

This is the Condemnation...

Message By: Leroy Surface

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. **And this is the condemnation**, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.*

John 3:16-21

The “Power” of the Gospel

The preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ is the most powerful person on this planet. He carries the gravest responsibility of any person. He holds the issues of life and death like no other. The reconciliation of the world is placed in his hands. God almighty has entrusted the preacher of the gospel with a greater power than that given to the ruler of any nation on earth. I speak of the “power” of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul said “*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth...*”(Romans 1:16).” Notice two things about this scripture. First, “*It is the power of God unto salvation.*” Second, it is salvation “*to every one that believeth.*” God has invested such power in the true gospel of Jesus Christ that every one who believes it is “*miraculously*” transformed into a “*new creation.*” It is the “*truth*” of the gospel that holds this wonderful “*creative power.*”

Notice that John 3:16 says, “*...whosoever believeth in Him...*” Romans 1: 16 says “*...to every one that believeth...*” John 1:12, “*but as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.*” In Mark 16:15-16, Jesus said, “*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*” This matter of “*believing*” is mentioned forty one times in the book of Acts, sixty nine times in the letters of Paul, and over one hundred times in the writings of John. The sum of everything written about this matter is that “*believing*” is the sole requirement for releasing the “*power*” of the gospel that saves the soul. If this is the truth (and it is), then there is something else we must understand about “*believing.*”

Paul tells us in Romans 10:10 that we must believe “*with our heart:*” “*For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness...*” The gospel of Jesus Christ is of such nature that the “*intellect*” can never believe it. I Corinthians 1:18 says, “*For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but to us which are saved it is the power of God.*” It is impossible for the “*wisdom of man*” to believe the gospel. Only the “*heart*” of man can believe the truth, and then it must first be “*convinced*” by the Holy Spirit of God. In John 16:8-9, Jesus was speaking of the work of the “*Comforter*” (the Holy Ghost): “*And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of*

righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.” The word translated “*reprove*” in this text actually means to “*convict*” or “*convince*,” thus, the “*Holy Ghost*” working through the preaching of the gospel will “*convict*” the sinner of his sin, and “*convince*” him of the righteousness of God and the coming judgment of God on the ungodly. Being “*convicted*” and “*convinced*” by the Holy Ghost, the sinner can believe “*from his heart*” the truth of the gospel. Repenting of sin and believing the gospel, he receives the “*miracle*” of salvation from sin.

The “Fragility” of the Gospel

And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.

Isaiah 59:14

As great is the “*power*” of the gospel of Jesus Christ, equally as great is the “*fragility*” of the gospel. The “*truth*” of the gospel is so “*fragile*” that if anything is added to it, it loses its power. If it is “*twisted*” the least bit, it is destroyed. If it is “*diluted*” it can do nothing. The first apostles were “*set for the defense of the gospel*” (Philippians 1:17). They spent their lifetimes “*contending for the faith...*” (Jude 1:3) All but one of the apostles died a martyr’s death for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ. In Philippians 2:16 we are told to “*hold forth*” the “*word of life.*” The prophet Isaiah said, “*Truth is fallen in the street.*” With all the incredible “*power*” of truth, it cannot stand alone. When men forsake it, it “*falls in the street:*” then, “*judgment is turned away backward, justice standeth afar off...and equity cannot enter.*” Isaiah continues in the fifteenth verse, “*Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey.*” We live in such a time in America. While our nation continues its rebellion against God and our Lord Jesus Christ, even in the “*church*” there are multitudes that continue in sin: it is the one who “*departs from iniquity*” that is made the prey. It will be so in America until there are men and women who will take up the defense of the gospel. They will be “*heroes of the faith,*” but they will be hated by the world. They will learn rejection and persecution, but they will know the “*glory of the Lord.*”

Things That Render the Gospel “Of No Effect”

For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

I Corinthians 1:17

Paul declares in I Corinthians 1:18, “**For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but to us which are saved it is the power of God.**” It is impossible to separate “*the preaching of the cross*” from “*the gospel of Christ.*” Both are said to be “*the power of God*” to save lost humanity. In fact, the “*power*” of the gospel to save is found in the “*cross*” and the “*blood*” of Jesus Christ. It is impossible to preach the “*gospel*” without preaching both the “*cross*” and the “*blood.*” Further, in this first chapter of I Corinthians, Paul tells us that “*Christ crucified*” is the “*power of God*” and the “*wisdom of God*” (I Corinthians 1:23-24). Here he speaks of the offering of the “*body*” of Jesus Christ, a sin sacrifice to “*take away the sin of the world.*” Concerning this, the author of Hebrews tells us, “*...we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all*” (Hebrews 10:10). Take the broken body, the blood, and the cross of Jesus Christ out of the “*gospel,*” and it is no gospel. It is but a useless philosophy without these elements.

