

INTRODUCTION

ALL WE LIKE SHEEP HAVE GONE ASTRAY

When the Lord Jesus Christ showed up the first time His “Bible-believing”, Bible-preaching, soul-winning, praying, tithing, fasting, sabbath-keeping followers not only *did not recognize* Him, they despised and rejected His teachings and chose Barabbas over Him. The most common rebuke the Lord gave His people concerned their inexcusable ignorance of the word of God: “Ye do err not knowing the scriptures...Have ye not read...Is it not written...” Even well-known preachers of the Bible went to hell (**Mt 23:33; Jn 8:44**) and were rebuked for not understanding salvation and the new birth (**Jn 3:10; Mt 23:15**). I put *Bible-believing* in quotes because of the undeniable fact that the Lord wasn’t crucified by Bible believers who went by what His Bible said; He was crucified by theologians who went by what *other books* said the Bible meant.

According to Ecclesiastes 1 history repeats itself. Therefore, if the Word of God were to return today most of His born-again, “Bible-believing”, Bible-preaching, soul-winning, praying, tithing, fasting, Saturday- or Sunday-keeping followers not only would not recognize Him, they would despise and reject His doctrine and choose the Antichrist and his doctrine over Him while believing they were doing God a service. And when He rebuked them by quoting what the Bible says, they would tritely respond with, “I think that’s just your interpretation...I don’t think that applies today...Most modern translations have a different reading...I don’t think that was meant to be taken literally...That’s not what my church teaches...I think you’re majoring on the minors”, and other assorted sophistry intended to dodge Scripture because conforming to the Bible has been replaced with conforming to church tradition (“doctrine”). Even today’s well-known preachers of the Bible do not know what salvation is and do not understand the new birth because the church once again is relying on worldly wisdom and Reason by exalting theology while rendering lip service to Bible study and the inspired literal word of God.

This book is intended to be a wake-up call for those who believe what the Bible says. It is meant to introduce them to the fact that, just as Eve was deceived by the subtlety of Satan, they, too, just may be tradition-bound, Bible-rejecting, blind followers of men who know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. It is hoped they will get a glimpse of the sad fact that while they are piously teaching new Christians not to smoke or to use “the f word”, they are unknowingly rejecting the *authority* of God and are in danger of going to hell. And when I say that, I am not just speaking to those unskillful in the word of righteousness. Neither am I merely including the proud old but generally liberal mainline denominations such as the Episcopalians, Lutherans, Methodists, and Presbyterians. I am also addressing those denominations, independent or not, that generally consider themselves to be champions of “orthodoxy” and “fundamentalism” such as the Assemblies of God, Baptists, Churches of Christ, and today’s popular nondenominational mega churches. And, lest anyone think I’m favoring some cult, I include in that group the Roman Catholic, Mormon, Jehovah’s Witness, and Seventh-Day Adventist churches. If I’ve left any group out please be assured that I believe that just as it was during the time of the First Coming so it is today: *To be affiliated with any denomination is to be linked with apostasy*. (My definition of *cult*: Any religion that allows or encourages people to think something within the organization – such as a book, a person, or a committee – has doctrinal authority equal to or greater than the Holy Bible.)

I hope to help those individuals who are trying to ensure that their relationship with Jesus Christ is in accordance with the Bible – not tradition – because they know that the Word of God and the word of God are inseparable. Many people, however, will read this book just to see if I agree with their pet doctrine(s) or not. Today many Christians, when looking for a Bible study, are not humbly looking for something that will train them up in the way they should go by teaching them the hard truths of God; they are smugly looking for something that will tickle their ears by assuring them that, in spite of their appalling ignorance of the word of God, they are somehow already on the path of righteousness. They want to *read*, not *study*; and they want to *agree*, not *learn*. In other words, they prefer to waste their time with “Bible studies” they *don’t need because they already know and agree with everything in them!* Those people are already offended by this introduction and will not like this book because they prefer books that make them feel good about themselves – not books that show them to be part of the modern Babylonian captivity. Immature Christians will ignore the major and damning tenets of this book that show the church and its doctrines to be corrupt. They will do so by taking offense at trivial things I may say along the way that they disagree with – *but that do not affect their Christian walk in any way!* In other words, because they cannot deal with the major and far-reaching reasons this book was written, they’ll strain at gnats, swallow camels, quit studying, and go find something less challenging. Keep that in mind as you read this book because it is not for babes in Christ; this is a meaty Bible study written for soldiers; the gloves are off. It’s time for some Swordplay; for as iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. There is too much pabulum in the pulpits, which has turned men into panty-waisted, effeminate, supercilious little sissies whose “Christian” world is so far removed from the fight that it’s no longer sticks and stones that hurt – it’s words! That’s what lip service does.

The Lord is a man of war (**Ex 15:3**). He wants us to be men of war (**Ju 3:1,2; Ps 144:1; 1 Ti 6:12**). Sadly, we’re having trouble producing *men* let alone *warriors*. The modern church has filled our ranks with medics and psychologists whose carnal preoccupation with social acceptance has made “Christianity” unappealing to and even hostile towards warriors. Being for men of war, this book is very direct; you’ll have no trouble knowing what I’m saying. **My directness will offend those modern Christians who do not understand war and what is needed to participate in war.** I say again: Modern Christians understand neither war nor the total involvement needed to successfully participate in war.

