

Is salvation a matter of correct doctrine?



When I say that believing Paul's message is essential for membership in the body of Christ, am I making salvation a matter of correct doctrine? No. I am making correct doctrine a matter of salvation. Allow me to explain the difference.

I believe **Ephesians 1:4-5**, that members of the body of Christ are chosen in Him before the disruption of the world, designated beforehand for the place of a son. Those who are chosen and designated beforehand will, at some point during their lifetimes, be given faith to believe the truth. (For the record: truth, I believe, is the opposite of falsehood. I speak chiefly of the falsehoods of human religious traditions, which pervert the nature of God and deny the completeness of Christ's sacrifice.)

So you see how I put the horse where he belongs, in front of the cart. We are not saved because we believe right things about God; we believe right things about God because we are saved. Being designated beforehand according to God's sovereign choice is the horse, our believing the truth is the cart that follows. ■

We believe right things about God 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.

Believing Paul's message is essential for membership in the body of Christ

God's grace can cover wrong belief, but does it choose to do so?

I contend, and propose to you today, that not all who claim to be believers are believers, and therefore not all who claim to be saved are saved. I believe that the life that endures throughout the coming eons (that is, eonian life) is much rarer than we thought.

It is still a gracious gift of God, but it is a gift rare and precious. I also believe that we have seriously misapprehended the grace of God, especially that grace as revealed in the gospel brought by Paul. Rather than apprehending grace as the nature of the new message (that is, that Paul's message is *gracious*), we have made grace a slosh bucket that eliminates lines of belief and distinctions between what is true and what is false. In other words, we have made grace say: *Who cares what you believe? This is grace.* As one brother has put it, "God's grace can cover even wrong belief."

Yes, God's grace *can* cover even wrong belief, but does it choose to do so? If this is God's present design for grace, my question would be: "Then why isn't Osama bin Laden saved? *He* has wrong belief. If the grace of God covers even wrong belief, then Osama bin Laden qualifies for salvation under those terms. And so does everyone else, for that matter. In fact, if this statement is true, then believing the truth has absolutely nothing to do with eonian life."

Reader, are you willing to say that believing the truth has nothing to do with the special life God promises to believers (that is, eonian life)? If so, are you willing to take this to its logical conclusion and contend that Osama bin Laden is now your "brother in the Lord" and a fellow-member of the body of Christ? I am not. And it's not because I do not have agapé love in my heart for bin Laden and for all of humanity. It is because such a scenario is inconsistent with what I read in Scripture concerning those who do have this special life. I find, in the Scripture, that



Is this man a member of the body of Christ? *Why not?*

those who have eonian life will be found to be believing certain vital and fundamental truths concerning Jesus Christ and His work.

If God's grace covers even wrong belief, we make a mockery of Paul's gospel. We say, in effect, 1) those who believe Paul's gospel are members of the body of Christ, and 2) those who *don't* believe Paul's gospel are also members of the body of Christ. Where does that leave Paul's gospel? It makes it nonessential for eonian life. It makes a mockery of the great care Paul exercised in communicating his message accurately, and in reiterating its core elements.

I propose to you today that it *does* matter what one believes, and that it is important for our belief to be sincere and founded on revealed facts concerning Jesus Christ and His work. I believe that believing Paul's message is essential for membership in the body of Christ. ■

What must one believe to be in the body of Christ?

What must one believe to be saved? Paul puts it very simply to the Philippian jailor in **Acts 16:31**—“Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved.” With this one verse, we have already accomplished much. For one thing, we have eliminated Osama bin Laden from eonian salvation; he does not believe on the Lord Jesus. I take no particular pleasure in this determination, it is simply a fact.

So even though we live in an era of unprecedented grace, it is still important to believe a certain thing, or rather, on a certain Someone:

“And there is no salvation in any other one, for neither is there any other name (besides that of Jesus Christ, the Nazarene —ed.), given under heaven among men, in which we must be saved.” —Acts 4:12.

But is it enough to merely utter His name? In Matthew 7:22-23, Jesus said,

“Many will be declaring to Me in that day, ‘Lord! Lord! Was it not in Your name that we prophesy, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name do many powerful deeds?’ And then shall I be avowing to them that ‘I never knew you! Depart from Me, workers of lawlessness.’”

It is not enough to merely utter His name.

Is it enough to merely believe that Jesus Christ existed? Pontius Pilate believed He existed. Is it enough to admit that Jesus Christ came from God? Even the Pharisees believed that. Is it enough to avow an acquaintance with God? Many who do so deny their avowal by their acts. Is it enough to believe that God is one? Demons have that much figured out.

We must keep looking past Acts 16:31. Indeed, Paul told the Philippian jailor, “Believe on the Lord Jesus and you shall be saved.” But the account does not end there. As he stands in the jail listening to Paul, with rocks still crumbling around him, the Philippian jailor does not yet believe. How can he? He still has no details concerning this Jesus. He has no information. As distasteful or unspiritual as this may sound to some of my readers, saving knowledge of Jesus Christ comes through the relay of information concerning Jesus Christ, by the mouths of God’s appointed heralds, for “faith is out of tidings”—Romans 10:17.

