



THE LENEXA EDIFIER

John 8:32 And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

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WHEN IS IT ANOTHER GOSPEL?

Jim Stauffer

Gal. 1:6 *I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel; 7 which is not another gospel: only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema. 9 As we have said before, so say I now again, If any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema.*

I realize some people are turned off when they read articles that contain a negative connotation. Yet, when someone notices the house is on fire we are all thankful they told us rather than let us burn.

Paul is telling the Galatians the house is on fire. Let us break his message down to see not only the bottom line but also how he arrives there.

He first laments they have so quickly changed from the gospel he preached to them. There are two factors he calls to their attention to help them see. 1) It is not another gospel but rather a perversion or change to what he preached. 2) They need to understand they removed themselves from the One who called them in the grace of Christ when they accepted this change in the gospel. The One who called them was Christ and He called them through the very gospel Paul had preached there as he had everywhere (**1 Cor. 2:1,2; 15:1-4**).

Paul next identifies the stability of the gospel he preached by saying neither he nor an angel from heaven could alter or change it. A great lesson is taught with this principle. That lesson is the gospel of Jesus Christ, the word of God, the very truth itself, cannot be changed. God's word originates with His omniscience. Since He knows all that has been, is now and ever will be, there will be no need for changes or updates to the word of God regardless of the supposed advances we seem to think have occurred in our society. It will always be the irrevocable truth the believers in Jesus can rely on. (**John 14:6; 18:37**)

This precious truth is so valuable to man it must never be changed or its power will be eliminated. Paul tells us it is the *power of God unto salvation* (**Ro. 1:16**).

Like any other power, when it is modified it loses its value or strength. We recognize what dilution or alteration does to chemicals. If medicine is watered down it no longer cures. If applications designed to protect crops from insects or other varmints who would destroy them are diluted they fail to accomplish their purpose. The purpose of the gospel is to save the eternal soul of man from perdition. If it is altered it will not. Thus Paul issues a stern warning to any who would change it. He says let them be anathema or accursed.

Paul makes it very clear the gospel he preached to them was the pure, unadulterated truth. He says in **verse 14** he received it from Christ Himself, not from any man. The clear teaching here is that man has no role or authority in the determination of the message itself. He is simply the messenger of the word Jesus has dispensed.

The Galatians were plagued by some with Jewish heritage who were not content to allow the new covenant Jesus died to implement come into effect at the expense of the Old Testament Law. As a result they wished to attach circumcision from the Law of Moses to the covenant Christ died for. Paul explained to them in this epistle that would dilute, alter and diminish the power of the gospel and cost them their souls. (**Gal. 5:4; 6:12-14**)

We may face different alterations today than those encountered by the Galatians. If, however, anyone teaches something contrary to the gospel message found in Scripture, he is to be accursed. It then behooves us to examine carefully who we believe and teach in light of His word.

Let us use one very common alteration to the gospel that is widely taught today. Salvation by faith only. A very prominent scholar is attached to this doctrine; Martin Luther. (Many others as well) There are two questions that must be answered. Is salvation by faith only in harmony with the gospel of Christ or is it something introduced by a man?

Luther attempts to establish his teaching by using passages from **Romans 4**. The difficulty he faces is harmonizing **Romans 4** with **James 2** and other passages. Since he believed they were not in harmony

he discounted the veracity of **James** and clung to his understanding of **Romans 4**.

In the passages of Romans 4, Paul sets forth the principle that God reckoned righteousness to Abraham because of his faith in God and not because of his works. The principle is that man can only receive righteousness by the grace of God and that God only reckons a man righteous if he is a man of faith. I believe we can all agree on that point. He then applies this principle to Jewish Christians who were attempting to cling to circumcision as a requirement for righteousness. Circumcision represented a work of the Law of Moses and since Christ nailed that law to the cross, circumcision was no longer an act of faith. It was not taught as part of the gospel. Now does this tell us Abraham was made righteous by **faith alone**? No!

The writers of both **Hebrews** and **James** explain just what kind of faith Abraham had and the kind of faith God demands of us. **Heb. 11:8** says Abraham acted on his faith when he answered the call of God to leave his home and go to a place God would show him. It is obvious Abraham demonstrated his faith by his obedience. In **James 2:14-26**, the writer illustrates why faith is by using Abraham as an example. He does this to teach the need for brethren to take action to help the needy. When someone does not have the necessities of life it does no good to say we believe in God and not provide for them the things they need. He says this kind of faith is dead and in essence is not faith at all.

