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Can You Tell The Difference

The current climate of religious diversity breeds not only choice in spiritual convictions but also leads to confusion. There are many who do not know what to believe and are content to pursue their lives without a real commitment to anything. Others are convinced that what they believe is right and hold to their opinions, even when the Bible contradicts their system of belief. Abraham lived during a time when mankind worshipped a host of deities of human invention. Surrounded by pagan worship and practices it would have been difficult to decide what to do. Then God spoke to him. ***“Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”*** (Gen 12.1-3). No doubt there were others in the world Abraham lived in who claimed to speak to their gods and received divine guidance. When God spoke to him, however, Abraham did as the Lord instructed and left his home and family for the land God directed him to. Many today will point to their personal experience of how God has communicated with them through various means, and, although their claims stand in opposition to what the word states, continue in their beliefs. The interesting thing is that Abraham realized there was a difference between what happened to him and the claims of others. He had the word of God spoken to him. He was given a command and when he obeyed continued in a close relationship with God. In the New Testament we read of Simon the Sorcerer who “bewitched” the people with his actions so that they thought he was some great one. (Acts 8.9). The people of Samaria heard the preaching of Philip and were baptized having seen the things which he did to confirm the truth of his statements. (Acts 8.12). The message preached was so different from what had been presented before that even Simon took note and obeyed as well.

(Acts 8.13). The Samaritans had been fooled by Simon’s deceptions but recognized the difference in Philip’s preaching and actions. This teaches an important lesson. When those who have been misled religiously come into contact with the Gospel, taught in its entirety and faithfully, they often see a difference. When the Gospel is presented in the way that God intended it is not hard to dispel the errors that abound in religious teaching and thinking. The Bible, the power of God unto salvation (Rom 1.16) is unique in its statements and while others may argue against the facts contained in scripture, it is not hard to introduce them to things which they have never heard, or have not heard in their proper context. Confusion results when we reject what the word has to say and hold on to things which are not supported by scripture. The experience of Abraham and Simon teaches us that when the truth is presented, it stands out from anything else. When we open our minds to what God has to say, we find that there may be quite a few areas that we were not clear on, or, had accepted things which are not found in inspired scripture. It is amazing to some to find that teachings such as salvation through the sinners prayer and other things are not backed up in the Biblical text. Some are surprised and sometimes shocked when they find that beliefs they have held for years are not in harmony with what God has to say. Abraham believed God, obeyed and was counted as faithful (Heb 11.8, Rom 4.3). The faithful, whose lives are recorded in scripture, saw the difference when they encountered the word of God. Today we make an appeal to anyone who will listen, to pay attention to God’s word and only that. Outside of the inspired word there is only confusion and indecision that will eventually cause us to be lost.

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