In our text, Paul warned us that the “*cross of Christ*” could be made of “*none effect.*” The Corinthian church had been divided. There were “*contentions*” among the people (I Corinthians 1:11). The divisive issue was over who had baptized them. The church was “*denominated*” down the lines of which apostle had baptized them. One would say, “*I am of Paul,*” another, “*I am of Apollos,*” and yet another, “*I am of Cephas (Peter).*” It is a shame that the “*church*” is still “*denominated*” over like issues. Paul writes them, “*I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Cripus and Gaius,*” etc. (I Corinthians 1:14-16). “*For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel...*” Is it incredible to you to think that water baptism could possibly “*make the cross of Christ of none effect?*” It has for untold millions of “*believers.*” I must explain.

Premature Baptism: “*Baptismal regeneration*” is a doctrine held by some that it is the waters of baptism that wash away the sins of the one baptized. This doctrine is not according to the scriptures, and it is certainly not the “*truth*” of the gospel. Fundamentalist protestant churches by large reject this doctrine as error. Why then is it that the most common answer we receive when we ask if a person is “*saved*” or not, is “*I was baptized when I was a child,*” or “*I was baptized in such and such church?*” Most often these think they are “*saved*” because they were “*baptized,*” even though they have never had relationship with the Lord Jesus.

A prominent businessman attended our church many years ago. Several times this man came under such conviction of his sin that he came to the altar and literally trembled, as tears would pour down his face. His hands would grip the edge of the altar until his knuckles would turn white, yet he never surrendered his heart and life to Jesus. The Holy Spirit of God was faithful to convict him of sin when the gospel was preached. Had he repented and believed the gospel, the awesome working of the “*cross of Christ*” would have slain his old man, and he would have been “*born again*” by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (I Peter 1:3). He was a very “*good*” man of this world, but he never “*submitted*” to the “*righteous work of the cross of Christ*” (Romans 10:3). After a short time this family moved out of our area and began to attend a good church, which was pastored by a friend and man of God. Again, when the gospel was preached, the Spirit of God was faithful to convict this man and bring him into the altar of God. This time, however, he was immediately baptized in water, before he surrendered to the “*death of the cross.*” Conviction lifted from this man. The “*cross of Christ was made of none effect.*” The “*miracle*” of a “*new man*” never appeared, because the “*old man*” never died. An old man of God in historic times said, “*we must pluck no fruit before it is fully ripe.*” In the salvation of a single soul there is both seed time and harvest time. Grain gathered before its time will rot in the barn. Multitudes have been destroyed by premature baptism, but not one has been saved.

Wisdom of Words: Paul said he was sent to preach the gospel, “*not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ be made of none effect.*” Probably the single largest “*enemy*” of the cross of Christ is the “*wisdom of words,*” or, “*philosophy* (the love of wisdom).” In Colossians 2:8 Paul named philosophy and “*vain deceit* (empty delusions)” as two things that would “*spoil* (rob)” the church of its power. These are teachings that lead the people captive to “*traditions*” and the “*rudiments of the world* (the way the world does things).” I heard a radio minister several years ago on a religious call in program. A young alcoholic called for help. The minister led him through a “*sinner’s prayer*” and told him “*now you are saved. You have eternal life. You will go to heaven when you die. You have Jesus, but Jesus is not enough for you. You need to get ‘professional help’ with your problem.*” If the young man believed the preacher his soul was not saved, instead, it was damned. Jesus is enough. God “*saves them to the uttermost that come unto God through Jesus Christ*” (Hebrews 7:25). It has never been known that a man or woman was “*born again*” of the Spirit of God and was still an alcoholic, drug addict, fornicator, liar, thief, covetous, or any such thing (I Corinthians 6:9-10). The multitude of “*self-help*” programs in many of the churches across America is a testimony against the “*gospel*” that is preached in them. It is a “*gospel*” that has been stripped of the power of God to save the soul. It is a

“gospel” that brings its believer into a lifelong struggle against sin that yet reigns in their heart and nature. It is not the gospel of Christ.

