

Discerning Truth From Error

Several years ago many of us in the Sabbath keeping churches of God went through one of the most difficult times of our lives. The Word of God was twisted, maligned and perverted in about every conceivable way. Yet how many of us went through this period unscathed? How many of us never accepted a single false doctrine that was being propagated at the time?

As far as I know every single one of us accepted at least one false doctrine. And of course most of us accepted far more than just one false teaching before we finally repented.

Someone wrote a book during this period, showing that there were over 235 false doctrines being taught by misguided individuals. Yet how many of these false teachings did you initially accept before you finally repented? Five? Ten? Fifty?

Like just about everyone else, I also was deceived. But I was only duped into accepting one false doctrine before I came to my senses. That's right. Out of the 235 or so false teachings that were being taught at the time I only accepted one. And of course I later repented of that false doctrine. But, how about you? Can you honestly and sincerely say that you were only misguided on one of the changes that took place just a few short years ago?

Well, if you are like most people in the Sabbath keeping churches of God today, and if you are brutally honest with yourself, you will have to admit that you were deceived on far more than just one doctrine. So, what's my secret? Why was it that I was deceived far less than most people? Is it because of my brilliance? Because of my superior

intellect? If you know me well you would have to answer that question with a resounding “NO WAY!”

So then, what’s my secret? Why was I deceived far less than most people, and how can you and I be protected from false doctrines in the future?

Here are the seven keys that helped me and hopefully will help you avoid being deceived—the seven keys to discerning truth from error.

Key #1

Pray very fervently and sincerely for God to lead you into the truth. Claim the promise that Jesus gives us in John 16:13 (NKJ): “However, when He, the Spirit of truth [God’s Holy Spirit] has come, He will guide you into *all* truth.”

After asking God to guide you into the truth you then have to do your part—which brings us to...

Key #2

Prove *all* things! In 1 Thessalonians 5:21 we are commanded to prove all things. Unless we are doing our part God will not do His part. Therefore make sure you are proving all things. We must be like the Bereans who tested everything that the apostle Paul taught them (Acts 17:10-11). They did not blindly accept anything—even what the Paul taught them! If they didn’t even accept what Paul taught them without first going to the Scriptures—how much more should we prove everything that we are taught today!

Remember also that the Laodiceans are spiritually blind (Rev. 3:17-18) and as a result they will have to go through the great tribulation.

Don't blindly accept anything. For when we blindly accept things—we become spiritually blind. Instead—prove all things!

After proving all things we must then do what the second part of 1 Thessalonians 5:21 commands us to do—which brings me to...

Key #3

Hold fast to the truth! Once you have asked God to lead you into all truth and then you have proved all things, you must never give it up—but instead hold fast to what you have proven to be good. If you would rather be a Philadelphian instead of a Laodicean (see Revelation 3) then you must do what we are commanded to do in Rev. 3:11—and that is to hold fast to the truth so that no one will take our crown!

Key #4

Don't trust anyone except God! In Jer. 9:4 and Micah 7:5 we are warned not to trust in anyone—be it a neighbor, friend, or brother. As a matter of fact God proclaims a curse on anyone who would trust in another human being. As Jer. 17:5 proclaims, “Cursed is the man who trusts in man.” And this most certainly includes ministers!

As a matter of fact do you realize how many times it says in the Bible to “beware!”? And do you realize that in just about every case in which we are warned to “beware!” we are being told to beware of ministers in the Church!? Time after time the Bible warns us to beware of their false doctrines.

Do a word search someday on this particular subject. You will probably be utterly amazed at just how many times God warns us to be on the lookout for false teachings from supposedly converted ministers in the true Church of God. As a matter of fact we are promised in 2 Peter 2:1-3 that there would be false teachers *among us*

who would bring in destructive heresies and blaspheme the truth. So beware and trust *only* in God!

Key #5

Obey God! In order to be wise and able to discern truth from error we must be practicing God's way of life. As Psalms 111:10 tells us: "A good understanding have all those who *do* His commandments."

Key #6

Don't be overconfident! We are admonished in 1 Cor. 10:12—"Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall."

Being overconfident is a trait of a typical Laodicean (see Rev. 3:17). So make sure that you don't become overconfident. Look up *every* Scripture that is quoted in every sermon, book, article, etc. And make sure that every Scripture is *properly quoted* and in its *proper context*.

Also, make sure you understand the Scriptures to mean *exactly* what God intended them to mean. Don't take anything for granted. Instead let's be zealous and search the Scriptures daily (like the Bereans did in Acts 17:10-11) so that we may be a true Philadelphian (and be accounted worthy to escape the great tribulation—Revelation 3:10).

This brings me to my last and final key for helping us discern truth from error, and in my estimation the most neglected key today.

Key #7

When proving all things—**always get both sides of the story!** Remember there are usually two sides to every story. Anytime someone teaches you something new or different from what you were previously taught make sure that you carefully examine both sides of

the issue. Go back and find out exactly what the previous teaching was *before* ever accepting any new teaching or idea.

Remember to get all the facts. Do not deceive yourself in thinking that you only need to hear one side of the story in order to make a proper evaluation. In most cases that is plain foolishness! What kind of judge would ever make a judgment without first hearing both sides of an argument. If the unrighteous judges of this world are wise enough to hear both sides of an issue, how much more should we be concerning the Word of God! Especially when our eternal life is at stake!

Summary

So, if you never want to be deceived again, please make sure you implement these seven keys into your life starting today!

#1—Fervently cry out to God to lead you into *all truth*. Claim God's promise of John 16:13 that the Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth.

#2—Prove *all* things!

#3—*Hold fast* to the truth!

#4—Don't trust anyone except God!

#5—*Obey* God!

#6—Don't be overconfident!

#7—In proving all things get *both* sides of the story!