

Knowledge, Obedience and Overcoming Deception

Part 3 of 7

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Some have noticed the vast difference between the book of Acts and modern churchianity, between the intellectual knowledge of Western “theology” and the practical expressions of life in Christ as practiced by Bible-deprived believers such as were in the Chinese house-church movement, and these offer the simple remedy of going out to preach and lay hands on the sick as is found in the book of Acts. Indeed this is an excellent first step but this is not the whole counsel of God in this matter. Any who would offer the analysis of knowledge versus obedience as the real but only spiritual “disease” that must be overcome have overlooked other factors equally at work that must also be taken into account.

But first, let us be equally clear that this analysis of knowledge versus obedience and the remedy of stepping out in faith and obedience to the very Scriptural acts of preaching and laying hands on the sick to pray for their recovery is absolutely correct and absolutely essential – but it is not the final destination of the life in Christ. If anyone stops here, the results will prove catastrophic.

And second, let us be clear that the simple remedy of preaching and healing is the cure only for those who have become born again in the context of some expression of faith in Christ that practices things that more resemble the book of Acts and who have not been exposed to the spirit-inhibiting deceptions of “church.” For those who have been immersed in “church” deception, there are other factors that must be taken into account and dealt with appropriately.

- Obedience to Christ is not to be defined as being limited to only preaching and healing. Preachers who operate (or at least seem to operate) in much power have been horrible husbands and fathers – and this is *not* God’s will for the family. People can make great show of preaching and laying hands on people but be dishonest in their business dealings with others and in their treatment of their brothers and sisters in Christ or they are simply insincere and hypocritical in their religious expressions of their contaminated “faith.” If we do not seek to submit all aspects of our life to Christ – especially our roles as spouses and parents – and keep them in God’s priority and order, then any power we might walk in may well be the power of the demonic.

- If we are steeped in “church” deceptions and use preaching and healing to draw people into “church” – no matter what version or flavor thereof – we will heap up judgment for ourselves quickly. To think otherwise is to miss the direction the Lord is now leading and to use the tools of the demonic to divert people from the path the Lord would take His people.

Let us consider the dilemma of the person who has been exposed to “church.” It is not enough to say that their knowledge far outweighs their obedience. It is not just a matter of quantity – it is also a matter of quality. The knowledge that is acquired at many “churches” is not of the spiritual kind but is only an intellectual, carnal kind of knowledge. One can hold many right facts about Christ without them ever being spiritual truth that leads to the life in Christ. As Jesus said to the Pharisees, “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal

life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.” (Jn. 5:39-40) If our knowledge does not take us to Christ but instead pushes us into some exalted position of supposed importance, influence or even power, we have only grasped onto carnal knowledge and not spiritual, life-giving and life-bringing truth. The former kills and brings bondage while only the latter brings life abundant.

Into this equation of knowledge versus obedience, we must also factor in deception. If we were more obedient, it will produce a better, more spiritually mature kind of Christian – absolutely. But this does not mean that we should be content with whatever knowledge we have. If there are elements of deception in our knowledge – deception which can come from willful selfishness or self-centeredness, human tradition or even demonic doctrines (teachings) – then our knowledge will simply corrupt our obedience.

If anyone is asked whether they have a complete and full grasp on the truth of all that the Bible teaches, almost all will admit that they do not have such knowledge. Yet these will brutally oppose anyone who suggests that they might need to learn something again and anew!

It is in this light that, yes, those who have been exposed to churchianity should also go out and preach and lay hands on the sick and see them recover. But these must also surrender their knowledge of Christ and His gospel to the Spirit of truth or these are not laboring for or with Christ but instead against Him!

The person who is gifted to equip others in healing should look for anyone to take out on the streets and into the lives of others and these should indeed lay hands on the sick and expect to see them recover. But the person who begins to lead others in this manner should not suppose that this is all that there is to the Christian life! The only protection against deception will be the heart fully surrendered to Christ and God. These will be found where God’s messengers are allowed and encouraged to speak freely about the errors and traps laid in front of the people of Christ and about the right and only way to follow Christ – Christ Himself!

In one sense, placing all emphasis on getting the people moving and trusting Christ to bring order out of the chaos of so many people doing so many things is very appropriate. But we must be careful to begin to recognize those who are truly sent by Christ to bring His order and direction. Satan will send many false apostles and messengers to bring disorder and deception and lure people back into his deceptive schemes most commonly called “church” – and these false apostles and messengers will speak words from the Bible with more familiarity than do those who have only recently come to know Christ. And these deceived deceivers will gladly lead the newer converts into bondage to their own personal agendas and ambitions to be considered significant in the eyes of others. If we receive the false and reject the true or if those who were originally sent as God’s messengers think they’ve suddenly acquired a full-time career and they need never progress or change, the result will be yet another hardened wineskin “church.”

The life in Christ is not defined by powerful miracles nor even by insight into the spiritual mysteries of Christ. If we do not love one another with a genuine and sincere love, we are not yet spiritually mature. It is not until we are simultaneously walking in power *and* genuine insight *and* genuinely divine love for one another and for the people of this world that we have overcome the deceptions of intellectual Western “church.”

Thus the problem in Western churchianity is not simply that our obedience to Christ is heavily outweighed by our Biblical knowledge. The real underlying problem is that too much of our knowledge is based on deception. Certainly the first part of the problem will be alleviated by simply going out and preaching and laying hands on the sick but if it is not accompanied by the

notion that there are other, deeper issues also at work in our disobedience to Christ and God, then the preaching and laying hands on the sick will simply become the next accepted religious practice, another nest for the demonic “birds of the air” (Mt. 13:32) and this next movement of men attempting to follow God will devolve into yet another abomination, possibly worse than any that has gone before because the people are expecting to walk in power but have not learned to take care what power source they draw from.

Knowledge is what led many people away from obedience to Christ and knowledge will be required to lead them back into the light. But it will not be enough to trade one teacher for another, merely changing the subject matter which the student is taught and not changing the method by which knowledge is gleaned. In Western-styled churchianity, most knowledge is gleaned from the “pastor’s” “sermons” and these “pastors” have been carnally corrupted at “seminary” or “Bible school” and few, if any, have learned to follow the guiding voice of the Spirit of truth. Jesus said, “When the Spirit of truth has come, He will guide you into all truth.” (Jn. 16:13) And John wrote, “The anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things; and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.” (1 Jn. 2:27)

The problem in Western-styled churchianity is not just that knowledge outweighs obedience. The problem is that churchianity has ignored the Holy Spirit and drawn its knowledge and practices from human tradition and even demonic “theology.” Only a return to Him will solve and cure *all* of the problems we have foolishly and ignorantly gotten ourselves into.

Let he who has ears hear.

Part 2 of 7: Coming Out and Moving On

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Part 4 of 7: The Final Reformation, Ekklesia and the “Church”

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