

"Will Tt Be Coffee, Tea or He?"

(Religion was once a conviction. Now it is a taste)

Last week, when I took Shirlee for her doctor's appointment we read this article in "Time". This article was written by an individual that professes to be a Jew. When truth is presented in it's correct context it is worth repeating.

"As I checked in for an outpatient test at a local hospital last week, the admissions lady asked for the usual name, rank, serial number, insurance and ailment. Then she inquired, "What is your religious preference?" I was tempted to say, I think Buddhism is the coolest of all, but I happen to be Jewish."

My second impulse was to repeat what Jonah said when asked by the shipmates of his foundering skiff to identify himself: "I am a Hebrew, ma'am. And I fear the Lord, the God of Heaven, who made the sea and the dry land." But that would surely have got me sent to psychiatry rather than X ray. So I desisted.

In ancient times, they asked, "Who is your God?" A generation ago, they asked your religion. Today your creed is a preference. Preference? I take my coffee black, my wine red, xxxxxxxx,, and my shirts lightly starched. Oh yes, and put me down for "Islam."

Of course, the only reason hospital folk bother to ask about religion at all is prudence, not theological curiosity. In case they accidentally kill you or you other wise expire on their watch, they want to be sure they send up the right clergy to usher you to the next level, as it were. We're not talking belief here. We're talking liability protection.

According to Chesterton, tolerance is the virtue of people who do not believe anything. Chesterton meant that as a critique of tolerance. But it captures nicely the upside of unbelief: where religion is trivialized, one is unlikely to find persecution. When it is believed that on your religion hangs the fate of your immortal soul, the Inquisition follows easily; when it is believed that religion is a breezy consumer preference, religious tolerance flourishes easily. After all, we don't persecute people for their taste in cars. Why for their taste in gods?..."

The article continues and makes a few more observations of today's society.

Remember when we were children, the girls played house, and the boys played Cowboys and Indians? The scriptures state it this way "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things." (1Cor 13:11) Unfortunately, the majority of individuals are playing at religion.

Just a casual reading of the New Testament will show that there were some in the first century that wanted it their way. Look at Acts, does it not address the Jews of that day. Does it not make it clear, that religion is not a preference! Look at Acts 2:35-37--Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet. 36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified. 37 Now when they heard [this,] they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? Do you see that these individuals (who were devout Jews) realized that religion was not a matter of preference. Do you see, these honest individuals knew that their souls were not right in the sight of the God of heaven. They wanted to be right with God! They conformed to what they heard.

We can look at Acts Chapter 7 and see that Stephen preached the same thing that Peter preached, and that these Jews were also pricked in their heart. But, the difference is they had a preference! They wanted to serve God on their own terms. They rejected the Word of God! And killed Stephen.

My beloved, God is the Designer. He is the seat of all truth. He has from the beginning of time set forth His ways and when His creation has violated them they were and are held accountable. Look at Hebrews 10:28-31--A man that hath set at nought Moses law dieth without compassion on [the word of] two or three witnesses: 29 of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be judged worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know him that said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Beloved, have we lost the "Fear Of The Lord?" Has God told us not to fear Him? OR, is it mere man who has told us not to fear God? Beloved, we stand as did the Jews in the first century, we can either believe the Gospel of Christ or we can reject it, the choice is up to you.

Before you make your choice there are something's you need to realize. How did this universe come into existence? By chance, without any design? Without any purpose? Let me ask you another question? When driving down the freeway, have you ever seen a car materialize right before your eyes. I think you would have to agree that cars just don't happen. They are designed and designed with a purpose in mind. Can you show me one automobile that has run without interruption for two thousand years? Wouldn't you agree that this universe that we dwell in is more complex than an automobile? Yet, each one of us knows that there is a designer behind every automobile that has been manufactured. Why are we so unwilling to admit that there is a Designer of this universe? Is it because, if we admit there is a Designer, that we would also have to admit that He has a purpose. We are so fortunate that God has revealed His purpose to us through His Inspired Word (Heb.1:1-3--God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, 2 hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in [his] Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds; 3 who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; What about YOU, Preference or Conviction?