

## WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE?

Jesus did not commission the church to go into all the world and preach “something.” He said “preach the gospel.” This “gospel of Christ” is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes it. Romans 1:16. Sometimes we forget that this is same gospel Jesus spoke of saying, “...but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Mark 16:15-16. The question for us is not whether we should preach the gospel, but what is this gospel that has such power both to save and damn based upon whether or not it is believed?

Jesus gave two criteria the gospel we preach must meet: First, it must “...save everyone who believes it.” Second, the “saving nature” of the gospel we preach must be so absolute that those who refuse it have “damned themselves” to eternity without God. It is this second criteria I will address first.

The apostle Paul warned of those even in his day who would preach “another Jesus” and “another gospel” II Corinthians 11:4. He spoke to the Galatians of those who had “perverted the gospel of Christ” Galatians 1:6-7. If anyone came preaching these “perverted gospels,” the apostle said, “Let them be accursed” Galatians 1:8. By no means did the apostle mean that we should “curse” the teachers of strange gospels; to the contrary, they damn themselves in believing a lie, and they increase their damnation by giving it to others. A perverted gospel has no power to “save,” but it will “damn” everyone who believes it.

Jesus explained the damning nature of rejecting the gospel of Christ. He said “...if ye believe not that I am he (The Christ), ye shall die in your sins.” John 8:24. Those Jesus spoke these words to believed The Christ would “make an end of sins” Daniel 9:24-25, but their “faith” would do nothing for them if they refused to believe that Jesus is “The Christ.” Their unbelief damned them to a lifelong struggle with sin that they would eventually take with themselves into eternity.

John the Baptist knew by the scripture that Christ would come into the world “to make an end of sins.” As quickly as he knew that Jesus is the Son of God, John said of Him, “Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world” John 1:29. The “sin of the world” is “the sin” that entered into the world through Adam's disobedience. Christ, who was forever “with God” and who “was God” became a man in order to die, and

through His death, “take away the sin of the world,” out of the hearts and nature of everyone who believes the truth and trusts in Christ. I BELIEVE THAT GOSPEL! It takes no action to damn anyone, but those who refuse to believe it damn themselves to “die in their sins,” and be eternally lost.

The first criteria of the gospel we preach must be that it “saves everyone who believes it” Mark 16:16. The message of the gospel is such that it is easy to know when a person has been saved. The apostle John said, “He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself” I John 5:10. The Greek word translated “witness” means “evidence.” The “evidence” or “proof” that a person believes is “in them.” John tells us that “eternal life” can be seen in those who possess it. I John 1:2. It is the “proof” that a person “believes on the Son of God.”

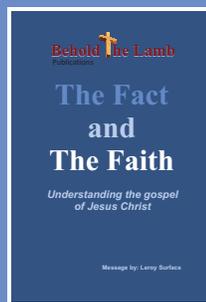
John makes several incredible and unbelievable statements about the gospel. For example, he wrote, “Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not” I John 3:6; “He that committeth sin is of the devil” I John 3:8; and, “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin” I John 3:9. John does not present anything he says in his epistle to be “judged” by the reader. It is not given to help us reach a “consensus” as to what he really meant to say. John tells us clearly in the same epistle, “We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error” I John 4:6. John boldly identifies those who do not believe the gospel he preached as “unbelievers,” and damned to die in their sins. Do you believe the apostle John?

A gospel that leaves you in sin can neither save nor damn. It saves no one from their sin, therefore those who reject it are as free as those who believe it. I am an “unbeliever” when I hear

some say God has forgiven us “past, present, and future, even before we commit the sin,” I refuse to believe a gospel that tells me I am “justified,” and nothing has changed. If that makes me an “unbeliever,” then I am “an unbeliever.” I cannot believe such things because I know what the apostle Paul said: “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” II Corinthians 5:17. The same apostle who said we are “justified by faith” said we are “new creatures.” Everything has changed, and everything is new.

What do YOU believe?

**The Fact** says Jesus was crucified. **The Faith** says my old man is crucified with him. **The Truth** says I am made free from sin!



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