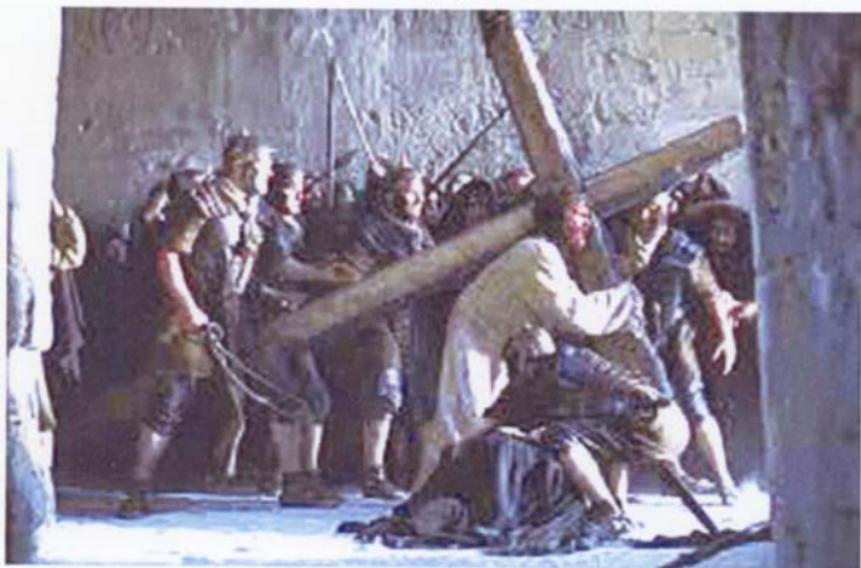




The works of man
or



The work of God through Christ Jesus

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1. The works of man presented unto God in faith

“So it came about in the course of time Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the ground” ————— “But for Cain and for his offering He (God) had no regard so Cain became very angry and his countenance fell” (Genesis 4:3, 5).

Adam's two sons, Cain and Abel, knew that to have fellowship with God a blood sacrifice was required. After Adam's disobedience, God gave a promise to Adam, which included all of his offspring. The promise of God to man was that a Redeemer would come to deliver him from the devil's power on the earth

(Genesis 3:15). Man, to show that he had faith in God's promise, was to bring a blood sacrifice to the Altar of God. This was shown to Adam when God killed an animal, (shed its blood). The covering of animal skins God put on Adam and his wife covered the nakedness of their sin (Genesis 3:21). Yet Cain brought a sacrifice to God from the produce of the ground, the labor of his own hands.

Cain did not bring a blood sacrifice; he was a materialist. He saw the work he invested to produce the herbs of the ground just as valuable as God's chosen blood sacrifice, the promised Messiah. God did not accept Cain's sacrifice and He told him only if Cain offered a blood sacrifice would He accept it (Genesis 4:6-7). The response of the Creator to Cain's sacrifice angered Cain.

The Doctrine of Cain has become man's religion and his most common way to try to be acceptable to God even to this day. It is in the heart of the natural man to attempt to appease the Creator's wrath against sin with his own ideas, righteousness, and good works.

For example, many people think that if they try to keep the Ten Commandments, God will accept them. Others feel that if they listen to their conscience, do good things, and never harm

anyone, they will be acceptable to the Creator. Pursuing a religious life is another way multitudes think they will be made acceptable to God. Wars, kings, kingdoms fallen, inquisitions, people burned at the stake, heated arguments, and the many divisions in religious groups, have all taken place in attempting to be acceptable before God.

All of these and more without number have their foundation in the doctrine of Cain, which is man's religious efforts or works to be made acceptable before his Creator.

2. Believing the Bible ~~=====~~ without faith in its contents

“Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the traditions of men. Jesus also said to them, you nicely set aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition”~~=====~~
“making the word of God of none effect through your tradition which you have delivered (taught and practiced)” (Mark 7:8-9, 13).

Misplaced loyalties

In these preceding Scriptures Jesus was rebuking the Jews for changing the meaning of Scripture that they found not to their liking. As they had done this over a period of time, the people did not know what came from God (God-given) and what was

changed by the traditions of the elders to a different meaning. It is possible that most people in Israel did not even know that the elders had changed many Scriptures to coincide with their own ideas, which then became their teaching and doctrines.

Jesus strongly rebuked the Jews for corrupting the Scriptures through their human teaching and traditions. Common people believed the elders and teachers, even though some of what they taught was from God and some from man — taught as from God. The result was confusion among the people and a creation of sects in Israel. The tradition of the elders (religious leaders) changing Scripture, placed themselves as the final authority, rather than the God-given Scripture (John 10:35; 2 Timothy 3:16). The effect can be seen in the people's judgment and doctrine being corrupted (Mark 7:9-13). It has, from the beginning of time, been the common practice of man to try to fit or change God's Word into whatever man believes or practices.

