

Harvesting the Fruit of Ignorance

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

A. Hosea 4:6

1. What is something everyone possesses, but no one can afford?
Ignorance
2. Ignorance of history dooms people to repeat tragic mistakes.

B. In religion, ignorance is even more catastrophic.

1. Survey of mainstream Protestants revealed that 49% of them believe in the Devil, but 56% believe in UFOs.
2. 29% believe in an eternal hell for all sinners, but 34% believe astrology.
3. After a poll, Gallup referred to America as a "nation of biblical illiterates."
 - a. Only 39% know that Jesus delivered the Sermon on the Mount.
 - b. 68% believe there are no moral absolutes
 - c. 71% cannot name the four Gospel accounts
4. Pop religion is a major contributor: "Christianity in modern America is, in large part, innocuous, ineffectual, inoffensive, and bland. It tends to be easy, upbeat, convenient, and compatible. It does not require self-sacrifice, discipline, humility, an otherworldly outlook, a zeal for souls, a fear as well as love of God. There is little guilt and no punishment, and the payoff in heaven is virtually certain." (Thomas Reeves, historian, University of Wisconsin)

I. GOD DOES NOT ACCEPT IGNORANCE AS AN EXCUSE FOR SIN

A. However well-meaning one may be.

1. Many intentionally avoid learning
 - a. "If I don't know how, I can't be required to do it."
 - b. "Ignorance is bliss."
 - c. "What you don't know can't hurt you."
2. Willful ignorance is intentional sin - Heb. 10:26

B. Some excuse sin, because "They didn't know any better."

1. This attempts to attribute something to God that man won't accept.
2. In court, ignorance of the law is not a defense of a crime
3. God's will has been taught in all of the world and remains consistent
 - a. He does not make exceptions for ignorance - Lev. 5:17-19
 - b. If ignorance of God's will is an excuse for sin, we do others a disservice when we teach them the gospel

4. The apostle Paul thought he was serving God by killing Christians - Acts 26:9

5. Whether they are aware of their sins or not, every single unforgiven sin will be punished - Nahum 1:3; Ez. 18:4; Col. 3:25

C. Everyone sins - Ecc. 7:20; Rom. 3:23, 6:23

1. American man with persistent sore throat goes to a doctor. He is diagnosed with throat cancer, treated, and survives.
2. An aborigine man with a sore throat goes to the village shaman. He is diagnosed with having an attack by an evil spirit and is treated with the sacrifice of a

chicken and a spirit dance. He grows worse and walks miles to an outstation where an unlicensed medical practitioner diagnoses him with a goiter, treats him with medical iodine, and sends him home. A few weeks later he died of throat cancer. The shaman and the unlicensed medical practitioner meant well, they were just ignorant. So, the aborigine should have lived because they were ignorant.

2. Sin is always terminal and Jesus has the only cure for it - John 14:5-6
 - a. John 8:24; Mark 16:15-16

II. IGNORANCE IS DANGEROUS FOR CHRISTIANS AND SINNERS

- A. Everyone is ignorant about something
 1. I can preach, make a garden, play golf, and cook, but I cannot sew, draw, understand electronics, or help someone who is sick
 2. A gifted engineer who doesn't know how to check the oil in his car
 3. A talented surgeon who cannot fry an egg
- B. No one fully understands everything written in the scriptures.
 1. I know a preacher who has memorized the entire New Testament, but he is a mess doctrinally
 2. The scriptures are written to teach us to discern God's will, but they have the miraculous quality of providing us with an endless supply of wisdom, meditations, learning, and wonder
 3. One must never be satisfied with his level of understanding.
- C. Our areas of ignorance leave us vulnerable to false teachers - Phil. 1:9-11
 1. We work to mature in knowledge and understanding - Eph. 4:11-15
 2. 1Thes. 5:21-22; Rom. 14:12, 16:19

III. IGNORANCE PREVENTS CHRISTIANS FROM SERVING GOD

- A. The most common excuses given by those who do not serve are:
 1. "I don't know enough to teach anyone else."
 2. "I might make a mistake."
 3. "What if they ask a question and I don't know the answer."
- B. We must overcome both our ignorance and our fear and teach
 1. 1John 3:14-15; Heb. 5:12
 2. God isn't making a suggestion. The faithful meet His expectations.
 3. Yes, He knows your limitations. He made you and your mouth.
- C. Failure to share the cure for sin is selfish and sinful - Mark 16:15

Conclusion:

A. "Nothing in the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity. The greatest enemy of knowledge is not ignorance, it is the illusion of knowledge. You are not entitled to your opinion. You are entitled to your informed opinion. No one is entitled to be ignorant." (Harlan Ellison)