The example he uses is the occasion when Abraham took Isaac up to Mt. Moriah to offer him as a sacrifice to God as God had commanded. Now we know God prevented this from happening and explained this proved Abraham as a man of faith (**Gen. 22:14-18**).

James says Abraham was justified by works in offering Isaac (**vs 20**). He says in **verse 26**, *faith apart from works is dead*. **Verse 23** then refers to **Gen. 15:6** and quotes, *And Abraham believed God and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness and he was called the friend of God*.

We can clearly see James is saying the same thing Paul says in Romans. A man is justified by faith. It is made clear that faith leads a man to obedience. Luther or any other man can attempt to define obedience as a work of merit if they choose, but that is not what Paul, James and the writer of the book of Hebrews say.

Can you see then this salvation by faith only concept is an alteration of the gospel? It is a perversion of the gospel of Jesus Christ and therefore removes us from the One who called us by the grace of God through the gospel. Anyone who teaches and preaches this alteration of the gospel will, according to the Apostle Paul, be accursed.

Please don't be offended when someone tells you the house is on fire.

Simply Christians

We read with interest the reports on every hand of the growing disenchantment with present religious

forms which originated in the Middle Ages and have become meaningless. We hear of displeasure with denominational structures and their pronouncements which reflect only the preferences of influential elite, ignoring the convictions of the rank and file. Because of these aspects of modern religion, some have decided that Christianity is not even relevant to this day and age. We believe they have so decided because they are not sufficiently acquainted with the scriptures to be able to distinguish between the relevant gospel of Christ, and the things men have added to religion since, and which truly are not relevant to serving God.

If some of these things have troubled you, and you have felt an urge, or even a yearning, to return to the simple uncomplicated religion of Christ, and if you have felt the desire to strip away all non-essential elements of religion and simply abide by the truths of Christ, truths which alone can transform the soul and bind it to God, let us suggest that such a possibility actually exists.

Let us begin with one essential fact. Jesus Christ is the Son of God. His coming (**Gen. 49:10**), His mission (**Is. 53; Zech. 6:13**), and His new message (**Jer. 31:31-33**) were all foretold in the Old Testament, which Jehovah used to govern Israel until the Christ should come and establish the New for all mankind (**Gal. 3:19**)!

The New Testament is the word of Christ. It reveals the religion of Christ (**Heb. 9:15-17**). By studying it we become aware that among the followers of Christ no denominational organizations have existed whatsoever. All such began at a later time. We see people hearing the gospel and in faith obeying the conditions of God's grace. That is, they turned to God and were baptized in order to be forgiven of their sins. Being thus saved, they were added to the Lord's people, or church (**Acts 2:36-47**). As the gospel spread, we find them assembling together in congregations in various localities. Each congregation was under its own elders (**Acts 14:23**) and no one else on earth. These elders could not make laws or be masters. They were given the responsibility of tending and caring for the congregation as shepherds would a flock (**Acts 20:17,28; 1Pet. 5:1-3**)! The only headquarters those disciples knew was heaven, where their head Jesus Christ was and is (**Eph. 1:22-23**).

Their worship was something to participate in, not something to watch. On the first day of the week, for instance, they would eat the Lord's Supper and hear preaching (**Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23-29**). They would share their mutual responsibilities by sharing their prosperity, and we find contributions being collected on no other day than the first day of the week (**1 Cor. 16:1-2**). Incidentally, no hierarchy could tax them or tell them how much to give. They had no organizations clamoring for their support. They gave as they individually purposed in their own heart (**2 Cor. 9:6-7**). In their assemblies they all would sing (**Eph. 5:19**), and all pray with various ones leading (**1 Cor. 14:15-16**). In all this they were all necessarily involved, for each saved person was a priest (**Rev. 1:5-6**). No one could perform his service or worship for him.

They lived godly lives. They cared for their poor. They taught others. They sent out preachers where they could not go. With simplicity of faith and fervor there was no need of centralization. Without organized machinery the gospel was preached throughout civilization in a short time (**Col. 1:23**). These disciples of Christ were known as Christians (**Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16**). They wore no sectarian names. Their religion was not sensual or materialistic. They sought not to impress men with pious ceremony. They sought to impress God with the only thing that has ever impressed him, contrite obedience (**1 Sam. 15:22**). Their appeal was not social or recreational. They offered the gospel to a troubled world for it was God's power to save (**Rom. 1:16**), and any other appeal was beneath them.