“For I am the Lord, I do not change...” (Malachi 3:6). What is true of God, is also true of man. Scripture reveals man's unchanging natural nature from the Creator's perspective, *“There is none righteous, no not one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks after God”* (Romans 3:10-11). Only by the Creator giving him a new nature (2 Corinthians

5:17) and man following it, can he respond to what the divine Scriptures tell him.

What was true in Israel is also true in the professing church today. Many religious hierarchy, leaders, clergy and teachers have put aside divine revelation as revealed in Scripture and taught their own doctrines, traditions and worldly culture.

Questions we must ask ourselves

Many church people would say the Bible is God's word and should be believed. How many read the Bible or hear its teaching without denominational or sectarian glasses or hearing aids? How many believe the clergyman is better taught than the laity and should not be questioned? How many people study the Bible for the purpose of truly understanding God's mind and His purposes? Is there a true desire to follow what the Lord teaches regarding worship and gathering together unto His name alone (Matthew 18:20)? Do we know the God given inheritance and responsibility a believer has in an assembly structure (2 Timothy 2:15)? Are we functioning as a parishioner or a priest unto God (1 Peter 2:5, 9)?

Do I read or listen to Bible verses to grow in the grace and truths of Christ Jesus? How many look to the Scripture for the purpose it has been given, which is, "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof,*

for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

How many people value and seek the truth in Christ as revealed in Scripture and follow it, rather than follow their denomination, religious culture, clergyman, marriage, religious tradition, family, church friends, or their own conscience? Yet this is what Jesus required of any and all who would be His disciple or follower (Luke 14:26-27); this is the only pathway into the kingdom of God.

The sincerity of regular church attendees cannot be questioned. This can be stated as true with most people who follow any religion. The question that Pilate asked Jesus, “*what is truth*” is just as relevant today. A person who desires to follow only truth, as taught by Jesus Christ and His apostles, cannot give heed to a competing religion. A different spiritual direction results in a divided heart following after or giving loyalties to third parties, including a reader’s own desires and unscriptural ideas.

A Christian life is not based on church attendance or trusting, following and elevating a clergyman, becoming a good pew sitter or living on a religious experience. It is a life of faith based

entirely on Scriptural truth. It is a life of practicing truth, not just giving mental assent to it.

The Apostle Paul labored in Christ among various assemblies and stated the purpose of a believer who follows only the truth in Christ with a singleness of heart and vision. “...*For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ*” (2 Corinthians 11:2). The Christian is in Christ and is a full member of the bride of Christ that Jesus, at His coming (the rapture), will take unto Himself.

3. The works of Satan, accepted by man as from God

“*But I fear lest somehow, (a) as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who comes (b) preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a (c) different gospel which you have not accepted — you may well put up with it!*” (2 Corinthians 11:3-4).

(a) Serpent deceived Eve

(b) Preaches another Jesus

(c) A different gospel

(a) Serpent deceived Eve

The kingdom of darkness prevails in this world; it is Satan's ruling place, and workshop. His primary weapons and the tools he uses to build his kingdom are lies and deception. In the church, when the whole counsel of God is not taught or made known, it leaves the door open for Satan to use craftiness to mislead church people into hierarchical systems that take the place of Christ alone being the head over His saints (Matthew 23:8-10). In this place His saints meet around Him and to Him in simplicity of faith. It is a believer's inheritance as a priest of God. In other words, a church built on or around the clergyman, denomination, or a charismatic leader, rather than coming together for the sole purpose of gathering unto the Lord Jesus, is not from the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:1-4).

Jesus promised to be in the midst of those who meet and gather only to His Name, "*For where two or three are gathered*

together unto My name, I am there in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20). Those who meet and gather unto the Lord Jesus, reveal a brotherhood of God-ordained priests (1 Peter 2:5, 9; Revelation 1:5-6). This is the simplicity in Christ wherein God has called every Christian. Through Satanic corruption of the minds of men, the simplicity in Christ has been changed into the clergy/laity system, where it has been born, and where it grows, flourishes and is practiced throughout Christendom today (3 John 9-10).

