

It Does Make A Difference What You Believe

Foreword

I could have been a Buddhist monk! I have never met one, I don't know anything about being one, but I could have been one. If I had been born in a Buddhist nation to the proper Buddhist family, I would have been trained from my infancy in Buddhism, and today I would have been a Buddhist monk. On the other hand, I could have been a Hindu Guru! I would have been born in India, to the proper Hindu parents. I would have been prepared from my infancy for the purpose of being a Hindu *"holy man,"* and that is what I would have been today. Incredibly, I could have been a *"suicide bomber,"* and so could have any one of us. Born in a Muslim nation to devout Muslim parents, under the influence of the *"Al Queda,"* the *"Hamaas"* or any one of numerous Muslim sects, I would have been taught from childhood that my glorious purpose in life was to strap a bomb around my body and blow myself into a million pieces for the sole purpose of *"killing Jews."* I would have been taught about the wonderful rewards *"Allah"* would give me in heaven upon my successful *"martyrdom."* I would have believed this was my *"destiny,"* and I would have looked forward to the day of my departure. Through similar means I could have been a *"Jewish Rabbi,"* a *"Catholic Priest,"* or a devotee to any one of thousands of religious sects in the world today. Instead, I am Christian! I was born in America to devout Christian parents. I was raised in the church from infancy. I am a *"Christian."*

A number of years ago, I visited with a friend who is a Jew. He complimented me on my four sons, that they were good, moral, hard working, and very likely would be successful. I answered, *"that's because I raised them to be good 'Christian' boys."* He immediately responded, *"yes, and I raised my three boys to be good Jews."* I was struck with the foolishness of my thinking. His sons were just as good, moral, and hard working as mine. They were also very successful.

It was to a *"ruler of the Jews"* by the name of *"Nicodemus,"* that Jesus said *"ye must be born again."* The gospel of Jesus Christ was first preached to the Jews, then to the Gentiles. The message is the same to the Jew and to the Gentile, *"ye must be born again."* Originally, a *"Christian,"* whether Jew or Gentile, was any person that had been *"born again"* of the Spirit of God through faith in Jesus Christ. Today there is a *"Christian"* society that is no better than any other religion in the world. They are *"Christians"* only because they were born in a *"Christian"* nation, or to *"Christian"* parents, even though most have never been *"born again."* Jesus' message is the same to the Jew, the Christian, the Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, etc, *"ye must be born again."* This can only be through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Before I was *"born again,"* my *"Christianity"* was no better than any other religion, but when I was *"born again"* I was born of God. I am a child of God and a *"joint heir"* with Jesus Christ.

Billy Graham's daughter, Anne Graham Lotz, is quoted by *"Charisma"* magazine as saying many who warm pews in a church each week and think they're Christians aren't born again. *"You could tell them they had never been born again, and they'd be offended,"* she says. *"Then you get them into God's Word, and God shows them."*

This message is to *"Christians."* Some are *"born again,"* some are not. In either case, as a *"Christian,"* we are the result of what we believe. The same is true of everyone on this planet. As one that is *"born again"* though, we are the result of what we believe about Jesus Christ and His death and resurrection. Many *"Christians"* today are weak, sinful and *"lost."* They have believed the wrong thing, because, ***"it does make a difference what you believe."***

It Does Make a Difference

What You Believe!

Message by: Leroy Surface



Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein. We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

Hebrews 13:8-13

In this, the last chapter of Hebrews, the Apostle brings a warning against “*divers and strange doctrines.*” The letter to the Hebrews was written to bring the Jew fully into the New Covenant. With the persecutions that had arisen against the church of Jesus Christ, the faith of many of the “*believing*” Jews was being tested to the fullest extent, and some were drawing back to trust in the Old Covenant. This epistle was written to show the superiority of the New Covenant over the old. One of the key words of this epistle is the word “*better:*” a “*better name,*” a “*better hope,*” a “*better testament,*” a “*better covenant,*” “*better promises,*” “*better sacrifices,*” a “*better substance,*” a “*better country,*” and a “*better resurrection.*” Having brought them from the “*type*” to the to the “*reality,*” the Apostle now seeks to keep them from going from the “*reality*” into the “*heresy.*” The truth of God never changes. It is eternal as God is. When Jesus said, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life,*” He was revealing that He is the “*way to God (the Father),*” the “*truth of God,*” and the “*life of God*” manifest in the flesh. When the Apostle says in our text, “*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever,*” he is revealing that the “*way*” to God, and the “*truth*” and “*life*” of God are forever the same, as unchangeable in nature as the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ are.