The very next verse in Acts 16 reports the subsequent action of Paul and Silas on behalf of the jailor: “And they speak to him the word of the Lord, together with all those in his house.”

It is at this time that our apostle and his fellow laborer relay the vital details concerning Christ. Thrill with me with what is next said concerning the jailor, in verse 34:

“Besides, leading them up into his house, he sets a table before them, and exults with all his household, *having believed God.*”

It is not enough to utter the name of Jesus. It is not enough to believe that Jesus existed. It is not enough to admit that Jesus Christ came from God. It is not enough to believe that God is one. It is not even enough to avow an acquaintance with God. Saving faith is *believing what God has to say concerning His Son, Jesus Christ.* ■

I want you to thank God as never before.

God has miraculously delivered you from deception



Iwish for you to realize just how rare eonian life is, and how rare a gift it is to have been called out of religion to hear the true voice of God. I wonder if any of my readers are as thankful as I am today to have been rescued out of the darkness of religion. When you see how rare is your call, how rare is your destiny, and how hard it is (nay, humanly impossible) to escape the snares of the deadliest and most seductive religion on earth (Christianity), you will fall on your knees and thank God as you have never thanked Him before. You will thank Him for miraculously delivering you from the raging river of deception that even now sweeps most of humanity to eonian destruction. ■

The basics of Paul’s gospel

NOT ONE IN A HUNDRED THOUSAND CHRISTIANS BELIEVE THEM



Paul wrote to the Corinthians concerning the evangel which he first brought to them. Here then are the foundational elements of Paul’s gospel of grace. These are the basics of the basics that those who have been set for eonian life into Christ’s body (Acts 13:48), will be found believing:

1 Corinthians 15:3-4

“For I give over to you among the first what also I accepted, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that He was entombed, and that He has been roused the third day according to the scriptures...”

I highlight the key elements like this:

- 1) Christ died**
- 2) For our sins**
- 3) He was entombed**
- 4) He was roused**

I doubt that even one in one-hundred thousand Christians believes any of these foundational points. How could I possibly say that? Three words:

DOCTRINES OF DEMONS

See page 3. ■

Rants & Stuff

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

Grace does not equal numbers

Those not given faith in this life are still saved for eternity, they just don't live during the two coming eons. The first objection to this is: "Yes, but Paul's is a gospel of *grace*."

Because no one found righteousness under law, we assume that everyone finds it under grace. We have made the mistake of assuming that grace equals numbers. The more gracious God's message is, however, the fewer people embrace it.

"Now I, brethren, if I am still heralding circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? Consequently the snare of the cross of

Christ has been nullified." —Galatians 5:11.

The law of Moses was never called a snare. That's because it was easy for work-oriented humans to understand and appropriate it. God said, "You do this for Me, and I'll do that for you." How could anyone stumble at that? Most people grasp the revenge thing. The law perfectly coincides with how humans like to think. Thus, no one ever called the law a snare. But Paul calls the message of the cross a snare. Why?

Paul's message is so gracious that few



humans can stomach it. Mankind-at-large wants to earn its salvation, and so the message that Christ accomplished all at the cross actually repels most people—especially religious people—and keeps them from believing it.

That *you* believe it is a pure act of God. *Rejoice.* ■

Teachings of demons derail Paul's gospel

TWO OF CHRISTIANITY'S MOST CHERISHED TEACHINGS COME STRAIGHT FROM SATAN'S LAIR

Our adversary has laid snares—trip wires—in front of every one of Paul's four doctrinal points of 1 Cor. 15:3-4. Satan is not stupid. He knows that members of Christ's body will be seated above every sovereignty and authority in the heavens (Eph. 1:20-23). This means *him*, for he is an authority in the heavens. Knowing this, Satan does everything in his power to prevent there being members in the body of Christ. Lying is Satan's forte. Thus, Satan will lie about the truth. Every one of Satan's lies is a denial of truth, that is, a falsehood.

Satan knows where to construct his snares. Again, he is not stupid. He will construct them *before* the vital elements of Paul's evangel, not after them. Thus, his trip wires will keep people from believing the necessary elements of truth, and therefore from becoming members of Christ's body, and

therefore from being seated above him.

These snares and trip wires are called "false doctrines." In **1 Timothy 4:1**, Paul specifically calls them "the teachings of demons."

BASIC ELEMENT #1:

► Christ Died

This truth is denied by the false doctrine of the Trinity, which states that Jesus Christ and God the Father are the same being. If this is so, then Jesus Christ could not have died, because God cannot die.

BASIC ELEMENT #2:

► For our sins

This truth is denied by the false doctrine of Free Will. Free Will insists that—even subsequent to the cross—one's sins still stand against him. The human default setting is eternal torment...UNLESS one exercises one's free will and believes in Jesus. This effectively de-



nies the death of Christ for sins.

BASIC ELEMENTS #3 & 4:

► The entombment and rousing of Christ. —see ELEMENT #1

Doctrines of demons, like Satan himself, trick the unwary eye. Satan now disguises himself as a messenger of light (2 Cor. 11:14) and his servants pose as dispensers of righteousness (2 Cor. 11:15).

Small wonder, then, that the teachings of Satan would sell best in the bright, "righteous" halls of Christendom. ■