(b) Preaches another Jesus

In religion today there are many who preach a Jesus that is not from the Holy Spirit or Scripture. Well known preacher/teacher, Harold Camping, teaches that Jesus Christ is Michael the Archangel; (however Mr. Camping does teach that Jesus Christ is God the Son). The cult of Jehovah’s Witness teaches that Jesus Christ is Michael the Archangel (N. H. page 30), while Mormons instruct that the Mormon Jesus Christ is Satan’s brother. They teach Jesus was a god as was Satan, both spirit children of Elohim (Smith, G D, page 70). Christian Science, Spiritualism, Scientology, Unification Church, Unity, Wicca and many more such cults deny what Scripture declares. There are many such cults flourishing today.

One identifying mark of any cult is their rejection of the Jesus Christ as He is revealed in Scripture — God, who came to earth as the Word of God, in human form (John 1:1, 14, 18; 3:13; 8:56-58; 10:30-33; 14:9). The Jesus Christ in Scripture and the Holy Spirit are One. With a different Jesus, as taught by the cults, comes another spirit and that other spirit is not the Spirit of Christ — the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:11-16; 1 John 4:3, 6). Everyone who is not born of God does not have within them the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit of Christ and the Holy Spirit are One and the same. Everyone who is born of God has within them the Spirit of Christ — the Holy Spirit (John 4:13; Romans 8:14, 16; Galatians 3:5; 1 John 4:13), Who is the embodiment of Truth (Romans 8:9).

(c) A different Gospel

“In the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel” (Romans 2:16).

The gospel of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:3-4) is “... *the gospel of the grace of God*” (Acts 20:24). The Holy Spirit shows the seriousness of giving heed to a different gospel and its eternal consequences. The Galatians were warned, “*I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there*

are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:6-9).

What has already been stated concerning the Mormons, and the new revelation Joseph Smith (founder of the Mormon gospel) said he received from an angel, is clearly another gospel. The Mormon gospel is not the gospel of Jesus Christ in the New Testament. The Jehovah Witness cult is another group with a different gospel. Their gospel is founded on the direct contradiction to the New Testament. Their gospel teaches that Jesus Christ is not the Word of God, the Son of God and God the Son, come to earth in human form, as stated in John 1:1-4, 14; 3:13; 8:51-59; 10:30-33; Acts 20:28; Hebrews 1:1-3, 8-10; Revelation 1:1-8, 12-18). Any religious body, church (so called), or others with spiritual teachings that do not teach that Jesus Christ is God come to earth in human form, as taught in Holy Scripture, is a cult and is teaching another gospel.

Homosexuality

In our day some independent and denominational churches, both small and large, as well as other religious organizations (Christian so-called), are receiving and installing practicing homosexuals and lesbians as clergy and spiritual authorities. Many times church people vote to bring in homosexual clergy. These homosexuals and lesbians become the leaders and the teachers of Scripture; the immorality of their life-style sets the spiritual condition and nature of their church or religious body. And the people say, AMEN. A similar spiritual condition was developing in Judah in Jeremiah's day. Jeremiah prophesied the word of rebuke to them by the Spirit of God (Jeremiah 5:20-31).

The Scripture tells us that the people who practice these acts of homosexuality are spiritually unclean and those practicing these acts will acquire a debased mind (Romans 1:24-32). The Scripture also tells us that people who practice these acts of sexual immorality will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). All who come under the spiritual authority of church doctrines or religious authorities that preach or teach the rightness of homosexuality, are receiving another gospel. Scripture tells us, those receiving or teaching this false gospel are living under a curse of God (Galatians 1:6-9).

The Law of Moses

“For as many as are under the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them; — “the just shall live by faith” (Galatians 3:10-11).

As previously stated, the Christian’s hope of Christ is in the gospel of Christ, found in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4. Any other message added to the gospel of Jesus Christ is another gospel. The Holy Spirit has made this clear in the epistle to the Galatians. In this epistle, circumcision was added to the gospel of Jesus Christ. One thing is very clear in Scripture, adding circumcision or any of the other 612 laws of Moses to the gospel is another gospel.

In the church today, it is not uncommon to hear church people quote some point of the Law of Moses, and try to follow it as a path of faith. For example, the Sabbath keepers will quote God’s instruction to Israel to keep the Sabbath (Exodus 20:10-11). Holiness church people will try to incorporate the Nazarite vow to never consume wine or similar drink (strong drink, Numbers 6:1-3). This can also be said of those who keep the food laws found in the Law of Moses (Leviticus chapter 11). They believe they achieve a nearness to God and holiness by following these

food laws. These are only a few of the multitude of laws that have been added to the gospel.

