However, these will learn the fatal lesson in judgment that the things of this world will dissolve, but their works will follow them. If we have been more mindful of ourselves here than of God, He will not be mindful of us on that day.

B Satan also uses **family, friends and foes** to blind the people of this world.

1 Family ties run deep, and often are never broken. Many people are lost and will be eternally separated from God because they allowed their family ties to override God’s word. Jesus said: ***“He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.” (Mat 10:37).*** If we place our family and their interests above God’s, we are not worthy to be followers of God. Jesus also said: ***“...Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.” (Mat 12:48-50).*** When our physical families are not members of the Lord’s church, we often become closer to our brethren in the Lord than we do our earthly families. This is because we have more in common with our brethren than with our families. When we place our earthly families above the Lord, we cease to be disciples of the Lord.

2 Our friends can cause us to be blinded also. We will overlook things which should not be overlooked if we are not careful. Paul wrote: ***“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.” (1 Cor 15:33).*** In the immediate context, he was warning against the false teaching concerning the resurrection in Corinth. However, the principle is eternal. We had better be careful who our friends are and what influence they are having upon our minds. Satan will use them to blind us to the gospel. We also had better be warned concerning our children’s friends. Parents have the God-given right to know who their friends are and where they are when they are out of their sight. Negligent parents often reap the whirlwind of destruction and despair because they do not keep watch on their children.

- 3 Our foes can cause us to become unbalanced if we are not careful. We can “ride hobby horses” on issues and fail to do good things which can cost us our souls, blinding us to our responsibilities. Our foes can also cause us to become afraid to speak out, blinding us from our duty as a watchman on the wall. We need to be speaking out against the error being taught from many pulpits. We need to be speaking out against the schools which are turning out liberals upon liberals. If we fail to speak we are allowing Satan to blind us to the gospel charge: *"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."* (Rom 16:17-18)!!

II BLINDED **BY** THE BIBLE

Is there a sense in which we are blinded **BY** the Bible? Yes, there is a sense in which those who read, heed and obey the Bible are blinded **from** certain things.

- A **WE ARE BLINDED BY THE BIBLE TO ATHEISM.** The very first verse will blind us to this error if we believe it: Genesis: *"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."* (Gen 1:1). Either God did or did not create the world. If we believe God created the world, this eliminates the other. The evidence is credible and clear that God DID create the entire world in six literal days. Thus one believe this is blinded to the doctrines of atheism and humanism.

1 *"For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."* (Exo 20:11)

2 *"Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee."* (Neh 9:6)

3 *"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."* (Psa 90:2)

- B **WE ARE BLINDED BY THE BIBLE TO THE ERROR OF DENOMINATIONALISM.** The Bible teaches that the church of Christ was the eternal purpose of God: *"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:"* (Eph 3:8-11). In the church we should see the manifold wisdom of God. Also we see the eternal purpose of God. If it was God’s eternal purpose to establish one church, why then does any member of the church have a problem with saying there is just the one God established? In fact, any member who has a problem with this idea needs to be converted again, if he or she was ever converted in the first place!!!

1 By studying the Old Testament one sees quickly the fact that God promised a savior (Gen 3:15).

a He promised to bless all families through Abraham’s line (Gen 12:1-3).

b He promised to build a kingdom through the line of David (2 Sam 7:11-15). He also promised deliverance in Jerusalem in the last days (Joel 2:28-32).

c God promised also to build His house in Jerusalem and that from there, His law would go to all nations (Isa 2:2-3).

d Through the prophet Daniel, God promised this would come in the days of the Rome kings (Dan 2:44-45).

e When we read Acts chapter two we read the fulfillment of all this prophecy which happened **AT ONE TIME!!!!**

2 **For anyone to assert the idea that God is pleased with even two churches is to insult the very nature of God!** If God said one - He did not mean two! Reading and understanding the Bible will blind me to the idea that denominationalism could be right in any sense!!

C **WE ARE BLINDED BY THE BIBLE TO THE IDEA OF NOT MARKING FALSE TEACHERS AND FALSE CONGREGATIONS.**

1 The Bible commands us to mark them and avoid them:

a *"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." (Rom 16:17-18)*

b We are commanded to try the spirits: *"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1)*

c Ephesus was commended by God for trying the spirits: *"I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:" (Rev 2:2)*

2 If they are part of a congregation which will not mark themselves, the leadership is to be marked. Those who remain in that congregation and support that leadership are guilty of 2 John 9-11: *"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."* We need to be blinded by the Bible and not turn to the right or left in this matter either. We need to mark and avoid as we are commanded to do.

D **WE ARE BLINDED BY THE BIBLE TO THE PULL AND PRESSURE OF FOLLOWING THE WORLD.**

1 We are told in the Bible of the love of God (John 3:16; Rom 5:8)

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)....."But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom 5:8)....."We love him, because he first loved us." (1 John 4:19)

2 We are told of the sacrifice of Christ (Phil 2:6-8)

"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil 2:6-8)

- 3 We are also warned against the following the world (James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17). We are told if we love the world we can not love God.
"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." (James 4:4)....."Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." (1 John 2:15-17)
- 4 So, these facts and warnings ought to blind us to looking at the world with eager eyes. We need to always understand the world is lost and if we desire to be saved, we must avoid its temptations. The Bible blinds us to these pulls.

CONCLUSION:

- 1 The woman who made that statement 26 years ago really did not understand the great compliment she paid to faithful members of the church.
- 2 May we always read and apply our Bibles, so we can remain blinded by its principles and precepts to Satan and his allurements.
- 3 May we have the courage and compassion to apply its healing salve to those who will listen and open their eyes!!