

ESCAPING BONDAGE TO PRESENT-DAY PHARISAISM
"Part V: Liberated Choices For Educating Our Children"
(John 17:15; John 7:14-17; Acts 4:13)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

(1) As we all know, there has existed a great debate on just **where** parents should **educate** their children. Dr. Dobson's April 1991 issue of Focus on the Family, p. 2-5 displays samples of the arguments:

(a) Ken Wackes of Westminster Academy in Fort Lauderdale gave his case favoring Christian schooling, p. 2-3. He said that "children are cheated in a school system that excludes God [such as in the public school] . . . the Scriptures are clear. Public schools are a mission field for Christian teachers and administrators . . . but they're not suitable schooling environments for children of Christian parents."

(b) On the other hand, Guy Doud, the 1986 National Teacher of the Year argues for public school education. He said: "In Matthew 25:40, Jesus said: 'Whatever you do to the least of these my brethren, so you do unto me.' What about the "least of these" who will never have any alternative other than to attend public schools? Don't we need to make public schools the best we can for them?"

(c) Susan Beatty, Co-founder of the Christian Home Educators Association of California trumpeted the case for homeschooling. She wrote: "If you've thought through your biblical responsibility before the Lord and can fulfill it through a traditional school, that's fine. But my husband and I believe such schools have replaced the final authority of the parents. The best way we can educate our children is through one-on-one tutoring."

(2) The issue is made hard by *problems* with the various types:

(a) Some public educators have tried to teach girls in separate schools to bring their science and math scores up to par with that of boys. Never mind that boys are five times more likely to attempt suicide, strong feminism in public schools has never led to all boy school efforts to develop the mental health for boys! (Kathleen Parker, recent editorial in the Waterbury Rep.-Am.)

(b) Guy Doud, 1986 National Teacher of the Year reports how some parents have reported to him how Christian schools may push errant doctrinal beliefs, become cliquish or, as in one case, have a leader who is sexually abusive, *Ibid.*, Foc. on the Fam., p. 4.

Well, **without trying to stir up feelings on this sensitive subject, where should a parent school his child, and WHY?!**

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . .)

Need: "I have heard so much debate on the issue, and there are so many problems in America's schools today that I feel I'm in a haze on WHERE I should educate my child! I know the Pastor respects each parent's choice on the issue, but what does GO D teach?!"

I. Where a child is schooled is not the deciding factor in his training:

- A. The theologically conservative Pharisees (Mtt. 23:2-3) taught their children in their rabbinical schools, B.K.C.N.T., p. 299-300, 363.
- B. However, Jesus and the Disciples who were not privileged to have such training were nevertheless **vastly** superior in their grasp of truth than were the Pharisees, Jn. 7:16-17; Acts 4:13.

II. Thus, we look beyond WHERE a child is schooled to see HOW he gains a solid education to understand how best to educate him:

- A. The child's **personal godliness BEST** influences **how well he learns**:
 - 1. The three major efficiency factors in learning are (a) the principle of **rest** [taking a break between memorizing efforts], (b) the principle of **recitation** [repeating a subject to learn it] and (c) the principle of viewing the **whole** versus the **part** [getting an overview of what is to be learned], cf. Compton's Encyclopedia, v. 12, p. 171-172.
 - 2. Each of these efficient learning habits is **hindered** or **helped**, depending on whether the child is godless or led by the Holy Spirit:
 - a. The sin nature yields unrest where the godly child exhibits peace and self-control to **rest** between memorizing sessions, Gal. 5:22f
 - b. The sin nature yields impatience where the godly child is patient and self-controlled to **recite** long enough to learn, Gal. 5:22-23.
 - c. The sin nature is so self-centered that the ungodly child finds it hard to evaluate an overview outside of his immediate world; the Spirit leads the godly child constantly to see the **overview** of the meaning of **history** (Jn. 16:8-13) putting him at a learning advantage of **habitually** noting the overview of **all** he evaluates.
- B. His role in the **angelic conflict** must also affect his **tendency** to learn:
 - 1. Christ prayed for His own that God would not take them out of the world, but rather keep them from Satan's **control**, Jn. 17:15.
 - 2. Since the **world** is Satan's **domain**, achieving that state involves a **spiritual -- not** a geographical -- dimension, 1 Jn. 5:19b with 4:4b.