In the greater spectrum, the church teaches and practices the Law of Moses by teaching and practicing the clergy/laity system, teaching the Jewish tithe as a Christian duty, and church membership based on church by-laws. Scripture teaches that all Christians are already members of Christ's church and body, (1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 27; Ephesians 5:30; Colossians 3:15). The ordaining of hierarchy in church leaders comes out of the Law of Moses, and imposes the doctrine of the law on the laity. It is also true that the clergy and laity, in most cases, have adapted to the Law of Moses, "...*And My people love to have it so ...*" (Jeremiah 5:31).

Deification of People

Another Gospel

"Thus says the Lord: Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the Lord (Jeremiah 17:5).

In churchianity today, some leaders are revered and held high. They are regarded as people you can trust and follow. Their words are believed, even when Scripture teaches to the contrary. For example, Benny Hinn has claimed that his power comes from

dancing on the graves of Aimee McPherson and Kathryn Kuhlman, thereby getting anointing from their bones (www://.equip.org-Benny Hinn-Word Faith Movement).

However, Scripture teaches that to seek life or the supernatural from those in the grave is an abomination to God. Scripture calls a person who does this a necromancer (Deuteronomy 18:9-12).

One can only guess how many people, who having put their faith in Benny Hinn and his gospel, have also gone to the graves of past Christian or non-Christian decomposed corpses and practiced necromancy (necromancy = worship or excessive reverence for the dead, Webster's New World Dictionary). Many of those who follow this type of gospel are found in what is called the "word faith movement". This faith movement takes the same path as the gospel of the Roman Catholic Church, where the parishioners seek wealth, truth in tradition, favor, redemption, getting out of purgatory early, divine blessing and anything else their hearts desire, through their own spiritual effort. The true followers of the Roman Catholic Church believe they can obtain these things by praying to the Roman Catholic Mary (Mariology) or Roman Catholic saints, counting rosary beads, lighting candles, or giving money.

All of these ways of seeking divine favor are either idolatry, paganism, man's works doctrine, or witchcraft. All of them are contrary to Holy Scripture. The following and practicing of any of these things is another gospel.

A Christian is given clear truth to avoid these deceptions and religious (spiritual) bondages. Scripture teaches that anyone who receives a different gospel or adds to or takes away from the gospel of Christ is accursed (Galatians 1:6-9)

The Gospel of God

Romans 1:1

“Moreover brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which you are also saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you – unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

“For by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage” (Galatians 5:1).

4. Man Giving a Polished Image of Himself Through His Works

“Behold, if He slay me, yet would I trust in Him; but I will defend mine own ways before Him” (Job 13:15 JND).

When Scriptural errors are pointed out to either clergy or church people regarding their foundational doctrines or practices, it is not uncommon for them to point to the good they are doing, or the charitable works they have done. Some clergy show the number of people in their church as proof of doing God’s work. When someone points out the wrong doing in their life or church, they display what they assume to be their righteous works to the messenger, and usually shoot the messenger in thought and words. This becomes a serious matter to the clergy, especially when their livelihood or religious position is built on their errors.

King Saul had intended to do good works for Israel and for God. Yet because of his intentions, he ignored the word of the Lord and did his own will. The Prophet Samuel told Saul that he

had violated the commandment of the Lord and that God had sought a man after His own heart to do His will. Saul thought his good intentions were a trade-off for not obeying God's commandment (Saul bestowed the Levitical priesthood upon himself) (1 Samuel 13:8-14).

In 1 Samuel chapter 15, we see again that Saul did not obey the word of the Lord. When Samuel once again rebuked him, Saul offered the good works and his intentions (in his eyes) as the reason (1 Samuel 15:1-3, 7-12). Again Samuel rebuked Saul telling him, “...*has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of Rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry...*” (1 Samuel 15:22-23).

Saul had good intentions (as religious man thinks) for not obeying the word of the Lord, and like many people today, their works take precedent over the word of the Lord. Saul had a good image of himself, even in his rebellion. Samuel then told Saul the kingdom would be taken from him (1 Samuel 15:23).

Job was a man of whom God said, “...*my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil*” (Job 1:8). God had

given Job the highest recommendation among men he could give, up to that time. Job had the blessing of God fully upon him and he knew it (Job 29:1-6). Job used the increase of God's blessing upon him (which included much wealth) to deliver the poor who cried out, help the fatherless and those who had no helper. He blessed the widows so that they sang for joy. Job walked and lived in righteousness. He was eyes to the blind, feet to the lame and a father to the poor. He searched out those in need, broke the fangs of the wicked and plucked the victim from his teeth (Job 29:12-17).

Job was revered among men as one above all men and dwelt as a king among his subjects (Job 29:7-11). He thought he would live out his days in comfort (Job 29:18-20); to all who knew him, he was the image of God. Job had a polished image of himself, because of his own righteousness and his works.

