

PRIDE & PREJUDICE

by Robert Hatfield

Jesus' disciples simply could not grasp what the Lord was doing. They thought they were on the right track as they asked Him, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6); yet, their speculations could not have been further from the truth with respect to Jesus' blood-bought kingdom.

It is certain that Jesus had already explained facts about His kingdom to His disciples; in fact, such conversations took place more than once! While on trial before Pilate, Jesus said, "my kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). Even after His resurrection from the grave, Jesus repeatedly emphasized the facts concerning His kingdom, the church. On the road to Emmaus, two of the disciples talked with an unknown man (who actually was the risen Lord!); they said, "... we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel" (Luke 24:21). The disciples remained untouched by the teaching Jesus had done concerning His kingdom.

So, only a few moments before Christ's ascension, the eleven remaining apostles asked at what time Jesus was going to restore the kingdom to Israel. Note that they did not ask *if* Jesus was going to restore the kingdom — they only asked *when* it was going to happen.

There are many people today who are caught up with pride and prejudice, just like the apostles in Acts 1:6; it is as if many fail to listen to the plain teaching which has been repeatedly emphasized in assemblies, Bible classes, etcetera. It can be very difficult to remove prejudice from the mind. In fact, prejudicial thoughts — especially with regard to religion — seem to survive in spite of sound, Scriptural proof. However, despite the problems with prejudice, the apostles would soon learn the reality of Christ's kingdom.

Jesus shows evangelistic Christians a perfect picture about properly handling people with prejudice.

Jesus is an example in longsuffering. The Bible teaches that God is longsuffering to sinners (Rom. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9; etc.). Peter said that "the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation" (2 Pet. 3:15). All men must be thankful to the Father for his patience with His iniquitous creation (cf. Rom. 6:23). Timothy was told to "exhort with all longsuffering..." (2 Tim. 4:2). Jesus effectively taught the disciples the truth, and He did so in a patient and loving way.

Jesus is an example of remaining true to the TRUTH. The apostles wanted to hear Jesus tell them at least a general time when the kingdom would be restored back to the Jews, but what Jesus was going to tell them was that which they would not like, nor were they ready to hear it. Yet, Jesus did not compromise the truth. Paul exhorted Timothy to "exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2). The truth is the standard of authority for Christians; they must not compromise the standard simply because it is not what others wish to hear.

All who are truly interested in serving God and following Christ must be willing to rid their lives of pride and prejudice, and to listen closely to that which God has to say.

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From *The East Hill News*
Published by the East Hill Church of Christ
P.O. Box 329 • Pulaski, TN 38478
(931) ~ 363-2777