3. Thus, Christ's words in John 17:15 reveal that a child's liberty from the evil Satan's control, and thus his tendency to learn well is **not** as affected by **where** he is schooled as it is to whether or not he is **spiritually related to Christ wherever** he is being schooled!
- C. Now, in this **spiritual conflict**, the **parent** (guardian) plays a **key** role:
1. God ordains a **parent** to have jurisdiction over a child, Eph. 6:1-4.
 2. Accordingly, **where** a child is **schooled** should be decided in keeping with God's will revealed **only** to the child's **PARENTS!**
 3. Thus, replacing the **parent's** rule re: where a child is to be schooled violates God's order, leaving the child vulnerable to defeat in the angelic conflict regardless of where he is schooled !
- D. We can illustrate this parental role significance in the life of Christ:
1. We know from Rev. 12:4-5 that Satan tried to kill Jesus as a child.
 2. Yet, God led Jesus' guardian to make choices that protected him:
 - a. God led Joseph via his **parental protective** concerns, Mtt. 2:22.
 - b. God led Joseph to have Jesus schooled in despised Nazareth in accord with his affinities for his **own unique** background, Mtt. 2:23 with Luke 2:4-5; 2:39: (a) When Joseph returned from Egypt, he found the murderous king Archelaus ruled on Judea's throne, Mtt. 2:22a. (b) Though Jesus was Messiah, God warned Joseph not to settle there, 22b. (c) Thus, concerned for Jesus' welfare, and inhibited from settling in Judea, Joseph turned north to settle where he felt most at ease, in "safer" **hometown** Nazareth, Luke 2:4-5; 2:39. (d) Though most parents in Israel would have **avoided** settling their children in such a **despised location** for their **religious education**, (Jn. 1:45-46), this place nevertheless fulfilled Scripture. God used Joseph's instinct to "hide" in his hometown as guidance for Jesus' **location** to shield him from Satan's harm! (e) The Holy Spirit took up the slack for Jesus' education, tutoring Him very well, Lk. 2:40; Is. 49:1-2

Application: For a child's healthy, effective educational development, (1) the PARENTS must get right with God (see IV,A-D above). (2) Then, the PARENTS -- no other adult or institution -- must follow God's leading of themselves in rearing the child and selecting WHERE he is to be schooled! (3) In the process, as the child is led to faith in Christ and the filling of the Holy Spirit, he will obtain the characteristics of the Spirit necessary to REST, RECITE and note the OVERVIEW of what he notices in his education to AUGMENT his capacity to learn well!

Lesson: Since it is the SPIRITUAL realm that is the key to a child's development, NO ONE but the child's God-sanctioned GUARDIAN must decide WHERE the child is reared or schooled! Failure to heed this rule is legalism that leaves a child vulnerable to defeat in the angelic conflict.

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

World magazine last Sunday, and noted that there were two articles in it that exposed on the one hand serious failures in public education, and on the other a serious theological problem taught at a recent Homeschool Convention.

(1) On page 19, Los Angeles Times syndicated columnist, Cal Thomas wrote how the American public schools are falling far behind schools of other nations on math and science educational levels. His article was titled, "Reform is too little."

He detailed how Secretary of Education, Terrell Bell in 1981 created a National Commission on Excellence in Education. Two years later, he concluded in a report, A Nation at Risk, that "Many 17-year-olds do not possess the 'higher order' intellectual skills we should expect of them. Nearly 40 percent cannot draw inferences from written material; only one-fifth can write a persuasive essay; only one-third can solve a mathematics problem requiring several steps."

(2) On the other hand, page 29 detailed a very errant closing remark made by a leader at the Christian homeschool convention. The woman said, "I want to leave you with this final thought. This life is only a breath in comparison to eternity. We must fix our minds and hearts on the long view, doing all we can to bring our families with us into God's glory. [She felt that homeschooling was a good means to that end!] I want to quote a line from a song that means a lot to me. It was written by a good friend and a fellow homeschooling parent. Thing about this: 'Will heaven be heaven if my children aren't there?'"

The editor commented on this remark, saying: "Of course we long for the salvation of our children, and we have no greater joy than to see them walking in the truth . . . But what makes heaven 'heavenly' is not the presence of our offspring, and to suggest . . . that it does is totally out of order for a professing Christian . . . such a statement implies nothing short of **idolatry** -- setting up an object of desire that rivals God himself."

Thus, there is no innate perfection in the LOCATION used for schooling our children on this earth. We PARENTS must lean upon God, NOT another adult or institution's claim for where we must best educate our children! Our children's educational welfare takes **divine intervention** WHEREVER they must learn!