When God took His protective hedge away from Job (Job 1:10-22), Satan took away all that Job possessed, including his health, family and friends. Job did as all men would do who have a polished image of themselves. He pointed to the unfairness of God by the evidence of his own righteousness as seen in his works. In Job chapter 29, Job justifies himself saying the word "I" 19 times, "me" 14 times, "my" 18 times, a total of 51 times.

Job saw himself as righteous before God, because of his good works and his good intentions. Job said he would lay out his righteousness (Job 34:5) and his case before God (Job 23:1-4) if he could, because God was unjust to him without cause (Job 6:29; 33:8-11).

No one today with any knowledge of the kingdom of Christ can deny that there is sin in the camp (that corruption abounds in the church). This means that the word of God is not received and practiced as taught and directed by the Holy Spirit. This rejection of Scripture is seen in a divorce rate of over 50 % in the churches (according to leading marriage counselors). God has made all believers an equal brotherhood of priests (1 Peter 2:5, 9), and we are to function as such. The exercise of the believer's priesthood is rejected in Christendom in favor of the clergy/laity system, which is patterned after the Law of Moses (Matthew 23:8-10; 3 John 9-10); God calls the clergy/laity system Nicolaitanism (Revelation 2:6, 15). Homosexual clergy are received as an act of love and diversity in many denominations and churches (Romans 1:19-28; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10). Many men refuse the command of God to raise up their children, "... *bring them up in the discipline and admonition of the Lord*" (Ephesians 6:4 JND). This verse does not mean take them to

church; fathers are to instruct them in the truths of Christ and a life of faith. The responsibility of God-given headship to fathers and husbands are rejected in favor of diversity in feminism and equality of sexes. Churchmen outright rejecting Scripture and putting man's doctrines and church traditions in their place is the rule of the day (Mark 7:6-13). Women are unveiled when praying or prophesying (teaching) and are thereby teaching their daughters to do the same (1 Corinthians 11:1-16). Instead of teaching the young women to dress modestly, church women wear immodest apparel and unisex clothing and are thereby again teaching their daughters to do the same (1 Timothy 2:9). Separation unto the Lord Jesus, that is apart from the world, its culture, philosophy, dress, fleshly activities, and oneness with the spirit of the world, is just about unheard of today in most churches.

These are but a few of the sins and rebellion against the word of God that Satan has used to corrupt the church and Christian families in this day. Submission to the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit has become secondary to following the church program. All of these sins of the parents and the church are taught to the next generation as the normal Christian life.

When churchmen and church leaders are confronted with these sins, the normal response will likely be, “we are doing these good works”, we are into evangelism and going out to many places; our church is growing. Some may even say “we are in the forefront of what God is doing”. Many will say that some of the Scriptures are just culture, not to be taken seriously in our day. They believe they are rich, they are proud of what they are doing (the cults are among the fastest growing in professing Christendom). The Holy Spirit has recorded a warning to church people who say these things, as written in Matthew 7:21-23 and “*Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves...*” (2 Corinthians 13:5).

All of these answers are men’s excuses for rejection of the words of Jesus. He answers man, his religion and his philosophy with these words. “*Because you say, I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing — and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see*” (Revelation 3:17-18).

The word’s written to the church at Laodicea and individuals of that time are for individuals and the church of this age as well,

since the letter to the church at Laodicea was prophesy of our day and time (Revelation 1:3). Without faith and repentance on the part of all mankind, this condition is going to “...*grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived*” (2 Timothy 3:1, 13). In general, church people of this age need to receive the Word of the Lord: repent, and like the Apostle Paul, become converted (Acts 9:1-16). Confessing to the evil which church people are involved in and turning away from it is God’s answer for restoration. Then meeting and worshipping with those, “...*that call on the Lord out of a pure heart*” (2 Timothy 2:22) is the next step.

King Saul did not seek repentance

Saul, knowing the word of the Lord in judgment against him, did not seek the Lord through repentance. Saul instead sought to kill David (1 Samuel 19:9-15), God’s choice to be King of Israel in Saul’s place. Later when Samuel’s prophecy of Saul losing his position as King of Israel came to fulfillment, Saul turned to witchcraft. He sought out a witch to change and overturn God’s judgment on him (I Samuel 28:7-20). Repentance was not in Saul’s heart.

Job seeks repentance

The Lord spoke to Job (Job 38:1); “*Then Job answered the Lord and said: I know that You can do everything. And that no purpose of yours can be withheld from You — Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. — I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear. But now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes*” (Job 42:1-2, 3, 5-6). Job no longer looked to pride in his works and self-righteousness to justify himself.

