

Behold I Thought ...

By Mark Mayberry

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Introduction

Isaiah 55:8-9 says, “*For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,*” declares the Lord. *For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.*” Jeremiah 10:23 says, “*I know, O Lord, that a man’s way is not in himself, nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps.*” Proverbs 14:12 says “*There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.*”

In spite of these warnings, man often seeks to make his own way, think his own thoughts, and chart his own course. However, in religious and spiritual matters, we do not have that option. Whenever man turns aside from the Lord’s path, and pursues his own way, he **always** gets himself into trouble.

Abraham

Abraham thought he could avoid trouble by lying (Genesis 12:10-20; 20:1-18). Actually, he failed to tell the whole truth. Sarah was his half-sister, but she also was his wife. How many times do we “think” that we can get out of a fix by lying? Many accept lying as a necessary ingredient of life. People lie to their boss, their husband or wife, their parents or children, their teachers, and even to themselves. However, dishonesty is never pleasing to God (Prov. 12:22; Eph. 4:25; Col. 3:9-10; Rev. 22:15).

Naaman

Naaman nearly rejected the prospect of physical healing because the conditions did not conform to his expectations (2 Kings 5:1-14). Thinking the prophet would do some great thing, he viewed Elisha’s response as insultingly simple. Moreover, he thought that the waters of Abana and Pharpar were better than the muddy waters of the Jordan. He thought he would be healed in some way other than the way prescribed by the prophet.

In like manner, many today reject God’s terms of spiritual pardon as expressed through the gospel. They expect some kind of direct operation of the Holy Spirit. They listen for some “small still voice.” Many think that God will save them in some way other than the way that has been revealed in Holy Scripture. In reality, men are saved when they respond to the preaching of the gospel (Rom. 1:16-17; John 6:44-45).

Naaman sought physical healing; sinful mankind stands in need of spiritual healing. As Naaman objected to dipping in the waters of the Jordan; so likewise, many object to water baptism. As

God tested the faith of Naaman, he also tests us. Do we have enough faith in God's revealed word to obey (Acts 2:36-38; 22:6-16; Gal. 3:26-27; 1 Pet. 3:20-21)?

Saul/Paul

Sincere but mistaken, Saul of Tarsus thought he was doing the Lord's will when he persecuted the church (Acts 8:1-3; 23:1; 26:9-11). Many today believe they are pleasing God, when in reality, they are following the commandments of men (Matt. 7:21-23; 15:8-9; Rom. 10:1-3; Col. 2:6-8). In contrast, those who are faithful seek divine authority for all that they preach and practice (Col. 3:17; 1 Pet. 4:11).

Conclusion

Let us boast, not in our wisdom, might or riches, but in understanding and knowing God (Jeremiah 9:23-24). Trust in the Lord, and do not rely upon your own understanding (Proverbs 3:5-12). Following the example of Jesus Christ, let us obey the Father's will (Hebrews 5:8-9).