

“But, I Didn’t Know!”

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from Bible Matters sources)

Introduction:

A. We live in a paradoxical modern world:

1. The Age of Information, where our technologies allow us to have information quickly and in quantity
2. Andrew Jackson, in 1817, fought the British in New Orleans despite the fact that the War of 1812 had ended two weeks earlier; the news of the treaty ending the war did not reach him until after the battle
3. Now we know what's going on in the Mideast, thousands of miles away, instantaneously
4. At the same time, ignorance has increased exponentially
5. Americans who do not know how many states there are in the United States, or who wrote the Declaration of Independence, etc.
6. We have fallen to 20th in the world educationally
7. Apparently the more knowledge is available, the less people seem to want to know

B. This is certainly true in spiritual matters

1. Biblical knowledge is at historic lows while at the same time the availability of Bibles and instructional materials are at the fingertips of every human on the planet
 - a. What people know, they get from the entertainment and news media and from cotton candy preachers like Joel Osteen and Max Lucado
2. Biblical ignorance is to be on the rise in some churches, too
3. It was said in earlier days that members of churches of Christ were "walking Bibles" or "people of the book"; can that be said now?

I. WHAT IT IS IGNORANCE?

A. Webster: "Want, absence or destitution of knowledge; the state of the mind which has not been instructed in arts, literature or science, or has not been informed of facts. Ignorance may be general, or limited to particular subjects."

1. The word is by definition "neutral," neither positive nor negative

B. Greek word: agnoia

1. Thayer: "lack of knowledge, ignorance, especially of divine things; of moral blindness; literally means 'no knowledge'"

C. There are two kinds of ignorance: unintentional and intentional

D. Unintentional ignorance

1. A person who, through no fault of his own, does not know something
2. A person who has never heard the Gospel

E. Intentional ignorance

1. A person who willfully chooses to either not know or believe differently
2. Eph. 4:18
3. Hopefully by the end of this lesson, we will not be ignorant of ignorance

II. WHAT DOES GOD SAY ABOUT IGNORANCE?

- A. Ignorance: Our former condition
 - 1. Acts 17:30; 1Tim. 1:13; 1Peter 1:14
 - 2. Those who have become Christians now know God and cannot be ignorant of His purposes
 - 3. We are to act in a way that demonstrates we no longer ignorant of God
- B. Ignorance: The State of Unbelievers
 - 1. Those who have not come to the knowledge of Jesus are still ignorant
 - 2. Repentance of ignorance is necessary, because ignorance is not an excuse, nor is it an acceptable substitute for salvation
 - 3. Ignorance-- especially intentional ignorance-- leads many to denigrate the faith; we silence them by doing good - 1Peter 2:15
 - 4. Their lack of knowledge endangers their soul - 2Thes. 1:6-9
- C. Ignorance: The State of False Teachers - Rom. 10:3; 2Peter 3:16
 - 1. Their intentional ignorance endangers their souls - Matt. 7:21-23
- D. When God's People are Ignorant - Hosea 4:1, 6
 - 1. Israel was "destroyed for a lack of knowledge"
 - 2. Therefore, they consulted wood and sought spiritual advice from their walking sticks - vs. 12
 - 3. They found that nothing filled the emptiness inside them
 - 4. Their wives and daughters fornicated with everyone that passed by
 - 5. Ignorance destroyed them; still think it's no big deal?!

III. WHAT IF WE CHOOSE IGNORANCE?

- A. God does not want His people to be ignorant; we were supposed to have left our days of ignorance behind when we obeyed the gospel
 - 1. We know that we must believe in and obey Christ-- but what else?
 - 2. Do we know enough to remain saved?
 - a. Matt. 4:1-11; 2Cor. 2:11; 1Peter 5:8
 - b. Do you know enough to deal with temptation? To answer misuse of scripture to avoid being misled?
 - 3. Do we know enough to evangelize? - 1Peter 3:15
- B. Ignorance has consequences
 - 1. If brethren are ignorant, Satan is able to use persuasive arguments through errorists to bring them under his yoke
 - 2. Throughout history, Biblical ignorance has directly led to apostasy, and has allowed apostasy to remain
 - 3. Is it the evangelist's job only to know the truth?
- C. Ignorance is always overcome by diligent study
 - 1. 2Tim. 2:15; Heb. 5:14
 - 2. Every one of us can reach this level of spirituality