The example of these two men is set before church people today as God’s divine record of man’s way or God’s truth.

5. The pathway of man or God’s path of light and truth?

A. I believe in God

B. Believing God according to what He has told us

A. I believe in God

“And this is the condemnation that light is come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19).

“Then Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you (John 6:53) —From that time on many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more” (John 6:66).

A wealthy young man came to Jesus and asked Him this question: *“Good teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” (Mark 10:17).* Jesus said to him: *“You know the commandments” (Mark 10:19) (Ten Commandments) ... “And he answered and said to Him, ‘Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth’. Then Jesus, looking at Him, loved him, and said to him, ‘One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross and follow me.’ But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions” (Mark 10:20-22).*

The widely used expression today, “I believe in God” (which God?) is used as a catch-all phrase. In fact it has been reported that up to 90 percent of the people in this country (USA) believe in God, with possibly 60 percent or less going to a church or other religious places. Surveys show that a high amount of clergy (especially in old-line churches) do not believe in the deity of Jesus Christ, His divine conception, or His rising from the dead. It is common in evangelical churches to believe that some of the Bible is culture (not divine truth). Others believe Jesus is not the only way to the Father (God) and heaven. Charismatic and Pentecostals and some other religious groups do not believe that the finished work of Jesus on the cross is able to save them, without their works (Charismatic and Pentecostal Dictionary, page 668).

According to a recent George Barna (a leading evangelical pollster) poll, only 9% of all American adults have a biblical worldview. Of those who say they are born again, only one in five has a biblical worldview. This means that the past, present, and future of this world, as presented Scripture, is not known to them. Of those who say they are born again, only 62% believe Jesus was sinless and only 40% believe that Satan is a real force. Many more such figures are given in his survey. He concludes

that this is because of “bad, inconsistent or non-existent teaching” (of the Bible). The Bible needs to be taught to change this downward trend. Putting his finger on the force that has come into the churches, he states “also, centering on the Bible more than the psycho-babble and self-esteem teaching we are hearing today, not even to mention occultic experiences (Third Wave Charismatic’s), occultic practices (contemplative spirituality and spiritual formation) and emergent postmodern relativism and Hegelian synthesis that are flooding into our churches.”

Jesus was crucified by the most religious people in Israel who believed in God. The devil believes in God (Matthew 4:1-11; 8:28-29). Others would say they believe in God so they try to keep the commandments (Ten Commandments). To say I believe in God, can mean almost anything to the one who makes the statement. This does not even take into account the people around the world who kill Christians and anyone else, because these victims do not believe in “their” god. They kill them in the name of, and for “their” god.

Here are a few of the doctrines and philosophies of men built on the broad religious road that people take and still say, ‘I believe in God.’ When some people are shown the gospel of

Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-4), they receive it with desire to believe the gospel. When they are told that they can have only One Master — Jesus Christ, and that they cannot follow the god of this world (the devil) through drugs, or immorality, a life of debauchery, or religion or a pursuit of self, they (like the rich young ruler) turn away from the grace of God, back to their present pursuit which is the broad road that leads to destruction (Matthew 7:13-14; 13:18-19). Other people have a religion of convenience. The extent of deception that some people follow is found in the following statement by some, “anything Scripture teaches me in how to follow Jesus which I don’t want to do or follow is not important, it’s just legalism.” The devil knows the Bible well and is quite active in religion, using the Bible (Matthew 4:1-6). The deception of the devil is quite comfortable to anyone who professes to follow Jesus — but is misled by pride, power, lust or the deceitfulness of riches, even supposed religious riches (Revelation 3:17-18).

“He who does not love Me does not keep My words...” (John 14:24).

B. Believing God according to what He has told us

“You came down also on Mount Sinai, and spoke with them from heaven, and gave them just ordinances and true laws, good statutes and commandments” (Nehemiah 9:13).

“For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me” (John 6:38).

“He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me” (John 14:24).

The person who hears and keeps the words of Jesus becomes His disciple. In becoming His disciple he learns to discern truth from error. And by following and practicing truth he becomes free from himself, religious error, worldly philosophy and demonic deception (John 8:31-31). This freedom, Jesus said, is being free from sin (John 8:34-36). We are told what sin is in 1 John 3:4, *“Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.”*

Freedom in Christ means freedom to follow every word of God in heart, soul and practice (Matthew 4:4). The person professing to be a Christian, but who does not possess the treasure of Christ as the top priority in his heart, leads a life of religious

bondage. Those people who mingle around God's water trough, but do not drink the living water, will never enter into the life it gives (John 7:37-38; Ephesians 5:26).

