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PROCLAIMING THE WORD TO THE WORLD

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Does Faith Alone Save Us?

BY THE EDITOR

INTRODUCTION: *You who have been reading this publication for some time are aware of my grave concern for so many people who are claiming to be saved, yet give NO biblical evidence of it in their walk and talk. The Bible not only tells us how God gives us the joy of being saved, but also communicates the clear evidence of such a transaction having been completed. (I John) (This is one of the titles among my FREE printed messages.) He plainly tells us who is going to heaven and who is going to hell. For years all we have heard is JUST BELIEVE IN JESUS. We have been served a discourse that we are saved by faith alone. Faith is not the only term God uses. What about the remission of sin, repentance, conversion, and being born-again? Are any one of these terms less in value than another? How dare we claim to be saved from our sins and then continue in them?*

ONE big mistake in preaching and teaching has been that all we need is the Savior to keep out of hell and reach heaven. When announcing the arrival of Jesus Christ upon this earth, the angels presented Him as a “SAVIOR, WHICH IS CHRIST THE LORD” (Luke 2:11). How dare we allow a separation in His Person? He is not only Savior, but also King, Lord, and Ruler, with absolute authority over us. The Apostle Paul recognized his position when presenting himself to the Christians at Rome as “a servant or slave of Jesus Christ.” (Romans 1:1) While on the sinking ship, he hears from the angel of the Lord. Notice Paul’s identification with Him: “WHOSE I AM AND WHOM I SERVE.” Again, he identified his relationship with his Savior as a slave. He belonged to Jesus Christ and was completely committed to His direction. (Acts 27:23) How dare we claim a Savior and not be under His absolute authority?

The Great Deception

Many people living today are deceived by Satan into thinking they are on their way to heaven, when in fact they will face hell the moment they die. So often I have asked a mother if her son is saved. Often her reply is, “Oh, yes, he went forward as a youth and made a public profession of Christ at the front of our church. Then he was baptized.” Has he been serving the Lord ever since? Does he read his Bible and pray daily? Does he attend and assume responsibility in a Bible-preaching church? The answer comes back “No.” Where is his obedience, the greatest proof of one being in God’s family? If not serving the Lord, who is he serving? You know the answer to that! Where did the concept come from that we can claim salvation and ignore the action that God says accompanies such a marvelous transaction? “They which do such things (adultery, fornication, hatred, murders, drunkenness, etc.) SHALL NOT INHERIT the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:19-21).

The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them WHICH DO INIQUITY; AND SHALL CAST THEM INTO A FURNACE OF FIRE. There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 13:41,42). Instead of resenting this Truth, you should thank me for sharing it with you.

We Have No Faith

How sad to hear such preaching and teaching that we must exercise our faith as though we already possess it. Ephesians 2:8 and 9 clearly teaches that faith is the gift of God. It comes to us through the Word of God. (Romans 10:17) To conclude that faith is all that is necessary to claim our salvation is a tragic mistake. I hear it all the time. Salvation by faith, plus nothing, minus nothing. How sad! Are we going to remove from the Bible the necessity of the conviction of sin, repentance, regeneration, and adoption? Will God reveal his Son to an unrepentant sinner? No one is satisfactory to a holy God until he or she repents of their personal sin and is made a new person in Christ (the miracle of the New Birth — John 3). The consequence? “Likewise reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:11). “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). Has this glorious change happened to you? You are not saved until it has, despite thinking your faith has saved

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you. It is the grace of God that saves a person (unmerited love of God that provided a Savior and the way to embrace His glorious salvation). If you are saved by your faith, then you have rendered satisfactory work before God. Never! You must rest upon the finished work of Christ on the cross. He took your deserved suffering upon Himself. His glorious resurrection power transforms your life. Of course, you must repent and believe. Both are God-given abilities. Don't expect it to happen until you depend upon Christ for all that His Father demands of you. Have you repented of your personal sin? Christ told us to repent in Matthew 4:17 and made it a very important part of the Great Commission: ". . . that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations" (Luke 24:47). Repentance is turning from the sin that God has revealed to you in His Word. Many a supposed convert has never had a personal conversation with Jesus Christ about their sin and going on record before Him of turning from it, trusting in His work on the cross and in an empty tomb. You do not think for one moment that God is going to forgive you independent of His Son, do you? "For whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13).

The Evidence of Saving Faith

Biblical truth teaches that faith is involved in turning from sin. We trust in His promises. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto to Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah 55:7). Refusal to turn from our sin forfeits God's answer to our prayers. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psalm 66:18). What a tragedy that spiritual leaders of our day are communicating the assurance of salvation independent of repentance. They say faith is all you need. God's Word says three times that faith without works is dead. "Faith, if it hath not works, is dead being alone . . . The devil also believes and trembles" (James 2:17,19). I hear it all the time from all directions— all you need is faith. Not so, according to God.

