



May 9, 2010

If There Was A Test

Is studying the word of God a joy or a Sunday morning anxiety attack? Life is busy and we don't always take the time to enjoy things we have at our disposal. Is daily Bible reading something you look forward to and enjoy. Is the Bible a book we desire to spend more time with, or an interruption of the novels and television programs one indulges in. Hosea stated, "...**my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...**" (**Hos 4.6**). If there was a test would you study to get into heaven? Guess what! There is a test. It's called life. When we look at the things we do daily how much of our time does God get. Do we question why we should study things that don't appear to relate to our lives? Do you understand what really relates to our life? Do we understand how God's word should be a part of that? These are all questions we encounter from time to time and for those who recognize the value of Bible Study, it might leave us speechless for as we present the reasons why it is valuable. The religious world around us, I believe, recognizes the difficulty for those who are not familiar with the scriptures to understand their significance. This is especially true of the Old Testament. There are even some in the Lord's church who do not understand the significance of the Old Testament scriptures as the foundation of the New Testament. To counter this there are religious groups who have tried to make God's word more "relevant" by providing services and resources that don't really have anything to do with learning about God's word. As an aside to these activities a small degree of scripture or moral lesson might be offered. I have seen this done. There are times when I have come away from denominational services wondering just what it was about God's word that anyone learned. Good stories were shared. Object lessons presented that stressed the moral principal but the depth of God's word was never used. There are a lot of folks in the United States who don't realize that many innovations in technology and social changes are a product of the wars that have been fought in the past 150 years. There are a great many who don't understand the history of the founding of the nation and can be misled by thinkers who work various political and legal agendas for their own benefit. The same is true of the Bible. If we don't have any idea of why things are stated or done in certain ways in the new Testament it may be because we don't have a good grasp of the gospel as a whole. We may be led to believe that certain elements of the Old Law have been incorporated into the Gospel and therefore are binding. A great deal of error and false doctrine is based on the conclusions of individuals who did not understand the scriptures. This has led to confusion in the religious world and tarnishes the reputation of all religious bodies. The Lord's church gets lumped in with the rest of these organizations. Error has its roots in ignorance. Ignorance becomes incorporated into personal beliefs and those turn into practice. Over time practice becomes influence. Influence leads others to follow one's ideas. If one is wrong, those who follow them will be wrong as well. This also leads to another problem. As we are influenced by those who do not know, we form social bonds. Emotional ties are strong and difficult to counter. Some people, when presented with the truth, recognize it for what it is, but, out of a sense of loyalty, will not abandon those they have come to regard highly. This is why James states, "**My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.**" (**Jas 3.1**). Paul warned the Galatians of the influence of others and not to accept anything other than what was revealed. "**But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.**" (**Gal 1.8**). Christ realized that his word would create problems. "**Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.**" (**Matt 10.34**). Have we studied enough to know the difference, and if there was a test today, how would you do? Can we tell when someone is speaking truth. Do we recognize that truth exists?

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