

## **"Be Not Deceived ..."**

*"... evil companionships corrupt good morals. Awake to soberness righteously and sin not; for some have no knowledge of God. I speak this to move you to shame" (1 Cor. 15:33-34).*

A variety of Greek words are translated "deceiver" or be "deceived". Twice, in this letter, Paul warns of being deceived, the other instance is 1 Corinthians 6:9 where he warned, *"Be not deceived, neither fornicators ... shall inherit the kingdom of God."* In this instance the companionships we are to avoid are false teachers who would corrupt our standing with God. The most prominent use of this passage is to warn against companions who would lead us into sin through moral corruption, but our spirits can be corrupted just as can our moral character and teachers who deny the resurrection can have a pernicious effect on our hearts. After all, if there is no life beyond this one, then why not *"eat and drink for tomorrow we die"* (vs. 32)? The destructive influence of false teaching is likened to leaven (*"a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump"* — Gal. 5:9) and to gangrene. Paul warned of Hymenaeus and Philetus who taught the resurrection was past already and likened their words as a *"gangrene"* (2 Tim. 2:17).

Having sounded his warning against false teachers, Paul urged them to *"awake to soberness righteously and sin not, for some have no knowledge of God."* This is an exhortation to right, holy attitudes and living, which things would keep them from sin. Those who doubted or denied the resurrection had no knowledge of God. Paul embraces the Savior's words when He told the aristocratic Sadducees (who also denied the resurrection) *"ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God"* (Mt. 22:20). What a slap in the face to these who had formal, classical education and who had basic control of the temple, its religious orders and services! Yet, the scripture Jesus gave to prove the resurrection was familiar to the most humble scribe; God's revealing of himself to Moses and saying, *"I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob"* (Exodus 3:6). Jesus' commentary that *"God is not the God of the dead but of the living"* stunned His questioners into silence and won grudging admiration from other of His critics. It has often been true that men fail to see what is patently apparent. Certainly such was the case in this example Jesus gave. By it Jesus proved an ultimate resurrection by proving the continued existence of the soul of man.

To have no knowledge of God would include ignorance of His power. If Sadducees erred because they *"knew not the scriptures"* equally was their lack of perception of God's power, the things He is able to do. Their world moved no further than the natural and the bringing back to life of something

that had long been dead was impossible in their mind. They ignored that the world was not the result of natural events for before the world functioned there were no elements nor material to act in a "natural way"; matter was the result of unnatural events, creation by God's word!

Israel, in the wilderness, soon forgot how God demonstrated His power in times past: the preservation of their life versus the death of Egyptians' firstborn the night of that first Passover; the dividing of the sea; the opening of the earth to overwhelm those who contested God's choice of prophet and priest in Moses and Aaron. Israel conveniently forgot the daily provision of manna. We ask, "How could they have doubted their ultimate possession of Canaan through God's divine hand?" Yet, do we not likewise ignore God's power? We see the evidence of His power in the daily revolution of our Earth and in its yearly trek around the sun. We see this world and its design, yet forget the implication of design!

So Paul said, "*I speak this to move you to shame.*" Let us "*stand in awe and sin not ...*" (Ps. 4:4). Let us not forget "*The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmaments showeth his handiwork*" (Ps. 19:1). Shame on the Corinthians (and us) for doubting the small matter of raising the dead when compared to the creation of such a vast universe as ours!

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