Old Covenant: *“I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain”* (Galatians 2:21). This statement of fact by the apostle Paul is broad and all-inclusive. We know that the “*Law of Moses*” cannot justify any. We know that “*keeping the Ten Commandments*” cannot save the soul. But, do we know there is nothing said or done between Genesis 1:1 and Malachi 4:6 that can bring “*life*” or “*righteousness*,” or save even a single soul? If there was, Jesus did not have to die on the cross, and His death is in vain. None of the prophets said or did anything that could save. The beautiful Psalms of David, the wisdom of the Proverbs of Solomon: neither of these could bring righteousness to the people. If even Jesus’ own “*sermon on the mount*” could have saved a single soul, He died in vain. In Gethsemane it was settled between Jesus and His Father that there was no other way except He die the death of the cross (Matthew 26 39:44). “*...If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law*” (Galatians 3:21). Jesus would not have suffered the cross.

Knowing these things, why do we dwell so much on the Old Testament? Why do we seek examples for the New Testament believer among those who could not have been “*born again?*” No one, from Adam’s transgression until Christ’s crucifixion, ever received a “*new heart*” or a “*new spirit*” (Ezekiel 36:24-27). Paul warned us in II Corinthians 3:14-16, “*But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.*” Multitudes are “*blinded*” because they have sought their “*righteousness*” in the Old Covenant, and not “*in Christ.*” For those, Jesus died in vain.

Carnal Ordinances: In Hebrews 9:10, the writer is speaking of the Old Testament priests who offered sacrifices for the people, “*Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.*” The “*time of reformation*” has come and the time of “*meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances,*” has gone. These are abolished in the sacrifice of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. To bring any such thing into the “*gospel*” is to destroy the gospel.

In Galatians 1:6-7, Paul spoke of those who “*perverted*” the gospel of Christ. They “*twisted*” it; they “*added to it*” until it was no gospel. “*Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses,*” they said, “*ye cannot be saved*” (Acts 15:1). Paul was harsh in his judgment of these false teachers. “*Let them be accursed*” (Galatians 1:8-9) was his cry. “*O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you*” he demanded of the church (Galatians 3:1)? “*Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing*” (Galatians 5:2). Certainly, by today’s standards, Paul was being “*contentious.*” “*But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ*” (Galatians 1:11-12). Again, by today’s standards, “*...he must think he’s the only one that has the truth.*” So it is with everyone who knows and defends the truth.

In II Corinthians 11:4, Paul warned of those who would preach “*another Jesus*”, “*another spirit*”, and “*another gospel.*” Every error that has entered the doctrine of the church in the past nineteen hundred years has began by the preaching of “*another gospel.*” The result of “*another gospel*” is “*another Jesus,*” and finally, “*another spirit.*” The defenders of these things almost always point to the multitudes they are reaching for validation of their error. Paul spoke of these in Galatians 6:12: “*As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.*” The entire region was coming to be “*circumcised.*” The church was growing by leaps and

bounds. *“Ye are fallen from grace”* (Galatians 5:4) was Paul’s sad commentary. *“My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you”* (Galatians 4:19) was his cry. Paul wrote all these things, simply because someone had added *“circumcision”* to the gospel of Christ. They had destroyed it.

A large segment of the *“church”* has returned to the Jewish forms of worship. They have adopted Jewish rituals, songs, and dances. They observe the Jewish feast-days. While it is true that the modern day observances of these things are beautiful and appealing to the eye, they are all *“dead works”* that have no part in the gospel of Christ. In Colossians 2:16-17 Paul said, *“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.”* In Galatians 4:9-11 Paul expresses his *“fear”* to the Galatian church, *“But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.”*

Can you imagine the dismay of the Apostles if they were to hear the doctrines of many of the churches of our day? *“Doctrines of devils!”* (I Timothy 4:1) would be Paul’s immediate analysis. *“Pernicious ways!”* and *“covetous practices!”* (II Peter 2:1-14) would be Peters cry. Paul would be even more horrified. *“It’s another Jesus, another spirit, and another gospel”* (II Corinthians 11:4) would be his conclusion. John would rather call it the *“Spirit of anti-christ!”* and the *“spirit of error”* (I John 4:1-6)! All the things these mighty men of God had foreseen and warned of, they would find in the modern doctrines of the church. They would see that *“philosophy”* and *“vain deceit”* has *“spoiled (robbed)”* the church and led it captive to the *“traditions of men”* and the *“rudiments of the world”* (Colossians 2:8). To find a multitude of *“counseling psychologists”* in the church teaching the *“twelve step program”* would confirm their worst fears. *“Surely perilous times (II Timothy 3:1-13) have come,”* they would say. *“The people are turned from the truth to fables”* (II Timothy 4:3-4).

