

“THEY HAVE NOT ALL OBEYED THE GOSPEL”

INTRODUCTION

A. Romans 10:16

Despite good efforts put forth to preach the gospel, not all will choose to believe and obey.

B. Hebrews 4:2; 1st Peter 2:6-8

The very gospel which saves some will condemn others.

I. THE PHILOSOPHERS AT ATHENS

A. Acts 17:16-34

1. In Athens, Paul’s preaching attracted the attention of certain philosophers (17-21).
2. When his speech concluded with the resurrection of the dead (30-31), some mocked (32), so Paul departed (33).
3. These people had imagined every sort of deity human wisdom could invent (16, 22-23), but could not grasp the reality of the true Son of God rising from the dead.

B. 1st Corinthians 1:22-25

The message of the cross was foolishness to them.

C. 2nd Corinthians 11:3

The simplicity of the gospel was an affront to their great learning.

II. THE SILVERSMITHS AT EPHEBUS

A. Acts 19:8-10, 17-20, 23-28

1. When Paul preached in Ephesus two years “*all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord*” (10), but some “*were hardened and did not believe*” (9).

2. The Ephesian craftsmen were unwilling to make the same sacrifices as their neighbors. They perceived the gospel as a threat to their livelihood.
 - a. If the gospel were accepted in Ephesus, these silversmiths stood to lose *“no small profit”* (24).
 - b. Demetrius proclaimed, *“Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade”* (25).
 - c. *“This trade of ours [is] in danger of falling into disrepute”* (27).

B. Luke 18:18-30

The call to surrender material possessions in order to serve the Lord is a call few are willing to answer, but the rewards outweigh the costs.

C. Matthew 6:31-33

Some simply refuse to believe that God will provide for them if they fully obey Him.

III. GOVERNOR FELIX AT CAESAREA

A. Acts 24:24-26

Paul’s preaching certainly instilled fear in Felix, but he was not persuaded to obey. Felix listened to Paul’s preaching hoping to gain a bribe by the apostle for his release.

B. 2nd Corinthians 5:11; 1st John 4:18

Fear serves a purpose; it is meant to motivate an escape from punishment toward salvation. Yet, eventually, a mature Christian outgrows that fear and is motivated by love. Felix never let his fear develop.

C. James 4:17

It is dangerously wrong to delay the good we know to do.

D. John 6:22-26; 1st Timothy 6:3-5

Some see godliness as a means of gain. They’re willing to listen to or even speak the gospel as far as it profits them materially, but no further.

IV. KING AGRIPPA AT CAESAREA

A. **Acts 26:24-32**

1. The wonder of the gospel had not escaped the notice of King Agrippa (26). He believed (27). He even knew that Paul was not guilty of any crime (31-32).
2. Agrippa was “almost persuaded” (28), but not quite convicted.

B. **1st Corinthians 1:26-29**

We shouldn't expect too many high profile people, either politicians or celebrities, to obey the gospel.

C. **John 12:42-43**

Prominent citizens would have a difficult time retaining their prominence once they convert.

CONCLUSION

- A. Have you refrained from obeying the gospel because you regard it as intellectually inferior to yourself?
- B. Have you neglected the truth because you're unwilling to forego material comforts?
- C. Are you afraid?
- D. Do you think you'll have time later?
- E. Will it knock you down a peg in society?