This is written for those who look at the slickly-packaged modern Christianity around them and quietly wonder if they’re *really* serving the Lord – because there are still a few good Christians who wonder if their church (with plenty of fine people in it!) really is on the right path or if it, too, has been leavened in these dark last days. They realize churches today are mainly successful because they get hold of unsaved people ignorant of the Scriptures, pump them full of traditional denominational explanations for the same verses that, amazingly enough, are also used to support the different doctrines of other denominations. Now loaded with leaven, the new converts accept the fervent assurances that they are lucky to have ended up in the one denomination that has escaped apostasy, and are quickly sent out to make more converts. Most converts enjoy the fellowship, are proud of their new knowledge of the Bible, are grateful to their denomination, and become passionately loyal to it while thinking loyalty to their denomination is the same as loyalty to Christ and His Scriptures. The soldier has

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probably been through those stages. He will be intrigued with this book. But he will also want to cautiously ensure that no well-meaning but deluded nut is going to get him to stray from the Bible, so he will spend a lot more time in the Bible than in this book in order to see if these things be so. He has seen enough to know that all denominations claim to go by the Bible, and that even his own is filled with many people who could easily be duped because they are ignorant and unmotivated. He finds it vaguely troubling that so many Christians who know nothing of the Bible and who couldn't care less seem to be an acceptable part of the church. He is motivated by Christ and therefore is humble and honest enough with himself and with God to quietly wonder if all is well with his soul. If he is an ignorant dupe he knows how to find out, and the Comforter and the Bible are all he needs because he knows that no matter what the doctrine is, if it is not in the Bible it did not come from God.

This book is not going to waste your time going over a bunch of stuff you already know. There will be no automatic chorus of amens! as you go through this because it will show you that some of your most basic, fundamental, unquestioned beliefs are just plain wrong. When you complete this Bible study you will have a mature understanding of God, world history, the Bible, doctrine, and Christianity. If you are a mature Christian and think you already have a sufficient grasp of doctrine, the historical section will show you why the doctrinal section is so important and necessary to your understanding of modern Christian apostasy. It will become evident as you go through this book why it is intended for mature Christians; it calls for a slow, methodical, disciplined pace because the meat of this work is the referenced Scripture, not what I've written. I cannot and should not convince you of anything; that's what the Bible is supposed to do. I do not expect you to go through this material once or twice and agree with everything in it. I do expect those of you who accept the authority of the Bible to be stunned. The consistency of this stuff and how well it fits with and explains other things in the Bible will not be what stuns you; it will be what makes you think there just might be something to this book. You will be stunned because you will begin to glimpse the shocking condition of the body of Christ if even *half* this stuff is true. You will stop wondering how Satan will someday deceive the church and will see that he has already done so. You will begin to see that we're not entering the dark last days of apostasy; we've been in them for at least a thousand years. As you read *The Age of Reason* you must gird your loins by realizing the following: Any book that really does expose apostasy in the modern church and really does teach correct doctrine *is going to be offensive to Reason and Tradition*: It will *not* be widely received and acclaimed. And it *cannot* reveal the truth to you unless you treat it as a Bible study. I say again: A commercially-successful book or an hour-long sermon or videotape cannot teach the truth about Christianity; the truth has never been that popular, that simple, or that easy. Apostasy can only be revealed by serious Bible study – which is why most Christians will remain apostate. Therefore, do not assume *The Age of Reason* is wrong just because it challenges some of your most cherished and fundamental beliefs; *it is going to do just that!*

You will begin to feel overwhelmed, insignificant, and helpless as the massive, all-encompassing spread of leaven becomes more apparent. You will also see how frustrating it is trying to converse with other Christians about any of these topics. That is why I wrote this book; I had to go back to the beginning and walk you through this stuff step by step so you could see that each step is sound. If you take the time to search the Scriptures and verify that each step is sound, you will find at the end of the journey that you have reached a conclusion that is horrifying, inescapable, exhilarating, and challenging. *Horrifying* because the gates of hell have done much to make evil good and good evil. *Inescapable* because the Scriptures actually say it and you believe them. *Exhilarating* because you are beginning to see the truth that has been buried for so long by tradition, and because you are delighted that the Lord has brought you to the point where you are a rarity because you can by faith accept completely what He says – you really are His follower, His disciple, His friend. And *challenging* because there is much to be done in your life and in the church. There really is a war going on over doctrine and you must gird up your loins and give your life to the church as Christ did for you.

It took me years to learn, understand, accept, and act on these Scriptural truths. It was a growth process. I pray it won't take you as long as it did me. Daily Bible study is not an option; it is a requirement. (Half of you just fell by the wayside.) The far-reaching scope of this book makes it seem complex at first. It's not. Just verify each step *as you take it* so you can build on it. Do not forget it and do not fail to apply it. You will see how consistent God is, as well as how society got off track.

My overall purpose is to help and encourage Christians to believe and act on the words in the Bible, because they are the actual words God chose to be on paper, and because *a person's relationship with the Bible is an exact picture of his relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ*. Most Christians already think they have a great relationship with Christ and are already on the road of truth. I believe they are wrong. So, tell the Lord you want to know His will so you can properly serve Him, ask Him to help you with His word and to keep you from error, and thank Him for the rewarding fellowship you experience when studying His word, and may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.