

MISTAKE 3

DO NOT BLINDLY FOLLOW ANY WELL-KNOWN BIBLE TEACHER OR BIBLE PROPHECY SPECIALIST

Over the years I've heard numerous times that what I have said or written contradicts what some well-known Bible teacher, or some Bible prophecy specialist, has stated. Unhappily, their criticism is put in such a way that their preferred mentor must be right. In other words, how dare you question what they say!

Sadly, when I ask them to consider the possibility that their favorite teacher may be wrong on this matter I'm often met with incredulity. Of course, they cannot be wrong.

When I appeal to the Scripture, or to undeniable evidence, many times it still does not make any difference. In sum, they blindly follow this person no matter what. This is beyond tragic.

Instead of uncritically taking whatever any Bible teacher says as "the truth," we should be like the Bereans. Note how they are described in the Book of Acts:

And the people of Berea were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica, and they listened eagerly to Paul's message. They searched the Scriptures day after day to see if Paul and Silas were teaching the truth (Acts 17:11 New Living Translation).

These individual searched the Word of God to discover if the teaching they heard matched what was written. We should always do the same.

In a similar manner, the Apostle Paul gave the following commandment about those who made prophetic utterances:

But test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good (1 Thessalonians 5:21 New Living Translation).

This is a good rule for each and every one of us. We are to weigh and evaluate what anyone says with respect to the Bible and what it teaches.

WE ALL HAVE BLIND SPOTS

Why should everything be checked out from Scripture?

Simply put, the nature of fallen humanity is that each of us has "blind spots." I love how John MacArthur explained it. It went something like this:

Of course, I have blind spots, but I don't know where they are, if I did they wouldn't be blind spots!

All of us should be able to say something like this. None of us has complete or perfect knowledge. That's why each and every Bible teacher should have their teachings weighed and evaluated.

MISTAKES COME IN TWO DIFFERENT CATEGORIES

Over the years, in discovering mistakes in the teaching of others, as well as my own mistakes that I have had to be clear up, I've noticed that they seem to come from two different directions.

OPTION 1 MISTAKES FROM WELL-MEANING PEOPLE

Most of the common mistakes that have been made, with respect to interpreting Scripture, have come from well-meaning people who have not gotten their information correct. Either they relied on something that someone else had said, or in their own study they have arrived at an interpretation that does not fit the facts.

This can come about by a number of ways. Sometimes the sources they are using are insufficient or outdated. Other times they have quoted a godly Bible teacher who had earlier made the mistake. Many times they have not checked with other godly Bible teachers who have a different view on the matter. Whatever the case may be, they are teaching or believing something that does not line up with Scripture.

All in all, these are well-meaning people who just don't know any better. When confronted with further evidence, many will indeed admit they had insufficient information on the subject and will immediately correct what they have said. This is certainly the proper way to approach the issue. I can personally testify that I have had to do this a number of times!

There is nothing to be ashamed about in admitting that we got it wrong. None of us know everything, hopefully we are all continuing to learn.

WE NEED TO BE TEACHABLE!

As we live our lives in anticipation of the coming of the Lord, and we study the Scriptures about the events surrounding His return, all of us need to be teachable.

In fact, Paul wrote about the qualifications of those in leadership in the church. They must be. . . “able to teach” (1 Timothy 3:2).

My good friend and world class Greek scholar, David Black, emphasizes that the word translated here “able to teach” can also mean “teachable.”

This applies to every believer in Jesus Christ. None of us “have arrived.” In other words, each of us should be teachable with respect to that which the Lord has revealed concerning the things to come.

May the Lord help each and every one of us learn the lesson to be teachable when it comes to understanding the truths of the biblical predictions of the “last days,” as well as how we should live in light of these truths.

To the point, when we discover mistakes in the teachings of well-meaning Bible teachers, we should always give them the benefit of the doubt. In other words, we should understand that they have taught certain things with the best of intentions with the knowledge that they currently possess. In other words, we should never doubt their godliness or sincerity.

OPTION 2 MISTAKES FROM FALSE TEACHERS

Sadly, there are other mistakes that are made by those who are not trying to correctly teach the Scripture. The Bible warns us about false teachers and false prophets:

But there were also false prophets in Israel, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will cleverly teach destructive heresies and even deny the Master who bought them. In this way, they will bring sudden destruction on themselves. Many will follow their evil teaching and shameful immorality. And because of these teachers, the way of truth will be slandered. In their greed they will make up clever lies to get hold of your money. But God condemned them long ago, and their destruction will not be delayed (2 Peter 2:1-3 NLT).

Do Not Blindly Follow Any Bible Teacher or Prophecy Specialist

Notice that, among other things, we are warned that these false teachers are after our money! We are advised to beware of them.

Whatever the case may be, whether mistakes come from well-meaning teachers, or from false teachers who do not care about the truth, the result is still the same: these mistakes need to be corrected.

It is important that we lovingly correct those who are teaching something that is not supported by Scripture. And if we are on the receiving end of correction, we should always remember the words that Paul wrote to the Galatians:

Have I now become your enemy because I am telling you the truth? (Galatians 4:16 NLT)

WE SHOULD HAVE A GENUINE CONCERN ABOUT PROPHECY SPECIALISTS

There is one more important thing that needs to be said. In the past, as well as today, there have been a number of people who become known as “prophecy specialists,” for lack of a better term. Basically their entire ministry is preaching, teaching and writing about last days Bible prophecy. While there is certainly nothing wrong in doing this, in and of itself, unfortunately it has become apparent that many of these high-profile teachers lack training in other fields of Bible knowledge.

In other words, some of the most important truths of the Christian faith are either never taught, or if they are taught it is with an insufficient biblical knowledge of the subject.

Therefore, it is crucial that those who desire to be high profile in this field pay close attention to the admonition of James:

Dear brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we who teach will be judged more strictly (James 3:1 NLT).

In sum, for those who are following these specialists, make sure that they have a correct understanding of what the Bible teaches on all of its major subjects. This includes the reliability of Scripture, the nature of God, the Person and work of Jesus Christ, and the Person and work of the Holy Spirit.

Without having a solid biblical understanding of these subjects, it is possible to fall into error. May each of us resolve to study the entirety of Scripture, not merely last days Bible prophecy.