



The phrase “I thought...” has been used many times as a defense or justification for mistakes a person has made. If you think about it, it is very possible that each reader of this article has at one time or another used this phrase of something similar to try to explain why something was done.

Paul used this phrase as he stood before king Agrippa making his defense concerning the things the Jews had falsely accused him of doing. In Acts 26:9 he said, “Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.” These words were spoken about the persecution he had brought upon the church of Christ (see verses 10-11). Paul thought he was doing God’s will by persecuting these Christians. But he thought wrong.

During a time of peace for king David, he realized that he was living in a grand palace of stone, cedar and gold, while the ark of God resided in tents. He thought that he should remedy this situation by building a grand temple. He relayed his thoughts to Nathan the prophet of God in 2 Samuel 7:1-2. Nathan thought this was a good idea and replied to the king, “Go, do all that in your heart, for the Lord is with you” (verse 3b). In their minds, both David and Nathan thought this was an excellent idea. But that night God spoke to Nathan telling him to go and speak to David and tell him that since God had never spoken a word to anyone saying, “Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?” that David could not build a temple for Him. Man’s thinking was not God’s thinking.

God Himself has said, “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher

than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8-9). Paul said, “For ‘Who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?’ But we have the mind of Christ” (1 Corinthians 2:16). It is through the word of God that a person is instructed in the ways of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17). God’s mind is revealed to us in the Scriptures. Moses wrote, “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law” (Deuteronomy 29:29).

There were many problems in the church at Corinth. One of the commands that Paul put forth for the brethren in the church at Corinth to learn from him and Apollos “...not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other” (1 Corinthians 4:6b). They were taking pride in their own wisdom and it was causing prideful division and errors in the church.

At the churches in Galatia they were perverting the gospel according to the thinking of the Judaizing teachers who were adding the Law of Moses on circumcision to the Law of Christ. These Judaizing teachers believed they were right in requiring the Gentiles to be circumcised. But Paul said that those who believed and practiced such had perverted the gospel of Christ and had fallen from Grace (Galatians 1:6-9; 5:4).

When it comes to religion and a person’s relationship with God, the phrase “I thought...” is woefully insufficient and may very well lead to eternal condemnation. Christians must put their trust in “Thus says the Lord...” for their thinking and doing. God has promised that this will lead to eternal salvation (John 14:23; Hebrews 5:9; 1 John 2:3-5, 24-25).