

Bewitched

Paul states in Galatians 4:16, "Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth." The churches in Galatia had allowed themselves to be lead astray by non-straightforward speakers, being bewitched by not knowing the truth (Galatians 2:11-3:1). Their lack of knowledge of the truth provided a pathway for being swept away by flesh. Such lack of knowledge has often lead the people of God astray.

Under the Old Law, God's people too often found themselves bewitched by the flesh and at odds with God because of their lack of knowledge. God revealed Himself that His people might know Him. God made His teachings, commandments, and statutes clear. He spoke to His people through the Prophets and placed the Levitical Priests among them so they could be taught. Yet, repeatedly, God rebuked them for their lack of knowledge. Hosea records, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge... because you have forgotten the law of your God" (Hosea 4:6). Hosea declares throughout his writing that the unfaithfulness of the people of God was rooted in their lack of knowledge.

Much like Paul's rebuke of the Christian's in Galatia for following that not approved of by God, Hosea declares, "I have written for him the great things of My law, but they were considered a strange thing" (Hosea 8:12). Thus, Hosea issues condemning words which spoke to the heart of the matter, which was the inappropriate heart of the people that lead to the harsh words, "There is no truth of mercy, or knowledge of God in the land" (Hosea 4:1). God was clear regarding His expectations. "For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings" (Hosea 6:6). God cannot be served by suitable circumstances, fortuity, cluelessness, or ignorance. Serving God correctly and

respectfully requires knowing His will and then submitting oneself obediently to His will.

Today, knowing God's will is a prerequisite to being a successful Christian. Jesus prayed to God the Father saying, "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3). Knowing God involves knowing His word. Paul writes to the Christians at Ephesus, "Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:17). Peter instructs, "But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge..." (2 Peter 1:5). Peter furthers with, "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18).

Finally, consider the words of Paul as he write to the church in Colosse, ""Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Colossians 3:16). We dare not become bewitched because our knowledge is not where it should be - growing and gaining daily. Let us each purpose to grow in God's wisdom and grace.