

God Can Shine A Light On The Mirage Of Deception

Sunday PM 06/16/19

Introduction:

2 Corinthians 4.1-4 What is a mirage? Movies will sometimes show us a mirage. It is something we normally think of as being visual, something we see. It is an optical phenomenon by which reflected images of distant objects are seen; something illusory, without substance, or without a basis in reality. Actually, a mirage can be something we think is true but it is not true.

I) Bible Warnings

A) Many are walking on dark paths, *Proverbs 14.12*

1. Satan will try and get us to go down the wrong path using prejudice, we already prejudge something as right or wrong without listening to what God says.
 - a. Hate is another way, we despise without cause.
 - b. Traditions of men, ignorance, and deceit.
2. All of these things will cause us to be blind, *John 8.44, Luke 6.39*

B) The true path, *Psalms 119.105*

1. God's word will always lead us down the right pathway.
2. It is up to us to follow that path. *Jeremiah 6.16*
3. Why would they not go down the pathway of God and life?

- a. Required repentance, a turning away from idols to serve the living and true God.
- b. Required personal sacrifice- pleasures of sin as described in *Hebrews 11.24-26*

II) Saul of Tarsus

A) Persecuted the church,

1. Consented to the death of Stephen, *Acts 8.1*.
2. Imprisoned those who were confessing Christ, *Acts 9.1-2*
3. Bound Christians in chains, *Acts 22.4-5*
4. To the point of killing Christians, *Acts 26.9-11*

B) He was religious, *Philippians 3.5*

1. A Pharisee (a legalist), *Phil. 3.5*
2. He was zealous for the Law of Moses.

C) We might say he was blinded, deceived by the mirage of being religious without knowledge, *John 12.40, Matthew 13.16, Romans 10.1-3*

1. There is nothing so blinding as false religion, ignorance, misplaced zeal.
2. Can we related to Saul of Tarsus?

III) Can You Name Someone Like These Two Today?

A) Person 1

1. Persecuted the church? Probably not, some may be nasty, ridicule the Bible, etc.

2. Prejudice against the church? You might know some in this category.
3. A member of a denomination or other religious group such as Jewish, Islam, etc.
4. A person who adheres to their doctrine? Mormon's would probably fall into that category, some of our devoted religious neighbors.
5. Zealous and dedicated, they will go the extra mile.

B) Person 2

1. No religious conviction
2. Not a member of a denomination although they acknowledge the existence of God.
3. Ignorant of the Bible, very little scriptural knowledge. Don't know the difference in Genesis and Revelation; Old Testament vs. New Testament, etc.
4. Person 2 is pretty well apathetic toward religion.

C) Why are they like this?

1. Mirage of you are ok.
2. Both are more like than you might think.
3. They are satisfied, they see no danger.

IV) Things to Consider

A) The power of God's word, *Romans 1.16; Hebrews 4.12*

1. The greatest device we have of making the mirage go away is God's word.

2. Sincere people can be mis-lead too, *Acts 24.16*.
 - a. The persecutor and the apathetic person may both be sincere.
 - b. We should not give up on them.
 - c. We should always be examining our teaching, our attitudes, our conviction with the word of God, *2 Corinthians 13.5*.

B) Somebody had to go and teach Saul

1. Ananias may have had his misgivings but he did go, *Acts 9.10-15*
2. What should our attitude be toward the "unchurched" and the "church".

Conclusion:

We might be like Saul of Tarsus, if so, you have to be willing to see past the mirage of Satan. Some may be more apathetic but again you must understand that all is not well if your soul is not right with God. Don't let Satan pull the wool over your eyes. Obey the Gospel today. Be the one exposing the mirage of Satan.