One of the greatest evidences of faith, given to you by God, is obedience. "And hereby we do know that we know Him, if (since) we keep His commandments. He that

says, I know Him, and keeps not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (I John 2:3,4). "Whosoever does (practices) not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loves not his brother" (I John 3:10). Christians are overcomers when it comes to this present evil world. Eight times in Revelation the saved are described as those who overcome: "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." If we love this world, the love of the Father is not in us" (I John 2:15,16). A man of genuine faith will be led by God's Spirit. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14). We will follow God's direction. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I will give unto them eternal life" (John 10:27,28).

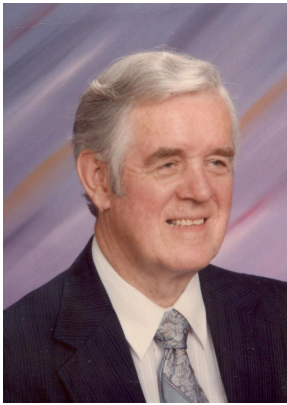
Many Christians say they have been born-again, yet still live immoral and disobedient lives. The Bible speaks of the saved as those who obey, overcome, do good, do the will of God, and follow Jesus Christ and practice righteousness. Are you among this number? I sure hope so. If you are a Christian, it will be evident in the fruit produced by the Holy Spirit in and through you. (Galatians 5:22-24) Oh, the joy of having been operated upon by the Spirit of God. "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:10). We are rescued from sin by the grace of God, not by our faith. "For by grace are you 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). Jesus Christ is our Savior, not our faith. (We have none. It must be given to us.) It is God's marvelous grace (His unmerited favor) that has provided for us an eternal salvation. On this basis will we enjoy eternity with Him. Faith simply rests upon God's provision, made available in Christ on the basis of His grace.

Will I meet you among the many mansions mentioned in John 14? I sincerely hope so. I will be there; look for me.

THE 23rd CHANNEL

The TV is my shepherd, I shall not want for entertainment.
 It maketh me to lie down on the sofa.
 It leadeth me away from the Scriptures.
 It destroyeth my soul.
 It leadeth me in the path of sex and violence for the sponsor's sake.
 Yea, though I walk in the shadow of my Christian responsibilities,
 There will be no interruption,
 For the TV is with me, its cable and remote, they control me.
 It prepareth a commercial before me in the presence of worldliness;
 It anointeth my head with humanism,
 My coveting runneth over.
 Surely laziness and ignorance shall follow me all the days of my life,
 And I shall dwell in the house watching TV forever. — author unknown

Personal Word



My writing began in my first pastorate which was composed of a monthly letter to my great mailing list of about 20 to 25. We began using our present name about 1959, upon assuming my Miami pastorate. For nearly 50 years, *The Challenger* has been going forth. Are you still reading it? When did you begin doing so? Not everyone desires a straightforward message from the Bible, using biblical terms. The “feel good” philosophy of this modern religious crowd turns away from dissertation of Truth. They want to hear nothing that disturbs their complacent, easygoing life-style. Authority and

obedience demanded by God’s Word, mean nothing to them. Here is the main reason for their bible remaining on the shelf instead of in their lap. To you who appreciates the Word with its doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction (II Timothy 3:16), please be assured that we do not intend to water down God’s message to satisfy the present day entertainment-oriented crowd. Hell is no joking matter.

Our Next Generation

A new Education Week report reveals that Detroit’s public high schools will graduate only 25 percent of their students; Cleveland (OH) and Baltimore (MD) will graduate less than 35 percent; Dallas (TX), New York, and Los Angeles (CA) about 46 percent. In fact, 10 of our nation’s biggest cities will graduate fewer than half their students. Another part of this sad story is that many who do graduate will be below acceptable levels of reading, math, and other skills. Character training and citizenship is not part of their education.

Now We Know

For the first time in the history of our country, all Democratic candidates stated their support for extending federal benefits and equal tax treatment, currently only available to heterosexual married couples, to same-sex couples, who are parties to a union legally recognized by their state. Additionally, the candidates express unanimous support for extending benefits for same-sex couples and their children. Only two candidates raised a question about gay-marriage. This we know by the questionnaire they individually filled out for a homosexual organization, prior to their debate sponsored by these Sodomites.

A Major Upheaval

It is plainly evident within our churches. It is not merely the contemporary church concept, but goes far beyond that. It started when I first entered the pastorate back in 1948. The measurement of church success was the number in attendance and their growth year after year. It took me a long time to shake off this new modern trend. The philosophy behind it is that we human beings are going to build the local church when God plainly says it is His work. We measure the effectiveness of the preacher by how many people he is reaching. You can forget what he is giving those who do respond. That is unimportant when the numbers game becomes the measurement.

