

THE APPEAL OF CULTS AND FALSE TEACHING

Mark 13:22 ... "For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect."

On occasion I am asked: "Why do some believers leave the church of Christ and follow false teachers or cults?" In all but a few instances, the answer is really quite simple. It is because they were not really born-again believers in the first place. I believe it is rare for a committed believer to succumb to satan's lies so profoundly, that he or she rejects God and falls to their knees before a false teacher. Very rare, and those who do so are addressed in Hebrews chapter six.

If someone bakes you a sweet birthday cake, do you throw it on the ground and eat dirt instead? If your mother gets you the perfect dress, will you burn it and wear a dirty corn sack? If you come home from work to find your wife has cooked you a wonderful meal, will you beat her and eat with the pigs? These extreme analogies are similar to rejecting God and following a liar, only with far more dangerous repercussions.

You can recover from eating dirt or pig slop, and you can survive the humiliation of wearing a corn sack, but you cannot undo the spiritual decision to reject God and follow a false teacher. Paul tells us in Hebrews 6:4-6 that persons who enjoy the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives (which means they are genuinely born-again) and then forfeit their salvation to follow the devil, do not have a second chance at redemption. This is exactly what happened to the angels who rebelled against God with Lucifer (the devil). They had an intimate knowledge of God, but forfeited that to follow the devil. In my 65 years of life, I can think of just two people who I knew personally, who probably fall into this category. You cannot do it accidentally. To reject God and follow satan, you must speak it: "God, I have changed my mind. I reject the gift of salvation and the presence of your Holy Spirit in my life."

If you are an authentic born-again follower of Christ, and you are privileged to have the Holy Spirit living in your soul, and you are enjoying the blessings of God, you will not reject that to join a cult or listen to a false teacher. It really is that simple. Pastors, you must preach the salvation message as often as possible, because there are people in your church who have not yet established a strong enough relationship with Christ, to repel the solicitations of the devil. They are vulnerable to the lies of satan and the attraction of smooth-talking false teachers.

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