

Ministerial Misleading

People Are Being Misled by Their Ministers
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I do not know why, but I am constantly amazed at how little the American people seem to know about what the Bible says. Perhaps it's because I am spoiled by having been educated spiritually in the Church of God. But yesterday I received a bit of unexpected confirmation from a local radio talk show host who talks to a wide variety of people all over the Charlotte Mecklenburg area and even beyond, because this is a 50,000 watt station and that signal carries pretty far.

I do not know exactly where this man came from. I know that he's been in Charlotte for a good many years now, but his statement was that even though we are in the midst of the Bible Belt, the people in this area are biblical illiterates. I said, *Yay!* to myself. I do not mean that I said *Yay!* because they are illiterates. I said *Yay!* because he agreed with me, and I think that you will, too. If you move around this area—it doesn't have to be restricted to this area; it could be in any area, I believe, in the United States—you are going to find that most of the people are biblical illiterates. They know somethings about the Bible, but they do not really know what it says.

This week I received some clarification on this, I believe—on why there is so much ignorance of the Bible—from two sources. I'll give you the answer right away, and that is because the people teaching them do not believe what the Bible clearly says, and thus they cannot teach their students to any higher level than what they themselves are at. That's what they should at least be doing.

The first article came from *The New York Times*, and it was by a man named Samuel G. Freedman. It was titled, "How Clergy Helped Same-Sex Marriage Laws Pass." The law in question in this article was the New York State law that was passed this past month in which New York State gave approval to same-sex "marriage." Mr. Friedman said in this article,

The passage of same-sex marriage in New York last month, just two years after its defeat here, attests to the concerted sustained efforts by liberal Christian and Jewish clergy to advocate for it in the language of faith to counter the language of morality.

They changed the argument, is what they did, and the ones that changed the argument were religious figures. Friedman went on to state that the public has an erroneous view of the battle being fought over the same-sex marriage issue. He said the real battle to influence politicians to vote one way or the other, he says, is really between the liberal and conservative religious groups. In other words, most politicians aren't really committed one way or the other. They could be persuaded. They have a tendency to be liberal, but when these liberal theologians come along, it agrees with their internal reasoning, and they fall for it. They do not know what the Bible says either.

Well, Friedman went on to interview Miss Taylor Swearingen, an ordained minister of both the Presbyterian and United Church of Christ denominations, and he says that she was at the crossroads of the debate on gay rights. She was right in there, fighting for them to have rights, see. When asked as to what part of the Bible persuaded her to enter the fight regarding homosexual and same-sex "marriage," she quoted Acts 10:15, which says, "What God has cleansed [or, made clean], you must not call common."

First of all, brethren, that verse has absolutely nothing whatever to do with gay rights or same-sex "marriage." It has everything to do with the then-held prejudice of the Jews against the Gentiles in terms of their being called into the church. She ripped her belief right out of the context, a context that had nothing to do with her issue. She based her belief and all of her very-successful efforts in behalf of these gross sins on the basis of an assumption, and the assumption was that God had cleansed—that is, absolved—homosexuality and same-sex "marriage" from being sin. God has done no such thing anywhere in His Word, but this lady is teaching people these things in the congregations that she serves in.

Friedman writes that she has "an instinct for equality." Do you know what "instinct for equality" means? Something born within, which the Bible would interpret as carnal—and "that this doesn't sit well with rigid dogma." The Bible is rigid: Homosexuality is a sin! Her desire for her brand of equality eventually overrode what the Bible clearly says. And it says, homosexuality is a sin and it must be repented of and forgiven, and *then* there is cleansing for that individual, not the sin itself. Big difference.

The second article is from NewsWithViews.com, written by attorney Timothy N. Baldwin, whose father is a nationally known, well-known theologian. The article concerned Christian submission to Romans 13. Basically, his premise is that Christians do not have to be submissive to a government that is unjust and cruel. That's an interesting twist. In other words, a Christian has a responsibility to work to overthrow that unjust government in favor of one that follows the judgments and the laws of God. That sounds good on the surface, but it also allows for a great deal of subjective interpretation by its advocates. As evidence, I present to you the French Revolution, where the revolutionaries became the murderers after they threw off the unjust royal government.

This is the subject that has a great deal of emotion attached to it, and especially at this time when we have a President so radically different in his political outlook from anything we've ever had in the past, that it's very easy to get caught up in a bad way—emotionally, I mean. But properly understanding Romans 13 ought to be a no-brainer for a converted person, if they believe what the Bible says. I'll give you a 1-2-3 progression here.

First, begin by thinking of Philippians 3:20, where it clearly tells us that the Christian's citizenship—a Christian's politics, if you will—is in heaven. Did Paul mean what he wrote? This is the crux of the issue. Or can we skirt around that? Did Peter mean what he wrote in I Peter 2, where he called us aliens and pilgrims, meaning that Christians are temporarily living in a land in which they are not citizens, and they are just passing through on their way elsewhere? Is this, too, a statement that is attractive window dressing?

Again, in I Peter 2:13, he said that Christians are to submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. You know what that "Lord's sake" means? It means to honor the Lord's submissiveness in doing the same things in his life that brings honor to Him. Again, did Peter really mean it? And if he did not, why did he then follow that up three or four verses later, when he said to individual servants—meaning slaves or anybody under another's employ—that they are to obey their masters, whether they are good and gentle, or on the other hand, harsh?

What about Jesus himself? He said in John 18:36 to Pilate, "My Kingdom is not of this world, and if My Kingdom *were* of this world, then My servants would fight." The picture is incredibly clear. God tells His children, "Don't fight against these harsh governments or you are fighting against Me." He is as much as saying, "I put them there. That was My choice for right now, and you have to live with it."

Let's add one more here, one that we do not quote very often. But in Daniel 4:17, Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar,

Daniel 4:17 'This decision is by the decree of the watchers, and the sentence by the word of the holy ones, in order that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to whomever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men.'

The King James says, "the basest of men."

So what is the Christian's position in the face of a harsh government? He just has to deal with it. Endure it. Endure the situations produced by bad rulers by means of understanding by faith that God is on His throne, and that He is aware of us. He is aware of what is going on, and in the greater society. And at this point in time, it is His will. He will permit them for the advancement of His greater purpose. So we know by faith, the situation is going to change, hopefully for the better. So we just patiently wait it out and allow Him to take care of us within it.

So where does people's ignorance come from? Well, they aren't studying themselves and they do not know, and their teachers aren't informing them properly either.