



"And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also." 1 John 4: 21

Sunday – April 7, 2013

Heart to Heart...

Today there are more than 600 different religious groups in America alone! That's astounding. Each claims their allegiance to the Lord and believe in what they teach. Why are there so many different religions, with so many varied teachings and just one Bible? We see the heading: "*Attend the church of your choice!*" Whatever appeals to your flavor, it's out there. Why? Let's look at the only reason: the devil! Listen to Paul's warnings to the church: "*So that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.*" (II Corinthians 2:11) "*Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.*" (Ephesians 6:11) "*But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.*" (II Corinthians 11:3)

The devil is a schemer! His greatest scheme is to create diversity and confusion in the religious world so that people cannot easily see the truth. In the process of his schemes, he adds secondary teachings that aren't found in the word but makes them look as if they are from God. For instance, we just came through a time where the majority of the world celebrated Easter Sunday. It sounds innocent on the surface. Millions follow this one Sunday a year in celebrating the resurrected Christ. Was that part of the teachings of Christ Jesus which He received from His Father? When one looks it up, you find there is no celebration of Easter found in Scripture. It actually came from an Anglo-Saxon goddess that sacrifices were made to in the spring of each year upon the arrival of spring. It was tied to the resurrection to make it acceptable some 350 years after the resurrected Christ by a newly organized denomination. Was that a brilliant scheme by the devil? Every Biblical scholar (and even some encyclopedias) say Easter has no roots in Scripture yet everyone treats it as holy, with pageants, performances and special music in worship as if the Lord had ordained it and called us to it. It upsets people when you speak against it but that's just what the devil would want. The first century Christian's celebrated the resurrected Christ each first day of the week in the Lord's Supper! (We see this same path followed with Christmas tying it to the birth of Jesus.)

Paul warned the church: "*See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.*" (Colossians 2:8) It's too easy to be taken captive! If it isn't according to Christ, it needs to be rejected, no matter what people think or feel about it. The devil is working to create things to look good and acceptable and doesn't mind God being praised if it's not true! That's it, give God praise for falsehood! "*But the resurrected Christ isn't falsehood!*" someone would say. That's true and we proclaim His resurrection each first day of the week through His Supper in remembrance of Him, not once a year. That's what God calls us to. The only way for us to make certain that we follow and maintain the truth is listening for the truth as presented solely in the word of God. You need to be asking, "*Where does God's word teach this?*" The devil is a schemer and people don't seem bothered by any of this.

The devil adds this idea and that idea, springing up denominations called non-denominations with new twists and turns, appealing to the multitudes and making things entertaining in a society steeped in entertainment. Creeds are put in place. Performances are the focal point and enhanced. (Makes one wonder how they worked all this out when the saints in the first century had to meet secretly in the catacombs for their worship?) In the process, the purity of the word, the simplicity of gospel and truth get blurred to where people no longer question anything, they just blindly accept. People never ask, "*Is this of the truth of God's word?*" The devil smiles while people blindly follow. No wonder Jesus said there would be few that would find the way to life (Matthew 7:13-14). There doesn't seem to be much seeking and knocking! The question for you is: are you concerned about the truth? Think about it!!!

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