

Christianity is but another religion

WHEN REQUIRED FOR SALVATION, BELIEF BECOMES A WORK

Some would see a difference between “hoping for acceptance by God” and “tendering acceptance to God.” There is no difference.

In an attempt to distinguish their religion from others, Christians say that God accepts them. But this is subterfuge, because God’s acceptance is only potential; it requires reciprocation. If the supplicant fails along this line, then God’s “acceptance” is of no more use than the tenuous favor of any other false deity.

Christianity says, “Ours is the only faith not of works.” Really? Christianity may have a shorter list of works than other faiths, but a work is a work, and one is too many. What is the one requirement of Christianity? *Faith*. One must believe in Jesus, or else. Thus, belief becomes a re-



quirement of salvation, and Christianity becomes another religion. In fact, it becomes the most deceptive religion of all.

It is the cross of Christ that saves, not our acceptance of that cross. Our acceptance is merely the acknowledgment of a fact. I have said this before, but it bears repeating:

We are not saved because we believe; we believe because we are saved. ■

Martin Zender's Clanging Gong News

“If I know all mysteries and all knowledge, but have no love, I am a clanging gong” --1 Cor. 13:1-2



Two out of three isn't bad.

WORKS: The basis of all religion

Today it is God, not us,
Who is working

“For in grace, through faith, are you saved, and this is not out of you; it is God’s approach present, not of works, lest anyone should be boasting.”

—Ephesians 2:8-9

Any religion setting forth works as a means of salvation is a false religion. Here is the litmus test: *Is the way to life presented as humanity approaching God rather than God approaching humanity?* Then the religion is not only false—it is Satanic.

Today, God not only approaches humanity, He accepts it.

Salvation is God’s approach present, not ours. It is God’s way of winning *our* favor. Faith is the channel through which this gift is apprehended, yes, but even that faith is a gift (Phil. 1:29).

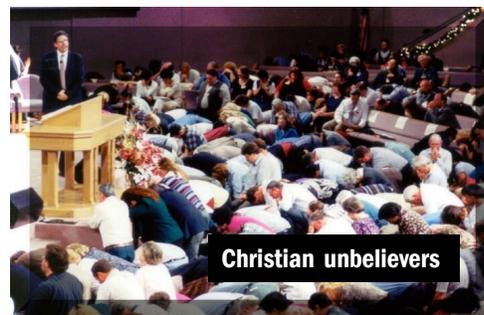
To grasp the magnitude of God approaching humanity, we must first grasp the approach present as set forth in the law. This is Leviticus 1:1-3—

He called to Moses, and Yahweh spoke to him from the tent of appointment, saying, “Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them: ‘When any man among you brings near an approach present to Yahweh, from the domestic beasts ... if his ascent approach is from the herd, a flawless male is it which he shall bring near. To the opening of the tent of appointment shall he bring it near for acceptance on his behalf before Yahweh.’”

Only by presenting to God a flawless specimen from his flocks could a son of Israel hope to enter even the antechamber of God’s dread presence. Pause to grasp that—and prepare yourself to gaze upon what can only be described as an unthinkable, unfathomable reversal of roles:

God now approaches us with the perfect Specimen.

Religion knows nothing of this. All religion is stuck in Leviticus. All religion insists that presents be brought to God, for only then can His favor be won and salvation secured. Hindus



chant, striving for selflessness. Buddhists embrace “The Noble, Eightfold Path,” hoping by it to starve human desire. Muslims roll out prayer rugs and face Mecca. Christians fall upon altars, presenting to God—they hope—a faith genuine enough to please Him.

If only these supplicants were worshipping God, thanking Him for *His* accomplishments. They aren’t; they’re *supplicants*. As such, they seek God’s favor. If the Muslim does not pray, or if the Hindu does not chant, or if the Buddhist does not surrender, or if the Christian does not approach with sufficient faith, there remains only endless cycles of rebirth, or an eternity of torment apart from Him.

The requirements of religion are two: 1) self-occupation, and 2) a still-unappeased Deity. These are Satan’s requirements, and the means by which he blinds and enslaves humanity. To what are the masses blinded? Only this:

“God was in Christ, conciliating the world to Himself.” —2 Corinthians 5:19 ■

The purpose of works in the Circumcision gospel

CHRISTIANITY HAS YET TO
LEARN THE LESSON OF LAW



“By works of law, no flesh at all shall be justified in His sight, for through law is the recognition of sin.” —Romans 3:20

Gee. Wouldn't that have been a helpful thing to tell Israel? No. Israel had to be kept ignorant of God's true purpose for instituting law. Here is another tidbit that God could have told Israel but didn't:

“Yet law came in by the way, that the offense should be increasing.” —Romans 5:20

Even though law was impossible to accomplish, *that* revelation was centuries down the pike. Before the true purpose of law could be revealed (it was revealed to Paul), God needed to present law to Israel as, “Do this, or else.” For the demonstration to work, Israel had to be convinced it was possible.

On that score, God should have won an Academy Award.

This seems cruel until we consider the necessity of a practical demonstration. Humanity must learn that flesh and blood cannot please Him. Why? So that humanity can give up before it even starts and trust God out of the gate, via Paul's gospel of grace.

Rather than “experiment” with the entire race (it was not a true experiment because God knew the result beforehand), God chose a guinea pig nation: Israel. I'm sorry, but that's what Israel was. It was necessary to the demonstration that Israel have every advantage. Thus, God gave her the covenants, the legislation, the divine services, the promises, and the scriptures. The result? She failed miserably.

Question: Was the miserable failure of Israel a miserable failure? No. It was a spectacular success. Why? Because now Paul

can point to Israel and say: “See? We tried that. It doesn't work. So forget it.”

In other words: the book of Romans.