Fallen From Grace

Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

Galatians 5:4

Over the years there has been much controversy over whether or not a person could *“fall from grace.”* In the case of the Galatians, an entire group of people fell from grace. They had received the gospel from Paul (Galatians 1:6-8). They had *“begun in the Spirit”* (Galatians 3:3). They had *“known God”* (Galatians 4:9). In Galatians 4:19 Paul said, *“...I travail in birth **again** until Christ be formed in you.”* Paul warned them in Galatians 5:2-4, if they turned to circumcision, Christ would *“profit them nothing.”* Every man that received circumcision was a *“debtor to do the whole law.”* He climaxes his warning with *“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace”* (Galatians 5:4). In the ninth verse Paul further warns them, *“a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.”* It wasn’t only *“circumcision”* Paul was concerned about. Millions of men were circumcised at birth. This had absolutely no relevance concerning their salvation. The circumcised Jew could turn and trust in Jesus alone for salvation and he would be saved. It was those that *“trusted”* in circumcision that Christ could not profit. Maybe some of the Galatians received circumcision just to be sure of their salvation. They did not gain; they lost! When the *“gates”* of the church were opened to circumcision, a flood of Jewish tradition and the Law of Moses came in also. The Galatians had become *“Jewish proselytes.”* They had, in fact, *“fallen from grace.”*

Any small error, added to the gospel of Christ will destroy it. It doesn’t take much. *“A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.”* Soon the entire church will be consumed with error. I recently listened to a *“Classic Billy Graham”* message from 1971. He clearly said, *“Jesus Christ shed His blood to cleanse us from our sins.”* In less than a generation the majority of the *“church”* has ceased speaking about being *“cleansed,”* and have

substituted “covered.” This single error is enough to strip the gospel of Christ of its power to cleanse and sanctify the believer. Billy said, “when a man is born again, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, and all things are become new.” Billy Graham wasn’t the first to say this. It is the truth of the gospel that the apostle Paul preached (II Corinthians 5:17). During the past generation error has flooded into the “church” in America. Is it possible that all such have “fallen from grace?”

The Condemnation

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

John 3:17-19

Jesus did not come into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world. Those that believe on Him are not condemned, but those that do not believe on Him are condemned already, because they do not believe. The nineteenth verse tells us what the condemnation is. “...Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light...” It is easy to think that this verse references blatant sinners such as harlots, thieves, murderers and such like. It does not. In Matthew 21:31-32 Jesus was speaking to the “chief priests and elders (Matthew 21:23)” when He said, “...the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.” It was the chief priests and elders, the scribes and Pharisees, the lawyers and Saducees who “loved darkness rather than light.” It was not the “darkness” of worldly sin they loved, it was the darkness of “religion.” Jesus had told the people, “If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness” (Matthew 6:23). The “light” of man’s traditions, man-made doctrines, and religious philosophies is the greatest “darkness” of all. The scripture says they loved darkness rather than light, “because their deeds were evil.” The Greek word translated “evil” means, by proper definition, “worthless.” Their “deeds” were the deeds of religious tradition. At best their deeds were the “deeds of the law” that Paul said could not “justify (Romans 3:20).” All the works they trusted in were “dead works.” They believed doctrines with no power to crucify the old man. They offered “blood” that could not take away sin (Hebrews 10:4). Jesus said, “All their works they do for to be seen of men” (Matthew 23:5). They gave their alms “to be seen of men” (Matthew 6:1-4). They fasted to “appear unto men to fast” (Matthew 6:16-18). They only prayed “to be seen of men” (Matthew 6:5-6, 23:14). He added, “Therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation” (Matthew 23:15). Their punishment in Hell will be greater than that of the blatant sinners of the world.

In Matthew 15:7-9 Jesus was speaking to the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 15:1) when He said, “Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. **But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.** What a frightening thought! These religious leaders of that day were worshiping God, and it was all in vain. They sang the praise and worship songs, they went through all the motions of worship, they had all the confessions right, but their hearts were far from Him. The “doctrines” they taught were the inventions of man, and not the word of God. They were worshiping “God” but Jesus called them “hypocrites.” The origin of the word “hypocrite” means to be an “actor.” It is anyone that is simply “acting out a part.” They are “pretenders.” Everything they do is “in vain”. It is worthless.