Freedom in Christ is not only to be free in the heart, it is freedom to put away any and all things that hinder an inward and outward walk in truth (Luke 14:26-27). This is not perfection of the person, but directional of that person's heart and life, to obey in faith every word of God.

Scripture tells us that man's ways are corrupt and unclean (Romans 3:10-18), and those who reject the words of Jesus will be judged by His words on the last Day (John 12:48). Scripture is simple and clear; man's ways and works will never make him clean (before God) (Ephesians 2:8-9). Jesus said to His apostles, "*You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you*" (John 15:3). Those who do not receive the words of His apostles do not receive Jesus (Matthew 10:14-15); because the apostles' words are the very words of God (1 Thessalonians 2:13). The church itself is the temple of God and is built on the foundation of the apostles, Christ being the Chief Cornerstone (Ephesians 2:19-22).

The Holy Spirit has been given to the Christian to lead him into all truth (John 16:13-15). As He opens up the Old Testament,

Jesus is seen throughout as the Christ who will come. In the New Testament, Jesus is revealed as God, who became man and lived among us, and fulfilled all those words written about Him in the Old Testament (Luke 24:25-26, 44-48). And what He reveals is not debatable, not controversial, not culture; nor is His revealed truth something to twist into the doctrines of men who follow the world's practices of the day. His revelation is the pathway of light to the heart of faith. The Holy Spirit brings forth the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16); as He leads, He gives discernment of false doctrine and false spirits. As the Holy Spirit reveals the truths in Scripture, it becomes a living book. When the Holy Spirit finds a heart of faith which does not doubt Scripture or hang on to self or religious flesh, He reveals Christ to that person.

The promise of God to everyone who believes what God has told us, releases the promise of bringing the Father and Son to live in him.

“Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him” (John 14:23).

6. The works of God, completed in Christ, presented to man

“Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work” (John 4:34).

“I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do” (John 17:4).

From the day that Cain brought an offering to God from the fruit of the ground (by the work of his own labor), man has attempted to find favor with God through the work of his own hands. Till the present day, man has sought favor from God through his own abilities and works. Religion is the inner man’s way of trying to put this into exercise. However, all who have tried to find favor with God by their own works and ways have failed. The reason is that God has only one standard for heaven and earth. It is His holiness, His perfection, total and complete obedience to His kingdom, and living the life He has given a person *“to the praise of His glory”* (Ephesians 1:12). It is a fruitless task to try to please God and be justified before Him through anything we can do. Who can qualify for God’s favor? With man it is impossible. *“But Jesus looked at them and said to them, “with men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible”* (Matthew 19:26).

What Jesus stated, we inherently know, we can't do. We are as the Psalmist said, "*Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me*" (Psalms 50:5). The Psalmist (King David) was aware of his own incompleteness and corruption and agreed with God. "*The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek God. They all turned aside, they have all together become corrupt; there is none who does good, no not one*" (Psalms 14:2-3). The case against man is hopeless and irreversible; God Himself has judged man's state.

God made the first man (Adam) to dwell on the earth in the state He had made him, in God's own image and likeness (Genesis 1:26-27). Adam however, following the woman, his wife Eve, listened and gave heed to the devil's lie — and lost his sinless nature and state, as did all his offspring. All men then became sinners as stated in Psalms 14:2-3.

The nature of God is love (1 John 4:8); He sent His eternal Son (the second Adam) into the world, "*...that He might destroy the works of the devil*" (1 John 3:8), and bring light and life in this world where only darkness and death exist. This planet has one common denominator – everything physically alive will die.

Jesus had only one purpose when he came into this world and dwelt among us, that was to do the works of his Father. *“Jesus answered, —‘I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work”* (John 9:3-4). Jesus said, *“As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world”* (John 9:5)

Jesus was, and is, not only the light of the world seen through carrying out His Father’s works, but He is the Author of all Life. *“All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made”* (John 1:4; Colossians 1:16). Scripture reveals that Jesus, the eternal Son of God, did not start to do the works of His Father in this world — but before the world was, God created the worlds through the Son (Hebrews 1:2).

In this world He did the works of His Father to reveal the light of God, so that all men who follow the light of God in Jesus may become sons of God. In becoming sons of God, they no longer have to follow the darkness. Scripture shows us God’s purpose in those that follow the light of Jesus. *“This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare it to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all – if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another*

(those born of God), and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:5, 7).

