

Something's Wrong With This Gospel!

I am writing in response to a letter printed in your July/August 2005 issue, in the "Everyday Theology" section. The question and answer were entitled, "I Waited Too Long."

The writer expressed deep regret in taking too much time preparing to share the gospel with a friend, and before he was able to do so the friend died. He asked for help in finding peace.

The response comforted the writer by saying that he may one day be "surprised" to find his friend in heaven, and that he should not blame himself for missing his chance to witness. There "may have been" other believers that God used to share the gospel with this friend in his final days.

"You may be surprised to see your friend in heaven!" "God may have used other believers to share the gospel with your friend." This is the only assurance that is offered by most in the church today in cases where a friend or loved one has died without responding correctly to the gospel.

But what if others also do not share the gospel? What if others are like this friend who waited, and prepared, and never got around to sharing with this friend?

This interchange should cause anyone to stop and observe, "Something is wrong with this gospel!"

Salvation of the lost seems to rest a great deal upon we who are Christians. If we don't witness, others end up in hell forever. We were remiss, but we end up in heaven. Because of our neglect, others end up in hell.

God seems to place an awful lot of responsibility on our shoulders! His plan of salvation seems to be dependent on how well we do what we're supposed to do. But look at the sorry history of mankind as recorded in the Bible! Would God really base the eternal destiny of others upon our performance?

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Perhaps, though, God knows of our weaknesses, and takes control of things Himself. Perhaps He draws the lost to Himself, so they can accept the gospel even if all Believers fail to act. Or perhaps God causes some Believers to take action so that others will hear and accept the gospel!

But if God is in control, why can't He lead ALL mankind to salvation? Why can't God know who to send, and what needs to be said or done so that every lost soul hears, understands and acknowledges Him as Lord?

Guess what! God **is** in control, and this is exactly what He is in the process of doing. You can't tell by looking at the state of affairs in the world today, or even the state of "The Church" ... but in His Word God assures us that He is in control ... that He is the Savior of all mankind (1 Timothy 4:9-11) ... that just as in Adam all are dying, so also in Christ will all be made alive (1 Corinthians 15:21-23) ... that Christ is reigning until all are subjected to God and God becomes All in all (1 Corinthians 15:20-28).

Something is wrong with the gospel that is preached by most preachers and teachers today. Their gospel says that **IF** you correctly respond to the gospel in this lifetime, however long you may have, you will spend eternity in heaven. But **IF** you do not respond correctly to the gospel in this lifetime, you will spend eternity in hell, being tormented endlessly with no hope of escape. The word “gospel” means good news, but what is preached by most today sounds more like good news and bad news.

That’s because it is not what God’s Word says.

Since roughly the fifth century, the majority teaching within the church (called “orthodoxy”) has taught the doctrine of endless torment. But this teaching stems from a failure to properly translate the New Testament from its original Greek, and a failure to carefully study God’s Word to understand “how it all fits together.” One cannot simply read from any place in the Bible and proclaim, “Here God is speaking to me.” God has worked in different ways in different ages, using different individuals or groups of people.

But one think is consistent throughout. God is continually working toward the goal of reconciling ALL to Himself!

Today the world hears the church proclaiming good news mixed with bad news. “You can get to heaven if you will believe before it is too late, but as for your deceased loved ones, take heart ... maybe you will be surprised to see them in heaven ... maybe God sent a Christian to them just in time so they could respond ... maybe ... maybe ... maybe...” Good news, is it?

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But what God’s Word REALLY says, if one can escape the biased and incorrect teachings of “the church,” is that God is in the process of saving ALL mankind.

All will be made alive! Not all at the same time, but all in their time (see 1 Corinthians 15:22-23). God cannot become All in all (1 Corinthians 15:28) until the last sheep is safely in the fold.

God is “the Saviour of all mankind, especially of believers.” (1 Timothy 4:10) Yes, He is the Saviour of Believers in a special way, for they believe and are saved in this present age through faith, and serve a specific function in the unfolding works of God. But God is the Saviour **especially** of Believers, not **exclusively** of Believers. For one day **every** knee will bow, **all** will be subjected to Him, and He will be **All in all**.

This is God’s plan, as revealed to us in His Word. It is not contingent upon anything we do. God’s will cannot be thwarted by mankind. It is guaranteed. **And that is the gospel!**

[Note: I would be happy to provide a copy of my book, written as I resigned as a pastor within the Free Methodist Church three years ago, in which I detail how I can believe the Bible is 100% the Word of God, and see in His Word God’s Plan to ultimately save all. If you drop me a note and provide your mailing address, I would be happy to send a copy.]

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August 2005