The Apostle’s warning is against divers (different) and strange (foreign) doctrines. These he identified as “*meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.*” Less than a generation after Calvary and the day of Pentecost, false teachers had “*infiltrated*” the church, bringing with them their “*different and foreign*” doctrines. Jude said they “*crept in unawares...turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness.*” Before the end of the first century AD, Jesus, revealing Himself to the Apostle John in the vision of the “*Revelation,*” spoke of the seven churches of Asia. Five of the seven churches received rebuke from the Lord, saying in effect, “*repent, or else.*” He warned of the doctrine of Balaam, the teachings of Jezebel, and the “*deeds*” and “*doctrines*” of the Nicolaitanes, which Jesus said He hated (Revelation 2:6, 2:15). After a lifetime of studying the scriptures, I have long since come to the conclusion that many, if not most, of the “*different and foreign doctrines*” the Apostles warned the church against have been incorporated into the doctrines of the modern church, some of them into even that which the “*church*” calls “*orthodoxy.*” This writer, while confessing to holding beliefs that are different than many in the church world today, does not believe these to be “*different and foreign doctrines,*” but lays claim to believing exactly what the Apostles taught in the scriptures. People are deceived by “*different and strange doctrines*” when they turn to any other source than prayerful study of the New Testament, especially the “*Epistles of the Apostles,*” for their understanding. I have often told our congregation, “*If you can’t go to the scriptures (KJV) to prove why you believe what you believe, you have no right to believe it.*” It isn’t enough to believe something just because I say it or write it. Neither is it enough for you to believe anything just because it is your “*church doctrine.*” The person that must go to someone else to find out what they, themselves, believe, does not really believe anything. Don’t misunderstand me. You need someone you can trust. Until God opens your understanding to the truth you need a teacher, but regardless of who your teacher is, let the Word of God be your final authority. The “*Bereans*” were said to be “*more noble than others,*” because they “*received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so (Acts 17:11).*” My admonition to you is to “*search the scriptures daily*” to see if these things be truth.

...For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

The alternative to the “different and foreign doctrines” is that your “heart be established with grace.” Sadly, many in the church today hold a “different and foreign doctrine” of the “grace of God.” Jude told us that ungodly men had “turned the grace of our God into lasciviousness.” “Lasciviousness” is uncleanness. Its definition is “licentiousness.” When “grace” is turned into “lasciviousness” it becomes a “license” to “continue in sin that grace may abound (Romans 6:1).” Approach almost anyone you see today and ask them what “grace” is, and they will probably answer, “Unmerited favor.” “Unmerited favor” is not, however, the definition of “grace.” Strong’s Greek Lexicon gives the definition of “grace” as “divine influence upon the heart and reflected in the life.” I believe “grace,” as used in the “New Testament” is even stronger than that. I do confess that grace is “an” unmerited favor, as is everything we receive through the atoning death of the Son of God. The modern concept of grace does absolutely nothing for the one receiving it. It is a “grace” that “covers” us, and our “sins,” from the eyes of God. As “licentiousness,” it is a “fleshly liberty,” while God has given His children “glorious liberty (Romans 8:21).” Those who hold to the “strange” doctrine of grace believe they will continue to sin as long as they live in the natural body, and by “grace” they will receive Heaven as their eternal home at the last. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is true, as Paul said, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief (1 Timothy 1:15).” Jesus came to save sinners. I was among the vilest that He ever saved, but it is also true that Jesus will not come to take sinners to Heaven. Neither sin nor sinners will ever enter there. It is, in fact, “unmerited favor” when a sinner is saved from his sins, but it will never be “unmerited favor” when our Lord says, “well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord (Matthew 25:21).” We were “unworthy” when God saved us, but we will not be “unworthy” when He calls us home. It is “the grace of God” that will have made us worthy.

What is Grace?

The grace of God was upon the young child Jesus before He was even twelve years old (Luke 2:40). Luke 2:52 says, “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour (grace) with God and man.” Why, if Jesus was the “sinless” Son of God (and He was), did He need the “grace of God?” By the time Jesus entered His ministry, it was said of Him by the Apostle John, that He was “full of grace and truth (John 2:14).” John then adds this in the sixteenth verse: “And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.” Every child of God is a partaker of the “fulness” that is in Jesus Christ. He, in the days of His flesh, was “full of grace and truth,” and, John says, we all have received out of His fullness, “grace for grace.” This term “grace for grace” is more correctly translated from the Greek as “grace **opposite** grace,” meaning that God has given all His children, not only the “grace of God,” but He has given us *every* grace that is in His first begotten Son, Jesus.

Grace is what makes us what we are as the children of God. It is given to the children of God and not to sinners. James tells us “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble (James 4:6).” If God gave His grace to sinners, He would give it to the proud. He does not! In the verses that follow, James describes the “humble” that God gives grace to. Take note! “**Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. HUMBLE YOURSELVES in the sight of the Lord, and HE SHALL LIFT YOU UP (James 4:7-10).**” It is the “grace of God” that “lifts you up.”

