

“Junk Science” ... “Junk Religion”

The other night I saw a television show on the subject of “junk science.” The show examined several popular “scientific” concepts and revealed they were actually flawed. I’ll admit I was surprised to hear that Vitamin C cannot be shown to help prevent or cure colds. I was even a bit more surprised (or maybe disappointed) to find that spinach is not so high in iron that it helps make you stronger (like Popeye!). Several other things were examined and it soon became apparent that many scientists (though sincere) don’t actually take a scientific approach to their claims by using the scientific method of forming a hypothesis then testing it in a controlled environment before making claims. As I thought on this idea of “junk science” it became clear that there is a much larger and much more dangerous area in which the same failure to examine assertions is found. We can call this “junk religion.” What I mean is that many sincere people hold religious doctrines that are near and dear to them, beliefs that perhaps have been honored in one’s family for generations, but they have no Biblical foundation for them at all. Some are relatively harmless — for example we sometimes hear that the Bible says “cleanliness is next to godliness” or that Adam and Eve ate an “apple” from the tree of knowledge. The Bible never makes either claim. But there are other widely held beliefs that have tragic consequences — consequences that effect one’s eternal destiny. For example:

- ✓ “Man is saved by faith only.” Are you aware the Bible nowhere makes such a statement? In fact it explicitly denies such by telling us justification is “not by faith only” (James 2:24).
- ✓ “Baptism has nothing to do with salvation.” It is popular to say something like “Baptism is an outward sign of inward grace...” but again such is not found in the Bible. Instead we find baptism is said to be “for remission of sins” (Acts 2:38), to “be saved” (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21), to have our sins “washed away” (Acts 22:16), essential for one to get “into Christ” (Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27). The Bible never affirms one is saved by anything “only.” Among those things that God has commanded for salvation such as faith (Hebrews 11:6), repentance (Acts 17:30) and confession (Acts 8:36-37), we find baptism.
- ✓ “One church is as good as another.” Did you know you have over 2,000 separate choices as to the kind of church you can attend? Does God ever say to “attend the church of your choice?” No. He does tell us that Christ came to build His church (singular) (Matthew 16:18). He emphasizes that there is but “one body” (Ephesians 4:4), the body being the church (Ephesians 1:23). If one church is as good as another why did Christ die to purchase the one described in the New Testament (Acts 20:28)?
- ✓ “As long as a person is sincere, it doesn’t matter what he believes or does

religiously." While millions believe such, God has said just the opposite! Paul was always sincere (Acts 23:1) but Christ made it plain he was lost in sin (Acts 9:4-5). As Solomon said, "There is a way that seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 16:25).

Many other sincerely held religious beliefs could be examined, but therein is the problem. Many do not examine teachings as to whether they are true. Just as many unwittingly promote or follow "junk science" because they fail to examine, many promote and follow "junk religion" because they fail to heed God's command to search the Scriptures and then base their beliefs on that study (Acts 17:11). As we noted, whether or not you take Vitamin C or eat your spinach is not really that important. But when it comes to religion, the consequences can be eternal. Don't fall for "junk religion." Take the time to examine God's Word and love Him enough to follow what HE says!

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