So the nations learn in five minutes what took Israel multiple centuries *not* to learn: *Flesh and blood cannot please God.*

Thank you, Israel. Sorry for the inconvenience.

Now you see how ridiculous it is for Christians to continue promoting the Ten Commandments as the way to righteousness. Didn't they get the memo?

God is just to Israel

God is merciful to the guinea pig nation in that she will finally accomplish law. After all, it's not as though law is sin (Rom. 7:7). The law is righteous; it only incited sin (Rom. 7:8). Would God then waste a perfectly good law? No. The law will yet go forth from Zion (Micah 4:2), but not until God replaces Israel's stone heart with a heart of flesh (Ez. 36:26). In other words, flesh doing law requires a miracle. And, for Israel, a miracle is forthcoming.

We begin where Israel left off: FAILURE

Here's the glorious part. We begin where Israel left off: FAILURE. We start at the end-lesson that God drove Israel toward: *Flesh and blood cannot please God.* Israel and Christianity still haven't learned this. We have. Therefore:

“We ... are glorying in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in flesh.” —Phil. 3:3

From this fabulous starting point, the foundation is set for *true* good works. These works are accomplished—not because we have to do them (that was Israel's burden), but because we want to do them. This is known as “the spirit's law of life in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:2), and it “frees you from the law of sin and death” (Rom. 8:3).

If you want sin and death back, go to church. ■

What a Revelation!

“GENTLEMEN!”

“For His achievement are we, being created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God makes ready beforehand, that we should be walking in them.” —Eph. 2:10



Whenever anyone said “Gentlemen!” to the Three Stooges, they always looked behind them. This is how it will be when God rewards us for the good works (1 Cor. 4:5) that He, Himself, achieved. *Who? Us?* That's grace—on *top* of grace. ■

Q&A

This may sound like a dumb question, but what exactly does “NOT OF WORKS” mean in Ephesians 2:9?

It's not a dumb question. I will quote verses 8 and 9:

“For in grace, through faith, are you saved, and this is not out of you; it is God's approach present, not of works, lest anyone should be boasting.”

“Not of works” means that nothing from your hand or your head made salvation happen. It was nothing you did or willed. No particular mood or mindset brought you Christ. It was nothing you *said* ... no particular combination of words or syllables roused the Savior to love you. (Such things may be the channel of salva-



tion, but never the cause.)

None of your sweat inspired Him; none of your sacrifices moved Him. You may well have cried when Christ

came, but this was your reaction to His love, not the cause of it. He saved you, while you were a sinner (Romans 5:8), not a winner. All that remains now is for you to thank Him. You are blessed among mortals to realize this, and I am thankful to God that you do. ■

Rants & Stuff

The Apostle Paul says we should not murmur (Philippians 2:14). Therefore, I shall rant.

“DO YOU MEAN TO TELL ME ...!”

HEY. DON'T SHOOT THE MESSENGER.

Lots of people talk a good game of grace. They say, “We love grace. It’s all we talk about at our church. In fact, have you seen the name of our church? Go look at it! Well? Did you see it? It has the word ‘grace’ in the title, doesn’t it? What did we tell you? When will you believe us? Why do you always look askance at us? Haven’t you ever heard any of our hymns? Every other word is ‘grace.’

“But that’s nothing. We have one hymn that is actually called, ‘Grace,’ and every single word in the hymn—every single word—is ‘grace.’ It’s in the Guinness World Record Book. Have you ever heard anything like that? By the look on your face, we see you haven’t. Well, now you know.

“We are experts on grace. If you don’t believe it, ask our pastorette. Guess what her name is? Just guess! It’s, *Shirley.*”

Then you quote 1 Timothy 4:10 to them, that God is the Savior of all mankind, and they say:

“What? *Everybody* is going to heaven? Oh, *now* we see how it is. So you’re telling us that we can just go out and do anything we want, and we’re still going to heaven.”

“Well, by *grace* are we saved, *not* of works, and so—”

“So you’re telling us that we could just go out and *murder* people?”

“Well, by *grace* are we saved, *not* of works, so I imagine that—”

“Wait a minute. If everyone is getting to heaven, then we might as well just tell people to rob banks, poop their pants, burn their houses down, and eat Snickers bars.”

“Well, Snickers bars have an awful lot of saturated fat, so I really don’t think you



want to—”

And so it goes. Every time I talk to people about grace, they think they will finally come up with the most hideous crime in the world—something I’d never considered—that will finally make me slap my forehead, renounce the death of Christ for all sin, and get me off my irresponsible little grace kick.

“So you mean to tell me that I can just go out and *punch* baby kangaroos in the *stomach*?”

“OH GOD! NO! YOU CAN’T DO *THAT!* LORD! THE CROSS DIDN’T COVER *THAT!*”

If this ever did happen, I have a feeling that the person who came up with the stupendous sin would actually stand there looking smug, as if he or she had just achieved a great victory by uncovering a sin that somehow escaped Calvary.

In other words, the failure of Christ would make their day. I guess that’s just how it is when you can’t stand the idea of sinners getting saved. ■

Do and Live vs. Live and Do

Salvation by works has already been tried. It was called the Law of Moses. The God-inspired directive then was: DO AND LIVE. In other words, if you did what God said, you got to keep breathing. If you didn’t, well—you’d better have your life insurance paid up.

Today, we are saved by grace. The God-inspired directive now is: LIVE AND DO. In other words, live free in the realization that God sees His Son instead of your sins, and you will *want* to do things for such a gracious God. Because of grace, condemnation is out of the question (Rom. 8:1). Once you realize you can fail without losing God’s favor, you suddenly want to succeed. Isn’t

that phenomenal? Doesn’t it pack power? The apostle Paul coined a word for it. The word is:

GRACE.