

Pleasant Valley
Church of Christ

3317 Amidon
Wichita KS 67204
(316) 838-4195
www.letjesusleadus.org

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Classes 9:30 am
Worship 10:30 am
Evening 6:00 pm

Wednesday

Classes 7:30 pm

The Pleasant Valley Church of Christ is a non-denominational group of believers who are committed to following Jesus in our attitudes, our relationships, and our worship. If you want the same thing in your life, please contact us. We'd like to help.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the New King James Version Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Wings



*"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31)*

December 7, 2008

Zeal without knowledge

by David King

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:1-3).

Paul pinpointed the Jews' refusal to accept the gospel as an intellectual failure: they had "a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge." They were "ignorant" of God's plan for making man righteous, so they rejected it.

In reading this, we are tempted to draw a comparison to the Jews' ancestors during Old Testament times. Back then, the prophets attributed Israel's waywardness to their ignorance of God's law (e.g., "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge," Hos. 4:6). But that comparison doesn't quite hold up. The Old Testament Jews were literally ignorant of the most basic content of God's law. They knew nothing of the history of their people. They had no idea who God was or what He wanted. The Scriptures were a complete mystery to them. In every sense of the word, they were ignorant.

But that condition did not exist among the Jews of Paul's generation. These people knew the Scriptures backward and forward. They prided themselves on being "the people of God," separated from the rest of humanity by their high moral character and deep respect for the Creator. They knew the Law, they knew the rules, they knew of the coming Messiah. In

every sense of the word, they "had a zeal for God" — and were proud of it.

But therein lay the problem. Their academic knowledge of God's Law had crossed over into arrogance. Their preoccupation with the finer points of the Law became a stumbling block that caused them to overlook the underlying principles of that Law. They could recite the most minute details of the Law, and explain exactly how to apply those details in every aspect of life, but in doing so they "neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice, mercy, and faith" (Matt. 23:23). So instead of the Law serving as a guide to lead them to the Messiah, it became an instrument of self-aggrandizement, a means of "establishing their own righteousness" before God and others.

When Jesus finally came, He did not fit their elaborate interpretation of what the Kingdom should be, so they rejected Him. They were "ignorant" by virtue of their misguided theology. And as long as they maintained that condescending air of superiority, they would never be able to understand what Jesus and His gospel were all about.

The great irony in all of this is that the Jews' ignorance of God's plan was due to a misguided zeal for God's book. Their very knowledge of the Scriptures blinded them to the larger message of the book.

There is a warning here for God's people today. Certainly, God wants us to know His Law and obey it. But we must never allow that knowledge to foster a spirit of self-importance that overrides our humility before God.