Notice that Jesus repeatedly called the scribes and Pharisees “hypocrites,” especially in the sixth and the twenty-third chapters of Matthew. Now in the Old Testament Hebrew, a “hypocrite” was one that was “soiled with sin.” The word Jesus used in the New Testament, however, meant “an actor under an assumed character (stage player).” Everything they did was “pretence.” Everything they did was “to be seen of men.” You can easily spot them today. The life they live is simply “acting out a part.” They are “imitators.” They have taught to

“imitate.” Maybe you have seen a modern day *“man of God”* on television. Perhaps he was in his *“closet of prayer,”* his face uplifted with tears on his cheeks as he *“prayed”* over the letters sent to him. It seems *“wonderful”* the way this man so fervently prays, but *“why are the cameras there?”* It is because they want everyone to *“see”* that they *“pray for you.”* This is what Jesus spoke about the *“hypocrite.”* Even the *“tears”* on their cheeks came out of a spray bottle. We have all seen them with little starving children in their arms, loving them, feeding them, and wiping their dusty brows. This is wonderful that someone is doing this, but *“why are the cameras there?”* Again, it is as Jesus said, *“All their works they do to be seen of men.”* When the cameras are present all their works are *“godly.”* What they really are is done in secret. That is their *“private life.”* It is *“no one business!”* Jesus said it the other way. *“Pray in secret; give your alms in secret; fast in secret;”* but let your *“private life”* be an open book that every man can read and know that God is real (II Corinthians 3:2-3).

Why “Religious” People Hate the Truth

If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin.

John 15:22

The Greek word translated *“cloke”* in this text means *“an outward showing, i.e. pretext.”* In our English dictionary the word *“pretext”* means, *“that which is put forward to conceal a true purpose or object.”* O how revealing it is when the *“cloke”* that conceals is taken away. Until Jesus came the Pharisees were seen to be *“holy men.”* Everyone knew they fasted and prayed, but they did not know that it was only for *“appearances.”* They had seen them doing alms (giving to the poor), but again, it was only when they could *“be seen of men.”* They kept all the feast days, the holy days, and the Sabbaths. They offered sacrifices, burnt incense, sprinkled *“holy water,”* kept rituals, and did many ceremonies. They also *“...love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi”* (Matthew 23:6-7). It is no different today. They love *“titles.”* They will pay money for *“mail order degrees,”* and insist on being called *“Doctor, Doctor.”* Jesus said to them, *“ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in”* (Matthew 23:13). It is no different today. They hate the truth of the gospel and will do anything to keep *“their”* people from hearing it. They feed their congregations doctrines that hold them in bondage to sin, and will not let them go. Again, Jesus said they *“devour widows houses, and for a pretence make long prayer”* (Matthew 23:14). They, *“compass land and sea to make one proselyte, and when he is made,”* Jesus said, *“ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves”* (Matthew 23:15).

Jesus came and spoke to them. He took their *“cloak of pretense”* away, and the world saw their nakedness. They saw them for what they really were. There was no more *“covering”* for their sin. The religious go about today saying, *“We are covered! We are covered!”* They are not. The world around them sees their nakedness. Our text for this message says, **“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”** The Greek word translated *“darkness”* in this text means *“shadiness, i.e. obscurity.”* This same word is used in the New Testament various different ways. Those without the *“light of Christ”* are said to *“sit in darkness”* (Matthew 4:16). The *“light”* of mans traditions are said to be great *“darkness”* (Matthew 6:23). Those who are *“cast out”* of His presence in the last day are said to be in *“outer darkness”* (Matthew 8:12, 22:13, 25:20). When Jesus was crucified there was *“darkness”* over the entire land for three hours (Matthew 27:45) *“The sun shall be turned into darkness”* (Acts 2:20). When Elymas the sorcerer was blinded *“for a season,”* it was said *“a mist and a darkness”* fell on him (Acts 13:8-11). Our *“adversary”* is called *“the ruler of the darkness of this world”* (Ephesians 6:12). Obviously the same word is used to indicate many different things, but in every place the Apostle John spoke of darkness, whether in the Gospel of John, or in the first epistle of John, he was speaking of *“spiritual”* darkness. Specifically he seems to be speaking of the *“darkness”* of *“traditions and doctrines of men”* that issued out of Judaism and the Law of Moses. Generally, he seems to be speaking of any religious teaching that is less than the absolute truth of the Gospel of Christ.

