

Earlier we discussed the responsibility of man to preserve the presentation of the pure Word of God. We don't want this word to become a cliché. It must appear sparkling pure and clean to the world. We must not bend it out of shape to suit our own purposes. The idea of bending metal gives us another way to look at this issue. In Acts 13.10, Paul said to Elymas, the sorcerer, 'Will you not stop making crooked the straight ways of God?' Here was a man that had taken the metal of the word and bent it into a shape that he considered more suited to his own selfish purposes.

If you have ever tried to bend back a piece of metal into its original shape, you can imagine what a problem this is. Perhaps you put a little dent in the fender of someone's car, and you would just give anything to pop it back into place so that the owner would never notice. It is very difficult to put it back like it was. In the initial action, part of the structure was irreversibly torn so that a return to the original perfection is impossible.

In Ecclesiastes 7.13 we read, 'Consider the work of God, For who is able to straighten what He has bent?' This is a similar way of looking at the problem. God has made truth into a certain shape or pattern. If we were to try to straighten it perfectly, we would find this impossible. It's sort of like trying to bend a coat hanger till it has no noticeable kinks in it.

Once a young high school student was entrusted with one of the school's musical instruments. This was a beautiful new French Horn with brilliant golden-looking metal and a shiny lacquer finish. When his first half-time show had been completed and he was allowed to return his instrument to the band room, he chose to run across a small field as the quickest route. He soon discovered a ditch about half-way across this field, and tumbled into it. He wasn't hurt, but as he approached the lights of the band room he saw that the once beautiful bell of the French Horn was squashed flat. He bent it back into the basic shape that it once held, but there were so many crinkles in the metal that it looked terrible. He then had to present this to the band director feeling very guilty for the way he had dealt with his responsibility.

It is interesting to note that in the case of the musical instrument, not only the appearance was affected by the accident, but the quality of the sound was marred as well. The instrument was taken to a local music shop and after some labor and cost, returned to its original appearance. The young man was once again entrusted to take care of it.

As we mentioned before, the truth has been given to us for a time to use, and God depends on us to present the pure gospel to the world. We must be so very careful not to mess it up. We want to motivate people to love God and see His goodness, and to come and worship Him. But this will not happen if we try to reshape the gospel to our own tastes.