

THE GOSPEL

TRUTHS ONE MUST SEE AND BELIEVE IN ORDER TO BE SAVED

I must accept a Holy God's evaluation of me.

When Isaiah saw God, he cried out...**"Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts."** (Isaiah 6:3) And though our tendency is to view ourselves or others from a relative standard, God's evaluation of us stems from His holy character and will so that He declares ...

"For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not." (Ecc. 7:20)

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)

"They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." (Romans 3:12)

Furthermore, it appeals to the pride of man to think that there is some good in him that could make himself acceptable to God. But again the Bible says...

"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." (Isaiah 64:6)

"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one." (Romans 3:10)

This of course, is the bad news.

I must see what God has provided for me through Christ's death and resurrection.

The good news of the Gospel of grace centers in what Jesus Christ accomplished for us on the cross of Calvary. Though God's justice demanded the punishment of death or separation, Jesus Christ died in our place, taking the penalty or punishment we justly deserved.

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." (Romans 5:6)

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:6)

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." (Hebrews 2:9)

His sacrifice for our sins paid the penalty in full, satisfying God's holy demands completely.

"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." (Hebrews 10:12)

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." (1 Peter 3:18)

And why did He do all this for us? Because He truly loves us and wants to save us from eternal hell.

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 4:9-10)

I must believe eternal salvation and life is a gift to me apart from religious works.

Since Christ fully paid for our sins when He died, what sins remain to be atoned for by our good works? None! Salvation is not a reward for good people, it is the gift of God for sinners who trust in Jesus Christ alone.

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23)

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Think for a moment, if you could go to heaven by living a moral life, trying to keep the Ten Commandments, being baptized, going to church, etc., why would Jesus Christ have had to die for you and your sins? It would have been for nothing!

"I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." (Galatians 2:21)

"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." (Romans 3:28)

"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." (Romans 4:5)

Good works are to be the result of salvation, they are never the means to be saved.

"Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:9-10)

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." (Titus 3:5)

"This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men." (Titus 3:8)

I must rest by faith in God's promise and assurance to me.

God's free salvation is personally received through an act of childlike faith in Jesus Christ as your Savior.

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." (John 1:12)

You need not wonder any longer regarding your eternal destiny. Read God's promise to the one who transfers their faith from their works to Christ's finished work for them.

"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." (1 John 5:11-13)

Do you know for sure where you will spend eternity? If you don't know, you don't go.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." (John 5:24)

God is offering to you the free gift of eternal life on the basis of His amazing grace. Jesus Christ, God the Son, has paid for this wonderful gift by the supreme sacrifice - He gave His life by shedding His blood to save you.

However, God's available salvation is of no personal value to you until you receive it through trusting in Christ alone. While you may have seen before that faith in Christ was necessary for salvation, do you see how that FAITH ALONE IN CHRIST ALONE is enough? Jesus Christ's last words on the cross were... **"IT IS FINISHED [PAID IN FULL]"** (John 19:30).

"And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." (Acts 16:31)

"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John 3:17)

"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" (John 11:25-26)

**Amazing grace! how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.**

**'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved.
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!**

WRONG RESPONSES TO THE GOSPEL

(The only proper RESPONSE to the Gospel is simply to BELIEVE it.)

Before we look at the wrong responses to Gospel, let us call your attention to the only right response to the Gospel. One is saved by God's grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone based on His finished work alone. In light of Christ's death for our sins and bodily resurrection, the issue in salvation is **not do**, but **done**. The basis is **not our walk**, but **Christ's finished work**. The means is **not works** but simply **faith**.

Let us not garble the Gospel, nor muddle the means to everlasting life by confusing the condition of salvation through telling people such erroneous conditions or wrong responses such as...

- **"asking Jesus into your heart"**... as He comes when you believe the Gospel, not by asking Him in. (John 1:12; Galatians 4:6)
- **"giving your life to Christ"**... as He does not want your "dead-in-trespases and sins" life, but wants to give you a new life in Christ. (John 10:11; 2 Corinthians 5:17)
- **"making a commitment to Christ"**... as salvation is not assured by your promise/pledge to Christ but on God's promise/pledge to you. (1 John 2:25, 5:13)
- **"turning over the controls of your life to Christ"**... as Romans 12:1 is an exhortation to believers ("brethren"), not to unbelievers.
- **"believing plus baptism"**... as a believer's baptism is to be done as a public testimony of one's faith and identification with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection as a result of being saved $\frac{3}{4}$ not as a means to salvation. (1 Corinthians 1:17; Acts 8:36-38, 18:8)
- **"believing and keeping the Ten Commandments"**... as God never designed the Ten Commandments to be a way of salvation, but to show us our sin and need of the Saviour. (Romans 3:20, 3:28; Gal. 2:16, 21, 3:10, 3:24-26)

- **“submitting to Christ’s mastery / lordship in your life”**... as James 4:7-10 is clearly a passage for believers (1:2, 1:16, 1:19, 2:1, 3:1, 3:10, 3:12, 4:1, 4:11), not for unbelievers. And while there is no debate that Christ is Lord, the issue in salvation is... **“BELIEVE on the LORD JESUS CHRIST and thou shalt be saved.”** (Acts 16:31)
- **“repenting of or confessing your sins”**... as 1 John 1:9 is a condition for believers to have “fellowship” with God (1 John 1:3, 6, 7) as a child of God (1 John 2:1), not a means to be born again for the unsaved (John 1:12-13). And while one must see he is a sinner before a holy God in order to see his need of a Saviour, the solution is not confessing ones sins to God. Instead, it is believing that Christ made full payment for your sins upon the cross (1 John 2:2, 4:9-10). Otherwise, how many sins must you repent of, how often, in what areas, and how perfectly in order to know you are saved? Confusing, isn't it? One must repent (change their mind) about trusting Jesus Christ versus something else.
- **“praying the sinner’s prayer”**... which is found nowhere in the Bible. Where do you find anyone in Scripture leading someone else in prayer to be saved? Nowhere!
- **“coming forward”**... as the issue is not getting out of your seat, but coming to Christ by faith in Him alone. (John 6:35-40)

Now I can almost hear someone screaming out, “But isn’t this all simply a matter of semantics?” My reply to that objection is “yes” and “no” depending on what you mean. Yes, it is a matter of semantics if you mean that word meanings and definitions are very important. On the other hand, this is not a matter of semantics if you mean that “trusting in Jesus Christ alone” and one of these inaccurate, misleading statements are really saying the same thing.

When the Holy Spirit directed the writers of Scripture to record in perfect accuracy the inerrant Word of God, He knew the difference between “pisteuo” (believe) and “aiteo” (ask), or “homologeoo” (confess) or “hupotasso” (submit) or “didomi” (give). Over a hundred plus times in the New Testament, the Holy Spirit decided that “pisteuo” (believe) would be the word used to describe the one and only condition of salvation.

Dear friend, if “pisteuo” (believe) was good enough for the Holy Spirit, is it not good enough for you? I exhort you. Do not let your pride (“I’ve taught that cliché in the past”) or your emotions (“I’ve prayed this with my kids”) or your religious traditions (“our church has always said that”) get in the way of truth and biblical accuracy on the most important issue that anyone must address. I appeal to you to do away with these “sacred cows” of modern evangelicalism, and let us return to the authoritative Word of God to embrace what the Lord says about our eternal salvation.

*And brought them out, and said, **Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved....*** (Acts 16:30-31)