“This is the message,” John says, **“that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth”** (I John 1:5-6). If the man that is *“circumcised (the issue of that day), and keeps the Law of Moses,”* says he has fellowship with God, John says he *“lies”* and *“does not the truth.”* The issue of today is this; if a man *“continues in sin,”* and says he has fellowship with God, he *“lies”* and *“does not the truth.”* Jesus said, *“Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”* (John 8:32). The same *“truth”* of the gospel will both *“free”* the religious man from the law and the sinner from sin. It is spiritual darkness (ignorance of the truth, Ephesians 4:17-19) that holds multitudes of people in our churches in bondage to both *“law”* and *“sin.”* Remember, before you balk at this saying, *“...the strength of sin is the law”* (I Corinthians 15:56). Everyone who is either ignorant of the truth of the gospel, or has rejected the truth, is still in bondage to sin. Many of the same are also in bondage to the law. To paraphrase I John 1:6 we might say, *“If we say we have fellowship with Him and walk in ‘sin,’ we lie, and do not the truth,”* or, *“If we say we have fellowship with Him and walk in ‘law,’ we lie, and do not the truth.”* In either case, if we *“do”* the truth, *“obey”* the truth (Galatians 3:1), and *“know”* the truth, we will be in bondage to nothing of this world, whether of *“sin, Satan, or religion.”* It all begins with *“believing”* the truth.

“But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin” (I John 1:7). The man who *“loves darkness (whether sin or religion)”* will not come to the light, *“lest his deeds should be reprov’d”* (John 3:20). **“This is the condemnation,”** John said, **“that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light...”** (John 3:19). The eternal Word was made flesh (John 1:14). The *“Word”* that was *“with God and was God (I John 1:1)”* was made flesh and dwelt among us. We called His name Jesus. **“In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not”** (John 1:4-5). The *“Son of God”* came; the *“creator”* of all things came (John 1:3, 10), and the chief priests, the scribes, Pharisees, and the Sadducees, all hated Him. They *“loved”* their religion *“about God,”* but they *“hated”* the Son of God. They *“loved”* the scriptures, but they *“hated”* Him whom the scriptures testified of (John 5:39-47). The *“life (light)”* that was in Him reprov’d their religious works and revealed that they were *“worthless.”* They hated the light and loved the darkness because in the darkness of religion they were respected and honored. They sought the honor of men. The worthlessness of their religion was obscured by the darkness they kept the congregation in. They loved the darkness: it kept them in positions of power over the people. Their religion was a *“cloke”* that hid their real motivations. It hid the secret things of their hearts. When light came it made all things manifest. People can see clearly when light comes. In the light of truth (Jesus Christ) they could clearly see the *“hypocrisy”* of the scribes and Pharisees.” Many of the people came to the light. All those who come to the light, their deeds will be *“wrought in God (John 3:21).”* It is those who *“do (hear, believe, and know) the truth”* that come to the light. They have *“fellowship with God.”*

Conclusion

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

John 8:32

There is that *“truth”* of the gospel of Christ that makes its believer free. Jesus said, *“If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”* He was speaking of the wonderful truth of being made *“free from sin”* (John 8:34-36, also see Romans 6:6-7, 18, 22). Those who *“love”* darkness seek to *“qualify”* these verses. They will speak of being free from the *“penalty”* of sin. The thought in such teaching is that a child of God is still a sinner, but, because they *“believe in Jesus,”* they can (and will) continue in sin without facing the penalty. *“Jesus took the penalty of my sin,”* they reason. He did not! The *“penalty (wages)”* of sin is death (Romans 6:23). It is not the natural death of laying the body down, but it is *“eternal damnation.”* It is *“everlasting death.”* It is eternal separation from the presence of God. Jesus suffered none of this. Jesus did not die *“spiritually”* as some teach. If He died a spiritual death, and went to Hell to *“take the penalty of our sin,”* He would still be there with no hope and no escape, tormented without end, because that is the penalty of our sin. Jesus *“lay His life down.”* He *“offered”* His own body and blood for our sanctification (Hebrews 10:10, 13:12). He suffered the *“death of the cross”* in order that *“our old man”* would be crucified. He was the *“Lamb of*

God.” He died to “*take our sin away*” (John 1:29). He did not die a “*sinner,*” but a “*sinless*” sacrifice, “*without spot or blemish*” (I Peter 1:18-19). Had there been the least blemish in the “*sacrifice,*” Jesus would not have risen from the dead. But, He is risen. His “*sacrifice*” was acceptable to God to “*take away sin*” (Hebrews 10:4). All who repent and believe the “*truth*” of the Gospel of Christ are “*made free from sin.*”