

Preparing Souls To Serve The Lord

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Taking Away The Of Knowledge

By

Jackie M. Stearsman

Some teaching is neither profitable to man nor honorable to God. Blind teachers will not be able to lead those who are determined to walk in the light. Some have destroyed their capacity for insight due to willful disobedience. Such actions are not the innocent deeds of a child. They are serious and bring the wrath of God upon those who so conduct themselves.

The Fact Stated

Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered (Luke 11:52).

Without key-knowledge we will not understand the purpose of the Bible. Without key-knowledge we will not understand the Christ. Without key-knowledge we will not understand the church of Christ or the kingdom of Christ. Without key-knowledge we will not under-

stand the government of the Christ. Without key-knowledge we will not understand how we are to worship in spirit and in truth. Taking away the key of knowledge is among the greatest mistakes people can make.

Some think they hold the key to knowledge but in reality they do not. It is not easy for these to learn.

Jesus was confronted by them in the context of our study. They came to him with this objection: *Then answered*

Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel: for the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land (Hosea 4:1). ♦♦ My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children (Hosea 4:6). ♦♦ For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings (Hosea 6:6). ♦♦ And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient (Rom. 1:28). ♦♦ For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge (Rom. 10:2). ♦♦ Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame (I Cor. 15:34). ♦♦ Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ (II Cor. 10:5).

one of the lawyers, and said unto him, Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also (Luke 11:45).

Their Method Appraised

In this connection there are three ways in which the lawyers had kept the people from the truth. (1) They burdened them with man-made traditions that were so stressful that the people became weary of it or were blinded to the true knowledge of God in the Old Testament. (2) They feigned devotion to the prophets of the past but had no problem with disobeying the prophets message to them. (3) They were rejecting the true prophets that were being sent to them in their own day. When people do these things they take away the key of knowledge. It happened in the days of Christ and it is happening today.

1. Man-made Burdens

And he said, Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye

lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers (Luke 11:46). Read carefully Matthew 23, 15, and Mark 7 for some insight to the burdens man-made traditions bound upon them.

Man-made religion is a great stumbling block to the key of knowledge. It confuses the masses. It provides false security to the gullible. It is viewed by many as more important than what the Bible teaches. Man-made religion destroys the key of knowledge.

2. Feigned

Respect for Prophets

Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres (Luke 11:47-48). Such hypocrisy is not an uncommon commodity among false teachers today. They like to "honor" the great "restoration leaders" of days past. Their writings will often cite them as being examples of their own devotion to the truth. However, careful evaluation will show that at times these twist and pervert what the truth-seeking men of the past wrote or proposed.

Men of the past were not perfect. A diligent student of history may provide one with "justification" for most any false doctrine one desires by citing someone in "the movement" (assuming that citing a restoration leader proves it). The sad thing is that many elders and

preachers do not know that they have had the key of knowledge taken from them. They are bold in echoing worn out errors of denominationalism as if they were new insights from above. Many of the would be leaders of the movement today are advocating the very doctrinal errors that were opposed by faithful men in the past.

3. Reject

Truth Bearing Brethren

Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation (Luke 11:49-51).

Jesus sent New Testament Prophets and Apostles to the people following His death. They did not heed their teaching. They did to them as their fathers had done to the Prophets in their day. As a nation of people they were unique in that they, more than any others, rejected the truth brought to them by the prophets. Their fate as a nation is well known to students of the Bible. It happened to them as the Lord foretold.

Take away the key of knowledge and we will see the wrath of God ourselves.

4. Warnings

There are those about us that are taking away the key of

knowledge. Let us resist their every proposal. I challenge us all to never forget the following: (a) There can be no devotion to the Christ without devotion to the Word of the Christ. (b) There can be no respect for the Christ without at the same time respecting the church of Christ which he purchased with his own blood. He purchased no religious denomination. (c) There can be no true worship of the Father unless it be in spirit and in truth. Man-made systems of religious services are not authorized by the Bible. (d) There can be no respect for the Christ without respect for the government of the Christ. Those respecting His government will pay close attention to the least of His commandments and will teach men so (Matt. 5:17-20). (e) There can be no durable building that is build upon the sand. Hearing His words and doing them is to build upon the rock (Matt. 7:21-28).