"If only such could be today," many say. But it is! Free men and women over the earth have despaired of denominationalism, seeing in it no necessity or relevance and only a cause of division. They desire the simplicity of what Christ authored. They are related and connected only in Christ and not in some earthly organization.

A group of such people meets within minutes of where you live. We are just Christians. We worship and serve God in the same way as the early disciples. Christ is our only creed and the Scriptures our only guide. We are not members of any human denomination, but simply a congregation, or church, of Christ. We would like thus to share Christ with you and with the entire world.

You too can be just a Christian and serve God without belonging to any denomination, bound by no denominational laws or obligations. If such freedom appeals to you, please visit with us, or contact us.

by Dale Smelser - THE BEACON - Electronic Edition - 12/8/15

Does Jesus Live at Your House?

A Bible class teacher had told her five year olds that Jesus was not simply a man who lived hundreds of years ago, but that He is alive and well today. One of her more enthusiastic little boys decided that he would begin knocking doors in his neighborhood to see if Jesus could be found. Up and down his street he went, looking for Jesus. Knocking at each door, he would ask, "Does Jesus live here?"

It was a good question for the surprised neighbors then, and it is a good question for us today. Does Jesus live at your house? Would Jesus be comfortable at your house if he came for a visit? Would you be honored to have Jesus as your guest, or would there be too many adjustments to make?

Sadly, it is sometimes true that the perfect gentleman at the office is a tyrant at home. The woman who is the sweetest teacher at school is the most hateful mother on her street. The kindest of neighbors is sometimes the most unfair spouse imaginable. When these things are true, Jesus has not been incorporated into daily life. Jesus intended for His influence to

penetrate even into our family circle. His New Testament teaches that *"husbands are to love their wives and show no bitterness toward them"* (**Col 3:19**). *"Wives are to love their husbands and children"* (**Titus 2:4**). *"Children are to obey and honor their parents"* (**Eph 6:4**).

It is tragic to see a family destroyed because the spirit of Jesus has been excluded. Husbands and wives who constantly quarrel; Children who demonstrate disrespect for their parents; Adults turning to alcohol, and children taking drugs - all give evidence to the absence of Christ in someone's life. When Christ is included (and not left at the church building) a family can enjoy each other's company. There will be kisses, pats on the back, and forgiveness.

Is Jesus living at your house?

By Jim R. Everett

Injured By A Friend!

As Christians, we must expect to be persecuted and ridiculed by those of this world. Jesus said: *"And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake"* (**Luke 21:17**). This is not surprising - it was the very treatment that Jesus Himself received. *"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you"* (**John 15:18**). Paul wrote: *"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution"* (**2 Timothy 3:12**).

The harsh treatment of the world is always hard to endure, but what is worse is when the mistreatment comes from those who claim to love us. Too often we are assailed by those closest to us - our own brethren.

David spoke of the terrible hurt he experienced from a friend. *"For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it.- neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: but it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company"* (**Psalms 55:12-14**).

Have you been hurt by someone close to you? Have you been betrayed by a brother in Christ? Have you been wronged by those who should have loved you and treated you with kindness and affection? Don't imagine that you are the first to be misused in this way. What you have experienced has been common to God's faithful people throughout the ages.

How shall we deal with this sort of painful "wound?" In the same context quoted above, David gives the answer. *"As for me, I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me. Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice"* (**Psa. 55:16-17**).

In the most difficult of times, continue to trust in God and serve him faithfully. Even when betrayed by a friend, maintain your confidence in Him. Remember, *"your labor is not in vain in the Lord"* (**1 Corinthians 15:58**).

- by Greg Gwin

Eph. 2:19 So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;

1Pet. 2:9 But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Psa. 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

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Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

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NEWS AND NOTES:

PLEASE REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING IN YOUR PRAYERS: GRANT CLOTHIER, MARY CZIRR, J.R. DANIEL AND JAN PATRICK.

STEVE WIMP CONTINUES HIS RECOVERY AT HOME.

BIBLE CLASSES: SUNDAY AND WEDNESDAY: THE THEME OF THE BIBLE - JIM STAUFFER

SUNDAY SERMON: THE KINDNESS OF GOD



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10