

Maintenance By The Book

By Art Irvine

I have a book on my shelf at home called The Book of Books. It tells about the Bible. It tells how we got the Bible. It gives facts and figures about the translations of the Bible. It gives facts and figures about the original manuscripts of the Bible. If I wanted to know about the Bible I would start my study with a book like that. If I wanted to know what the Bible actually said I would need to get a copy of and read the Bible. That is if I had a copy available to me to read. Long ago there was a king that knew about the Bible but he didn't know the Bible (or what there was of it to know). The king was Josiah of Judah, one of the kings that came long after king David.

Please read, II Kings 22:8-20.

Josiah's workers who were performing work on the temple, found the scroll in the temple and brought it to him. He had it read in his presence and found it contained the Word of God. Since he hadn't heard it before, he was grieved that they were not obeying the word of God previous to this. He tore his clothes in grief and sent to inquire about the book from a prophetess. When he found out the importance he began to obey it's commands and gave orders that all should obey it. The prophetess said the Lord would bless him for this.

Now Josiah has heard the truth of the word and he realizes that he can't escape from the reality of its fulfillment. He tore his clothes from grief and submission. He had grief that they weren't following the truth and submission because his heart was melted before the Lord God.

Previously the law had been handed down by tradition if it was handed down at all. Traditions embellish on the truth and are not complete. That is traditions take away from the truth and they add to the truth. I believe the implication leading up to this Old Testament story is that perversion, that is idolatry, was rampant.

The Bible through the ages has been removed for a time. Unscrupulous men pervert and take away from the word. When the word is removed we try to rely on man's word or tradition.

The black and white truth on the pages of the Bible just fade into shades of gray. Why are men able to take the word of God away from us at times? It is because of unbelief on the part of the removers and apathy on the part of the believers.

I have an illustration from my life that I hope will shed some light on what I am trying to say. I have been working as an aircraft mechanic for over 30 years now. Throughout the aircraft industry; civilian and military, we go by the manufacturers instructions to maintain the aircraft. The manufacturer knows the aircraft better than anyone else. They have an intimate concern with the aircraft they manufacture. Their name is on it and they

don't want their name to suffer. It is almost like a baby to them. When they manufacture it, it comes to birth. After birth (manufacturing) they usually give some support to those who fly and maintain it, especially the larger aircraft.

The aircraft mechanic, almost from the beginning, has been able to refer to the manufacturers instructions. Each major component manufacturer, such as engine and propeller, has a stake in it and give support and instructions for their components. The aircraft maintenance manuals are designed to include everything needed to maintain the aircraft except the very basic mechanical skills.

If the mechanic deviates from any of the manufacturers instructions and causes an accident, he is held accountable. The same goes for how a pilot flies the aircraft. We in the aviation industry have to follow the book, not just for liability purposes, but to do the job right the first time. We, as aviation professionals, need to be people of the "book."

Some years ago I was working with a lead man on an engine inspection. I got down to get the right washer for an engine control. The right washer in the right place and the controls won't come apart. The lead man said I didn't need one but I went and got it and put it on anyway, knowing it needed it. Some time later I was to get a review and a pay raise but I didn't get it. They cited this occasion to deny me the raise. Not long after that, after discussing it several times with them, I brought in my basic mechanics handbook and showed them the requirement for that type of washer. I still had a hard time until the chief inspector got into the discussion. It only took a minute for him to look at the situation and declare, "Art's right." Within a week I got my pay raise. The lead man and apparently some of the others didn't know the book. Aircraft mechanics need to be people of the book.

As practicing Christians, we need to be people of the book. God has made us and knows how we work. He has an intimate concern for us from before birth. Jeremiah tells us of what God told him in; Jer. 1:5. "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations." God knows us the same way and wants all to come to Him through the truth of His Word. Those of us who have believed His word and obeyed He has given us the name of His beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Because of Him we wear the name Christian. He loves us far more than any aircraft manufacturer loves his airplane. That is why He sent His Son to die for us. He supports us after we are born and even more after we are born again. John 3:3-5. When we are born again He sends His Spirit to help us. Acts 2:38.

God has given us guidelines for maintaining life in Him. In the beginning the guidelines were verbal and very simple. As people progressed and multiplied on the earth, He gave us more guidelines for our instruction. The written word has come to us as His final instruction and authority for life. This Bible is the maintenance manual for the body and soul and a flight plan for life. It tells us all we need to know, even the basics. If we read it and follow it we will be able to correctly maintain our lives as he intended.

Just as the aircraft mechanic and the pilot are held accountable for their deviation from the manufacturers instructions, we as Christians will be accountable to the Maker for errors resulting from the deviation from His plan. That is why we as Christians always need to refer to our Maker's instructions. The outcome for those who make that commitment will be rewarding, like Josiah.

The pilot and mechanic are trained in the basics to do their job then keep on training and gaining more skill on the particular aircraft they are concerned with. They continue to refer to their books to keep current and learn more. The Christian, likewise, must learn the basics then keep on learning, referring to the Book often. Trying to do all aircraft maintenance and flying year after year after only reading the manual once will likely end in the disaster of a crash. Likewise if a Christian only reads the Bible once and does not refer to it again his life will come crashing down in disaster. That means we need to keep our minds sharp and the knowledge fresh to keep our lives maintained properly and flying right. This maintenance manual the Bible must be opened and referred to regularly.

II Timothy 2:15 "Be diligent (study) to present yourself approved to God as a workman, who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately (rightly dividing) the word of truth" NASB

Conc. Josiah saw his deficiency as he read the lost word of God. He knew, since God said it, it must be truth. He not only found and restored the book to it's rightful place, he endeavored to follow the instructions within.

Has the Book of Books, the Bible been taken away from you? Or more rightly, have you endeavored as Josiah to restore the Book of Books the Bible to it's rightful place in your lives.

The Restoration Movement is trying to restore Biblical truth to a rightful place in the church, not to start a new denomination. The Bible only makes Christians only. We must as Josiah, completely restore the ancient order. Part way is not good enough.

As we restore the ancient order of things as seen in the New Testament, maybe you need to be restored to a right relationship with God. Come repent of your sins and be immersed for the forgiveness of sins confessing that Jesus is Lord and Savior and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.