Conclusion

We are not losing faith and confidence because some have taken away the key of knowledge. We are surprised that some do not recognize what is being done or that they are the very ones that are doing what the Lord condemned in the

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Editor: Jackie M. Stearsman

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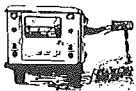
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TRAINING PREACHERS SINCE 1969

lawyers of His day.

Paul provides us with wisdom when he wrote the Corinthians. What they needed to know then we need to remember today. *For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you* (I Cor. 11:19). There are heresies about us and they will expose the substance of our make up. Some of us will prove to be wood, hay and stubble, and some will be prove to be gold, silver or precious stone. The trials of fire will consume us or mold us (I Cor. 3:11-18).

Has the key of knowledge been removed from you? Would you know it if it had? How do you know that it has not?



Did You Know?

Bruce and Lisa Harris are the proud parents of a new addition to the family. **Bethany Michelle Harris** arrived November 15, 1992 weighing 8 pounds and 10.5 oz.



Bruce graduated from the *Florida School of Preaching* in 1982. He is now preaching for the church in Garden City, Michigan. Their address is:

M/M Bruce Harris
29511 Bock
Garden City, MI 48135.

Congratulation to the Harris family and thanks for letting us know.



December 18, 1992

South Seminole
Church of Christ
5410 Lake Howell Road
Winter Park, Florida

Dear Jackie,

First of all we want to express our thanks to you for the very able assistance you furnished South Seminole while we were waiting for our pulpit minister.

Beginning in January 1993, we will be supporting the school in the amount of \$75.00 per month.

May God continue to bless you and the school as you labor for His cause.

In His service,
/s/ Jere Trotter
For the elders

Editorial by
Billy R. Davidson

"A very interesting item recently appeared in the **CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE**, a newspaper published by our brethren. It is entitled **FIRST PRAYER** and is datelined Malibu, Calif.

It is as follows: 'D' Esta Love, dean of students at Pepperdine University, gave the first prayer by a woman in a convocation ceremony on Aug. 31. According to the Graphic, Pepperdine's student newspaper, the university decided earlier this year to utilize women fully in all the institution's public assemblies.' Are you shocked at this obvious violation of such passages as I Cor. 14:34-35 and I Tim. 2:11-12? Well, no more so than another 'Christian college' hiring as editor of their student newspaper a Methodist preacher! Sunday night in our lesson we warned of dangers of drifting. In some instances we are not just drifting, we are running full-speed ahead into the bear-hug of the devil and denominationalism! When will some brethren wake up!" [*The Challenge* (Dec. 13, 1992), bulletin from the Central Church of Christ in Clearwater. Brother Davidson preaches there and is on the faculty of the *Florida School of Preaching*.]

THE SECOND INCARNATION: A PATTERN FOR APOSTASY

By Curtis A. Cates; Foreword by Garland Elkins

This review of the "Second Incarnation" by Curtis A. Cates is reminiscent of the "Review of Jeter" by Moses E. Lard in its penetrating analyses and thoroughness of exposure of the absurd tenets of this deliberate attempt to lead the saints astray. It is a total exposure of the doctrines the "Second Incarnation" advances. I commend it unreservedly.

Guy N. Woods

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THE SECOND INCARNATION**

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Memphis, Tn 38115 (\$3.50 plus \$1.00 Post. & Hand.)**

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Check Classes Desired

Hours	Course	Instructor	Credit
Monday ___ 8:30 to 12:00 ___ 1:00 to 4:30	Acts 12318 Introduction to N. T. 22321	Davis Burgett	3 3
Tuesday ___ 8:30 to 12:00 ___ 1:00 to 4:30 ___ 7:00 to 9:30 p.m.	Greek 22323 Restoration History 22342 Psalms 31368	Stearsman Stilwell Blackman	3 3 2½
Wednesday ___ 8:30 to 12:00 ___ 1:00 to 4:30	Wisdom Literature 22348 Principles of Speech 22302	Stearsman Franklin	3 3
Thursday ___ 8:30 to 12:00 ___ 1:00 to 4:30	Christian Ethics 32385 Gospel of John 22327	Stearsman Davidson	3 3
Friday ___ 8:30 to 12:00 ___ 1:00 to 4:30	Old Testament History 22339 Educational Program 12330	Stearsman Franklin	3 3

FLORIDA SCHOOL OF PREACHING

1807 SOUTH FLORIDA AVENUE
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DIRECTOR: Jackie M. Stearsman
 Phone (813) 683-4043

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