

Call to Obedience #480
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Another Gospel and Another Christ

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I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel.... 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 (Gal. 1:6-8).

Notice, the words “so soon.” Let me ask you: “When did the church turn away from the Gospel and the Christ of the first apostles? Was it in the Dark Ages, after the Reformation or perhaps just recently?” My friend, these words of Paul were in his letter to the Galatians which he wrote before most of his other letters. That soon the church had to contend with another gospel and another Christ than what Paul preached! Ever since, when you first meet someone who goes to church, you may be with him for hours without knowing that he is a Christian. That was not so with the first Christians because they said: *For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen or heard* (Acts 4:20). They were evangelists, Christians who could not be hidden.

The Christ of the apostles is vivacious, vibrant, dynamic—a supernatural Person controlling everybody He indwells. Once He is in you, it is obvious: your body becomes His temple; your mouth becomes His mouthpiece; and your feet become His feet to take you where He wants you to go. That is the apostolic Christ that comes out of the apostolic Gospel, producing a people who are plumbed into the rivers of living waters flowing from the throne of God.

On the contrary, we have alternate gospels producing believers who are as wells without water: *...for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever* (2 Peter 2:17). This is a sad picture. Yet, it is people like this with a decrepit spiritual state that the average pastor has to entertain Sunday after Sunday to keep them happy in order to assure his “success” in ministry. This also is the result of another gospel and another Christ that has been preached now for centuries: preachers entertaining carnality instead of feeding the sheep and lambs. Let us consider some marks of another gospel and another Christ than that of the first apostles.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ANOTHER GOSPEL

1. You know you have another gospel when it does not call for repentance. You cannot add new life to an old life. You must forsake the one to get to the other. If that is not preached, you have another gospel. The old life, the old man, the carnal nature must not just be allowed to become civilized or inhibited—it must be crucified because it is a murderer of all that is of God. Repentance gets you started. If you do not start there, you do not start. It is the first step towards an entirely new lifestyle. And what is repentance? It is godly sorrow accompanied by a total course reversal. Again, if people are not called to repentance, you have another gospel. Jesus went everywhere preaching: *...Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand* (Matt. 4:17).

So also, the first word opening the Pentecostal era was “repent” (Acts 2:38). The Reformation began with Martin Luther’s theses, and the first three called for repentance. In spite of continued earnest pleas for Christians to repent, churches are full of unrepentant “believers” who worship and praise God, yet have no intention to take a single step following Jesus once they leave the sanctuary. This is an insult to the sovereignty of God. Here is God’s response to such “believers:” *Bring no more futile sacrifices; Incense is an abomination to Me. The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies—I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting* (Is. 1:13).

2. You know you have another gospel when it is not the gospel of the kingdom of God. *Jesus answered, Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God* (John 3:5). We are born again to enter the kingdom of God. Jesus preached it everywhere (Luke 8:1). He said: *...I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent* (Luke 4:43). The book of Acts also ends with Paul: *preaching the kingdom of God...* (Acts 28:31). Do you get it? The whole purpose of redemption is to get men into the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is an altogether different world. Jesus gave many parables about it and He said you must seek it first and always keep it as a priority of your life. If you do that, He will take care of you (Matt. 6:33). The kingdom of God is clearly distinguished from all other kingdoms by these three pearls: *...righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit* (Rom. 14:17). Righteousness is your legal standing before God, peace is a soul rest that no one can take away from you and joy is that attribute of happiness which is

independent of your circumstances. You have another gospel if you have a gospel without the kingdom of God.

3. You have another gospel if does not call you into a responsible partnership with your Savior. Do not be fooled by those words you frequently hear: “Jesus did it all” or “Jesus does it all.” First, notice that these words cannot be found anywhere in the Scriptures. Second, if you have a religion that asks nothing of you, it is worth nothing. Third, these words only have validity if you rephrase them like this: “Jesus did all He could to save you and you must now: *...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure* (Phil. 2:12-13).” The Christ of the Gospels kept His disciples busy 24/7. Just like He was called, they were called to be about the Father’s business. Jesus did not create the “just Sunday Christians.” The devil did.

Salvation is a partnership and it always has been. Yes, as a Christian, you are delivered from the works of the law which are the 613 Levitical laws. But you are not delivered from the moral laws, the Ten Commandments. The Levitical laws of the Old Testament are replaced by spiritual laws and disciplines in the New Testament, which must be kept to prevent you from becoming an unprofitable servant and being cast into outer darkness (Matt. 25:30). So, look at some of these laws and disciplines that are yours to keep once you have Christ. There are many in the New Testament, such as in the Sermon on the Mount, in the three judgment parables of Matthew 25 and in Paul’s letters. They are do, do and do instructions. Here are some examples for your to do list: put off the old man; put on the armor of God; cleanse yourself from all filthiness of the flesh; love your enemies; take care of the widows and orphans (Eph. 4:22 & 6:11, 2 Cor. 7:1, Luke 6:35, James 1:27). Yes, Jesus will help you in all of this, but you have to hold up your end. Again, remember that salvation is a partnership.

But please do not get me wrong. It is not that the churches across the land are not preaching truth. They preach many wonderful truths, but often only half the truth and that is where the deception comes in.

ANOTHER CHRIST

Another gospel has brought us another Christ, another Jesus. If the Christ you worship is not transforming you, He is a paper Jesus who is only of value for Sunday school discussions. Or your Jesus may be a historical Jesus who never left the first century; a phantom Jesus who is devoid of flesh and

blood; a homespun Jesus, one created out of a few scraps of Scriptures to suit your lifestyle; or a Christmas Jesus, a baby whom you can manipulate.

The real picture of Jesus which has often been hidden from the masses is that He often made people mad instead of making them feel good. He was offensive as seen in the following scripture: *...they were offended at Him...* (Matt. 13:57). Instead of opening wide the door to salvation proving His love to all mankind, He made it as narrow as the "eye of a needle." He made people accountable for every idle word and everything they did. He saw through people's pretenses and hypocrisy. When His worshippers justified themselves saying: *Lord, Lord, ...we ate and drank in Your presence...*, He responded by saying: *...Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity* (Luke 13:25-27). Oh yes, He is a friend of sinners, but once you refuse to follow Him, that friendship is over. And if you are a backslider, He will cut you out of the vine and cast you into the fire (John 15:6). The apostolic Jesus is a radical Jesus. He said: if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out; if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off (Matt. 5:29-30).

Jesus is not a compromiser. He is absolute in His demands. He does not allow you to replace His joy with the good, clean fun the world offers. He brought division to families; He was run out of His own church; He created havoc in the temple; He was condemned to death; and all those who confessed Him were banned from church membership (Luke 12:53; 4:29; John 2:15; 9:20). If you ask Him to come into your life, He will not move in unless He gets total control, including every penny in your pocket and every minute of your schedule. He wants to inhabit you, completely. **That gives Him great joy and it becomes your joy unspeakable and full of glory.** Again, that is what He came for. But to have that, He will not accept anything less than your life for His life. Anything else is a lie. That is the true gospel of Jesus Christ. **And anybody who preaches another gospel or another Christ, let that person be accursed (Gal. 1:8)!**

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