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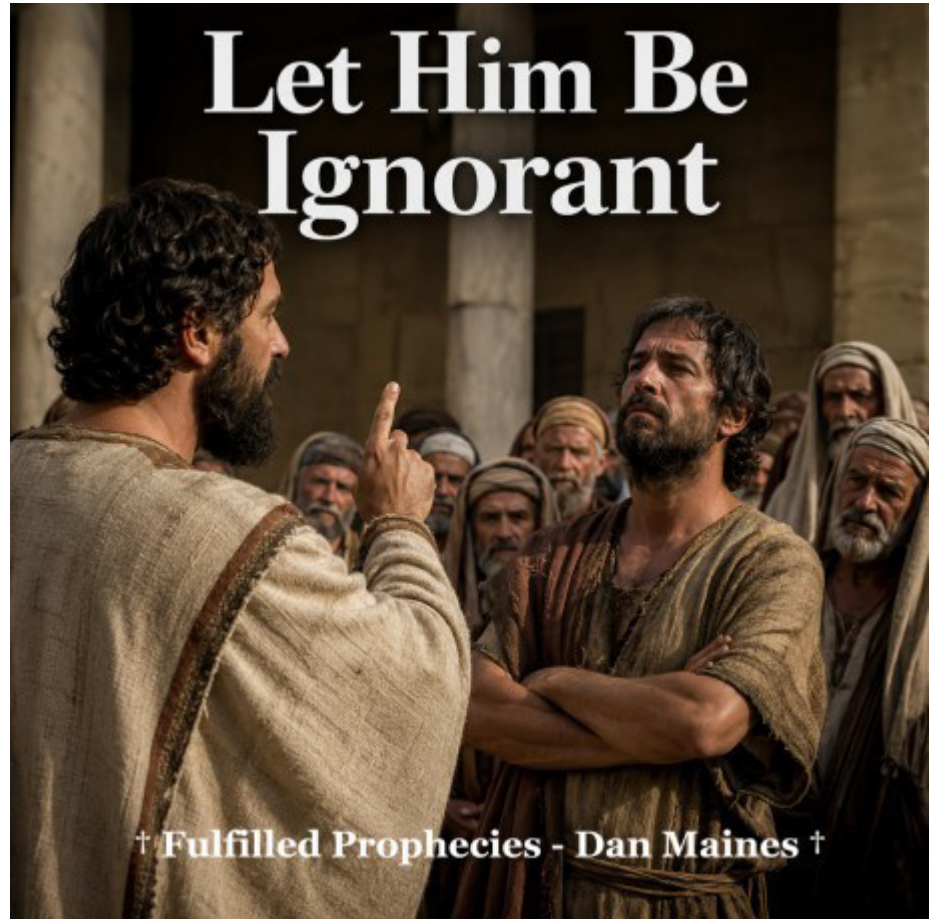
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Let Him Be Ignorant



By Dan Maines

Let Him Be Ignorant

Introduction

† Paul closes his discussion of spiritual gifts, prophecy, and orderly worship with one of the strongest statements found in the chapter. He had already explained God's order, corrected confusion, and established apostolic authority. After giving those instructions, Paul makes it clear that not everyone would accept what he wrote.

† There comes a point when truth has been plainly presented and the responsibility shifts to the hearer. God doesn't force people to accept His word. Paul understood that some would continue resisting even after receiving clear instruction.

† This verse isn't encouraging ignorance. It's a warning about the consequences of choosing to remain ignorant after truth has been revealed. (Romans 1:18-22; 2 Timothy 4:3-4)

1 Corinthians 14:38

But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.

† The immediate context is important. In the previous verse Paul declared that the things he wrote were the commandments of the Lord. This wasn't merely Paul's opinion. These instructions carried divine authority. (1 Corinthians 14:37)

† After establishing that authority, Paul says that if someone still refuses to recognize the truth, let him remain in his ignorance. The problem isn't lack of information. The problem is rejection of revealed truth. (John 3:19-20)

† The issue wasn't lack of knowledge. Paul had already provided the instruction. The person described here is one who refuses to acknowledge what the Lord had revealed through His apostle. (1 Corinthians 14:37-38)

† Scripture repeatedly shows that people can hear the truth and still refuse it. Jesus performed miracles before many witnesses, yet many still rejected Him. The issue wasn't evidence. The issue was the condition of the heart. (John 12:37-40)

† Israel's leaders heard Christ's words, witnessed His miracles, and saw prophecy fulfilled before their eyes, yet many remained unwilling to believe. Ignorance became a choice rather than a

lack of opportunity. (Matthew 13:14-15; John 5:39-40)

† Paul wasn't telling believers to stop teaching altogether. He was acknowledging that some people become so committed to their own traditions and opinions that they refuse correction. (Titus 3:10-11)

† There comes a time when debate ends. Paul had given the truth, corrected error, and established the Lord's commandment. If someone still rejected it, there was nothing more to argue. The responsibility then rested upon the hearer. (Acts 28:24-28)

† This principle applies to every generation. Truth doesn't become false because people reject it. God's word remains true whether people accept it or not. (Romans 3:3-4)

Historical References

† John Chrysostom noted that Paul was exposing the stubbornness of those who refused apostolic instruction, showing that continued resistance left them responsible for their own ignorance.

† Chrysostom also emphasized that Paul's words were directed toward those who resisted correction after the truth had been plainly declared.

† Matthew Henry observed that when people reject clear biblical teaching, they place themselves outside the benefit of the instruction being given.

† Early Christian writers consistently understood this verse as a warning against willful refusal to receive apostolic truth.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We should always be willing to examine our beliefs in light of Scripture. (Acts 17:11)

† We must never elevate tradition above the clear teaching of God's word. (Mark 7:13)

† Not everyone will accept biblical truth, even when it's plainly presented. We are responsible for faithfully teaching it, not forcing others to believe it. (Ezekiel 3:17-19)

† When discussing fulfilled prophecy, some people will examine the evidence honestly while others will reject it without consideration. Our responsibility is to continue presenting Scripture faithfully. (Matthew 24:34; Revelation 1:1-3)

† We should remain patient and gracious when teaching others, but we must also recognize that each person is responsible for how they respond to God's truth. (2 Timothy 2:24-26)

Q & A Appendix

Q: Does Paul encourage believers to remain ignorant?

A: No. Paul is addressing those who choose to reject revealed truth after it has been presented. The warning concerns willful ignorance, not lack of opportunity to learn. (1 Corinthians 14:37-38)

Q: Should we stop teaching people who disagree?

A: No. We should continue teaching truth, but we must recognize that some people will ultimately reject it. (2 Timothy 2:24-26)

Q: Can someone hear the truth and still reject it?

A: Yes. Scripture repeatedly shows that many heard God's truth and still chose not to believe it. (John 12:37-40)

Q: Is Paul telling Christians to ignore false teaching?

A: No. Paul repeatedly instructed believers to teach, correct, and rebuke error. Here he is addressing those who continue rejecting the truth after it has been clearly presented. (2 Timothy 4:2-4; Titus 1:9)

Q: Why do some people reject fulfilled prophecy even when the time statements are clear?

A: The same reason many rejected Jesus in the first century. Preconceived traditions can become stronger than a person's willingness to follow what the text plainly says. (Matthew 24:34; Revelation 1:1-3; John 7:47-48)

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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† 1 Corinthians 14:38

† John Chrysostom; Matthew Henry

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