Are you not excited about the mega-church movements with thousands in attendance? Not after they take a survey of the people surrounding their church location to answer questions as to what kind of a church they would like in their neighborhood. What message would they prefer (multiple choice)? Would they be satisfied with non-

confrontational chats from the platform? What about keeping financial appeals to a minimum? What about casual dress and style of music (again, multiple choice)? What about drama teams and other types of entertainment?

I have the privilege of attending the church of my choice. How dare the pastor and church leaders change my church program with nightclub music, entertainment for 45 minutes, with a sermonette following for 15 minutes? By the way, sermonettes are for christianettes. The teaching of the Word not only diminishes in time, but also in quality. We are to come to church to worship God. Look around — many could wear the same attire to a hayride. Reverence for a holy God has departed from many churches.

Dealing with Change

These changes are coming to pass without a vote or an ability to protest should you not want such changes. The crowd resisting this change, for the most part, are the ones who helped erect their building and have poured thousands of dollars in the past years. No one will lament your going should you leave that church. *Actually, with this change, your church left you.* If you oppose this change and will not finance it, will not pay for this changed activity, your choice is another church that glorifies God in their music and where the preaching of the Bible is the main attraction, instead of entertainment. Of course, it hurts to leave where you have been for years, but God has better things in store for you.

Do you think this change is going to help your church grow in numbers? It might help with people who want to hear the beat, feel good, and continue in their sin. It is the Word of God that produces Spirit-filled people, desirous of pleasing the Lord, giving Him glory in all they do.

New Leaders Selected

Dr. Michael Eccleston is now our assistant director and will become director and president of our nonprofit corpo-

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Personal Word (continued from page 3)

ration upon my resignation or when I join Marian in the Lord's presence. His wife, Linda, is now secretary-treasurer, replacing Marian. Many years ago I had the privilege of leading Brother Eccleston to Jesus Christ in my study in Miami. For years they have been pastor and wife of the Heritage Baptist Church in Titusville, Florida. You have read his discourses in this publication. Do pray for them as they assume these positions of leadership. One thing to remember — Dwight Porter intends to lead this ministry in the days and years ahead. Please pray concerning the ministry of our volunteer assistants.

Marian's Home-going

So many have inquired about the cause of my dear wife's death. I have no answers, except that God wanted her to be with Him. She had slept for two days, only getting up for meals, the bathroom, etc. We concluded she was sleeping because of the flu or a cold. But upon observing her shortness of breath and a bit of direction disorientation, my son and I took her to the emergency room at the Sebastian hospital. Shortly after our hospital entrance, the doctor told us she was a sick woman and her organs were gradually closing down. While sitting in the emergency room, she waived to us.

The negative answers I gave to the workers were quite revealing: no drugs, no sickness. Her last time in the hospital was for the birth of our son, about 57 years ago. About two years earlier, she was examined by our HMO doctor at his insistence, and no problems were found.

I praise the Lord for her easy passing into the presence of the Infinite, without pain or suffering. Later, the Medical Examiner, on the phone, expressed his amazement as to the reason for her death. A number of hospital personnel stood by her bed as she passed away at five o'clock in the morning, September 8, just two days before my eightieth birthday. She had reached that age six months earlier.

One of her dear friends told me she entered into the Lord's presence singing, "The wonder of it all." Already I had expressed to her mother and father my appreciation for providing me with such a sweet, consecrated daughter. They were fully aware that she was special, loaned to them from God. I thank God for the 62 years we loved each other, 59 of them as husband and wife. I am totally inadequate in expressing my thanksgiving to God for these thrilling years.

From Box 400



I'm looking at your writing on "Who Has Received the Holy Spirit," and I am amazed at the depth of your understanding and comprehension of the Word of God. A guard, whom I've never seen before or since, gave me a Bible. At first I read it with boredom, then I read your piece of literature. Something began to change within me when I got to the place where you quote Hebrews 13:5. The more I read, the more things began to make sense. I hit my knees, begging for forgiveness and repenting, thanking God that I was still alive. As I read the Word and prayed, the more I began to understand and the stronger I became. I know my relationship with God has taken a wonderful turn for the best. Please send *The Challenger* and your Bible Study Course. — a prisoner (TX)

I do greet you in the holy Name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I thank you very much for your cassettes, especially "What Is Grace?" We are very blessed from *The Challenger*. I see a change in the conduct of our people. The Lord is using The Hour of Grace and Power to help us and to help others to come to learn more about Jesus Christ. Thanks in behalf of our village church. — Kenya, East Africa

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Dwight Porter, D.D., Editor

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"Be you steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord . . . You know your labor is not in vain in the Lord" I Corinthians 15:58



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