However, we know that even when we believe on Jesus and follow Him we have weaknesses. Therefore, God has not designed the believer to follow Jesus to the best of his abilities, He has channeled the pathway of a Christian, walking in this life through the finished works of Jesus. *“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works ,which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them”* (Ephesians 2;10). As a Christian walks in the Spirit, he will be led to live and walk in the works of Jesus. We are told in 1 John 4:17 that *“...as He is, so are we in this world”*. This means that as Jesus was to the Father, doing His will and works, so the Christian is to the Father through the Son. Jesus only did what He saw His Father do. *“Then Jesus answered and said to them, Most assuredly I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner”* (John 5:19).

Jesus came into this world, born of a woman, to be entirely dependent on His Father, doing only what His Father did or directed Him to do. Through His complete obedience, the devil’s kingdom was brought to defeat (Luke 10:18-20). So it is with a

Christian; the power of God through the works of Jesus destroyed the power of the devil (Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 4:8-10; Revelations 1:18). God has designed the Christian to be as Jesus, by being transformed into His image (Romans 8:29).

The life the Father has given to a Christian, through the Holy Spirit, is to walk and live in the work Jesus has done (Ephesians 2:10). The Christian's life is not a life of man's ideas. It is Jesus living in the Christian, doing His works in the believer (2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 1:2; 3:6; Colossians 1:27). Jesus, when praying to His Father, said "*I have glorified you on the earth. I have finished the work which you have given me to do*" (John 17:4). His final declaration of this was on the cross when He said, "*It is finished*" (John 19:30). When the people asked Jesus what they could do to work the work of God, Jesus answered and said to them, "*This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He (God) sent*" (John 6:28-29). Believing (having faith) in Jesus, according to His finished work, is the complete place of favor with God. God has made the work that Jesus completed to be the dwelling place of the Christian.

7. Hallelujah, I have entered into life eternal through the work of Jesus

“Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1).

“For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his (own) works as God did from His” (Hebrews 4:10; Genesis 2:1-3).

The Scriptures above tell us two distinct truths. The first one shows us that the person who has put his faith in Jesus Christ (He is our life) is no longer under the wrath of God (Ephesians 2:1-9). Through the work of Jesus, the believer (one who follows Jesus with his life) is in the complete favor of God. This person has been chosen and predestined, before the foundation of the world, to become adopted into son-ship (a son of God) through Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:4-5). Therefore the enmity that existed between God and the sinner, before he came to faith in Jesus, no longer exists.

The Psalmist reveals the work of God for the believer. *“As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us”* (Psalms 103:12).

The believer now has a free conscience before God, and the peace of God in his soul. This peace and clear conscience was paid for by the work of Jesus.

Second is the place of eternal rest of spirit and soul (mind) for every believer. The believer now has eternal rest in God through the work of Jesus. This is the rest that Jesus promised to all who come to Him. *“Come unto Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me — and you will find rest for your souls”* (Matthew 11:28-29).

This place is entered into by walking after the Spirit. Walking in the Spirit means bringing Jesus Christ as the Primary Being into a person’s life. It is a life of full dependence on the completed work of Jesus; this work (deliverance from Satan’s kingdom, this world) was fully accepted by His Father. This means Jesus has done everything required to accomplish a finished salvation for all who follow Him (Colossians 1:19-21). The resurrection of Jesus from among the dead is the proof that the Father totally and completely received His sacrifice on the cross as payment for our salvation.

In this finished work of Jesus, the believer is brought into the Kingdom of God and showered with the riches of His Kingdom. God has raised up the believer (positionally) and made him to sit down together with Christ in the heavenlies (Ephesians 2:6). By the Holy Spirit, God has and is revealing this Scripture to the

believer, *“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit...”* (1 Corinthians 2:9-10).

Those in Jesus never again face condemnation of God, *“There is therefore now no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus”* (Romans 8:1). Jesus has made us, who were defeated because of sin, overcomers. *“Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us”* (Romans 8:37). God has shown His saints the mystery of His will (man without faith does not know the will of God) (Ephesians 1:9; 3:1-6).

The believer has been made rich in the gift of God and he has been given an eternal place with God (1 Thessalonians 4:17). This has been assured by the seal that God has put on each and every believer by the Holy Spirit. A believer is sealed by the Holy Spirit at the moment of his conversion. It is God’s guarantee (Ephesians 1:13-14). This seal on the believer is in place until the day of redemption (till Jesus Christ returns in clouds to take His saints unto Himself) (Ephesians 4:30).

It would take writing the whole New Testament to show all the spiritual riches of heaven which God has bestowed on those who have believed Jesus and have followed Him. We can

conclude with this: Man, in his natural state, is a sinner without God, and has no hope of ever coming into God's Kingdom by anything he can do. But God acted! He sent the Man from heaven into this world.

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich (2 Corinthians 8:9).

D. Neely

1-15-12

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