

WHY SOME DON'T OBEY THE GOSPEL

BY KEITH GREER

When I talk with my friends, many of whom are gospel preachers also, we often discuss our bewilderment of why so many folks are unwilling to obey the gospel of Christ. People give many different reasons, but allow me to offer a few I'm personally familiar with.

Some believe they cannot understand the truth. *"Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, 'If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'" {John 8:31,32}* Jesus said truth can make one free. Paul would later write to Christians in Ephesus and encourage them to study and read so they could understand, *Ephesians 3:3-5; 5:17*. Sadly, the devil has deceived many into believing that only a select few can understand the truth. Some religions, by teaching very little of the Bible, encourage such false beliefs. Still others want their members to depend on the "clergy" to provide the correct understanding. Truth—one can understand the bible if they WANT to.

Some don't realize they are lost. *"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God." {Romans 10:1-3}* Many believe that as long as they are morally good folks and believe in God—all is well. Society has watered down the notion that sin is really a "bad" thing. Hell, is reserved for only those who are evil and ungodly—murderers, rapists, child molesters, thieves, etc. The problem is people don't understand sin and its consequences for such conduct. Millions go aimlessly through life, never really concerned about the lives they are living. Unfortunately, (contrary to popular belief), where ignorance is bliss, it is pure FOLLY not to be wise. One who doesn't understand he is lost doesn't change the fact they are!

Some are prejudiced. *"So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house. Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.'" {Matthew 13:57,58}* When Jesus came to earth, the Jews already had in their minds what they needed from

the Messiah—an earthly king and kingdom to free them from Roman oppression. When Christ failed to fulfill their expectations, they rejected Him and His message. People reject the gospel today because it doesn't provide the expected options. Confusion is brought on by the facts—not needed by those with closed minds!

Some follow the majority. *“From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.” {John 6:66}* Following Jesus was not popular with the majority. In His Sermon on the Mount, He taught there would be two paths—the narrow and straight path, *“few there be who find it,” Matthew 7:14.* Did Noah follow the majority in his day? What about Elijah or Lot? Today, there are approximately one BILLION Roman Catholics in the world, one out of every four in the world are Muslim. Do those facts alone make them, right? Truth determines what is right—not numbers!

Some unwilling to pay the price. *“So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.” {Luke 14:33}* Others understand the commitment and obligation attached to one's obedience but are unwilling to pay it! Many wish for a relationship with God on their own terms. We cannot pick and choose which of God's requirements we will embrace and do. One who will not strictly follow His plans—cannot be one of His disciples.

Preachers must continue to preach the gospel of Christ and hope the hearts that are honest will embrace God's truth and obey Him. The choice is up to each of us. ***