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PERVERTING THE GOSPEL!

In Galatians 1:6-8, Paul warns the brethren in the churches of Galatia about individuals who are guilty of **“perverting the gospel of Christ.”** This perversion involved the idea of combining the Law of Moses with the gospel of Christ and making them equally binding upon Christians. This controversial issue was dealt with in Acts 15 and it was concluded that such a practice was out of harmony with the will of God. The Law of Moses after all had been replaced by the gospel of Christ (Hebrews 10:5-10); therefore seeking to bind the Law of Moses upon Christians along with the gospel of Christ was a **“perversion of the gospel.”** Unfortunately this perversion still exist as people return to the Law of Moses to justify **“tithing, instrumental music in worship, Sabbath-keeping”** and other Old Testament practices in the Lord’s church today. In doing so, they become guilty of **“perverting the gospel of Christ”** just as it was done in the first century. Colossians 3:17 makes it clear that today we must operate by the **“authority of Jesus Christ”** rather than the **“authority of Moses.”** According to Acts 3:19-26, those who follow Moses today rather than Christ will be cut off from having a relationship with God. (Read Matthew 17:1-5 as well.)

ANSWERS TO LAST MONTH'S BIBLE QUESTIONS:

According to Genesis 6:15, the dimensions of the ark were 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. (When a cubit is 18 inches.)

Mary is the woman who "sat at Jesus' feet, and heard His word" while Martha was "cumbered about much serving."
(Luke 10:38-42)

QUESTIONS FOR THIS MONTH:

What king of Israel endured a drought during the days of the prophet Elijah? (How long did this drought last?)

What New Testament writer speaks of the archangel Michael having a dispute with the devil? (What was this dispute about?)

"RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH!"

2nd Timothy 2:15 makes the following statement: "*Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*" The last part of this verse in the New American Standard Translation of the Bible is worded this way: "...*handling accurately the word of truth.*" There is a right way to handle the word of God, and there is also a wrong way to handle the word of God. Peter spoke of some individuals who "... *wrest (distort), as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.*" (2nd Peter 3:15-16) It is possible therefore to handle the word of God in such a way as to end up being lost. This happens all the time today, as people are very careless in the way that they handle the word of God. For example, just last week a TV evangelist by the name of James Kennedy quoted Mark 16:16 in this way: "He that believeth is saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." This of course is not what Mark 16:16 says; he left off the part of the scripture where Jesus said "...*and is baptized shall be saved.*" The reason that he did this is obvious; he believes in and teaches the doctrine of "salvation by faith only", which doctrine is taught

nowhere in the scriptures. Thus he is guilty of **“distorting the word of God.”** I once had a man tell me that you could prove anything by the Bible. I told him the only way this could be done was by mishandling the word of God, which he did by talking about how **“Judas hung himself”** (Matthew 27) and how Jesus said **“Go, and do thou likewise.”** (Luke 10 – Parable of the Good Samaritan) He concluded that we should all hang ourselves, as did Judas. What a pathetic twisting of the word of God!

I once had a man quote Acts 16:31 to me this way: **“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and that’s it.”** He added the words **“and that’s it”** to this verse. He did this once again to justify his false doctrine of **“salvation by faith only.”** My wife was in a Bible study many years ago with a friend who mishandled the word of God by misapplying Romans 8:1 to teach the false doctrine of **“once saved, always saved.”** She did this by leaving off the second half of this verse and saying **“There is now therefore no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.”** She left off the part of the verse that said, **“...who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”**

God will hold each one of us responsible for the way that we go about teaching His word. If we mishandle the word of God, we will suffer the consequences that we read about in 2nd Peter 3:15-16. That is why we must be extremely careful to **“...handle accurately the word of truth.”** We can only learn to do this by approaching the word of God with the greatest of respect and with a willingness to **“search the scriptures daily”** with an open mind and an open heart. (Acts 17:10-12) We cannot allow ourselves to be deceived by others who misapply and mishandle the word of God. Jesus said in Matthew 15:13-14 that if the **“...blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.”**

Make sure you are following the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Jesus said in John 8:31-32 that **“If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”**