And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

Acts 4:33

This scripture speaks of a time that may have been near the pinnacle of power and glory of the New Testament church. Great power and great grace was upon them. Special miracles were wrought at the hands of the Apostles as the resurrection of Jesus Christ was proven everywhere they went. Why was “great grace” also upon them? Were they also weak and sinful? Did they need a “covering” to keep them from the eyes of God? Only the followers of “lascivious grace” would think so. The grace of God upon them was the secret of what they were. The Spirit of God upon them was the secret of what they did.

And THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS WITH THEM: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. Who, when he came, AND HAD SEEN THE GRACE OF GOD, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

Acts 11:21-23

There was revival at Antioch. The gospel was preached and a great number was saved. When news of the Antioch revival reached Jerusalem, they sent Barnabas to see first hand what was happening. The scripture says that when Barnabas arrived at Antioch, he “*saw the grace of God.*” What was it that Barnabas saw? Remember that John saw the grace of God in Jesus: “*...we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*” What did he see? All that he saw in Jesus was “*glorious.*” It was the grace of God. It was the same when Barnabas came to Antioch. He saw that the “*hand of the Lord*” was with the ministers. This speaks of the Spirit of God, stretching forth the “*hand of God (Acts 4:30)*” through His people to save and to heal. Seeing the “*grace of God,*” Barnabas saw a multitude of sinners that had believed the preaching of the gospel, repented, and been saved from their sin. Their hearts were pure, their hands were clean; they were “*washed from their sins (Revelation 1:5)*” by the blood of Jesus. It is impossible to look at a people, professing to be saved, but continuing in sin, and there see the grace of God. It is only when you see a people that were once the vilest of sinners, but now they are free from sin, they are not entangled with this present world, nor enticed by it; it is here that you see the grace of God. You see a people that once hated, but now they love; they were defiled, but now they are clean; they were slaves to sin, but now they are free to serve the Lord; it is here that you see the grace of God. Grace can be seen, but never will it be seen on one who is yet a sinner.

The grace of God to save a sinner was given when God gave His Son to die upon the cross for our sin. Our old man is crucified with Christ, and the “*body of sin*” is destroyed (Romans 6:6). We are freed from sin (Romans 6:7) and justified by God. This wonderful salvation is finished at Calvary for the believer. This is “*unmerited favor;*” this is the grace of God to save sinners. Receiving that “*grace,*” the sinner is no longer a sinner

Space does not allow me to search this subject deeply in this message. Briefly, however, let me refer you in your studies to Romans 5: 1-2, where the justified person has “*access by faith into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*” This is not grace to a sinner, but rather grace to the faithful, to the end that they will stand, even if the entire world stands against them. In II Corinthians 12:7-10, Paul was suffering at the hand of what he called his “*thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me.*” This was not sickness, nor sinfulness, but rather the great persecutions he suffered at the hands of the Jews in his day. He related these things in the eleventh chapter: beaten with rods, beaten with whips, stoned and left for dead, escaped over the wall in a basket from Damascus, and numerous other things he suffered everywhere he went preaching the gospel. Paul prayed three times for these things to be taken away, and the Lord answered him, “*My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*” To the Apostle Paul, the “*grace wherein we stand*” was the very “*strength*” of the Lord Jesus Christ made perfect in him. Nothing could deter Paul from the course God had given him. He was under the “*grace of God.*” In I Corinthians 15:10, Paul relates that it was the grace of God that had made him to be the most fruitful of all the Apostles (“*by the grace of God I am what I am*”). He took no credit for his successes, saying, “*yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*” In Ephesians 3:7-8 it was a “*gift of grace*” that made him a minister and sent him to preach the “*unsearchable riches of Christ*” to the Gentiles. Finally, in Hebrews 12:28, it is grace “*whereby we may serve God acceptable with reverence and godly fear.*” Grace to serve God acceptable? Note the reason given as to why we must “*serve God acceptably?*” The next verse says, “*For our God is a consuming fire.*” Nowhere, absolutely nowhere in the Bible are we told that grace “*covers*” those who do not serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. **NOWHERE!!**

Now, back to our text, “*Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein (Hebrews 13:9).*” For the heart to be “*established*” with grace is for the heart to be made “*stable*” with the life, nature, strength, etc. of our Lord Jesus Christ. The alternative the Apostle warns against is “*...meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.*” The “*meats*” the Apostle speaks of here is the divers and strange doctrines he warned them of. They do not “*profit*” those who hold to them. Many today, who claim to be “*orthodox*” in doctrine, hold to a “*justification*” that does nothing for the one justified. They preach a “*salvation*” that does not change the one saved. They teach a “*sanctification*” that is nothing more than an endless human effort, with God as our “*helper,*” while the one being “*sanctified*” (progressively) is never, in this life, holy. They proclaim, “*There is none righteous,*” contradicting the truth

that says, "For as by one man's (Adam's) disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one (Jesus) shall many be made righteous (Romans 5:19)." They indignantly protest "no one is perfect," while the truth still proclaims "For by one offering He hath perfected (completed) forever them that are sanctified (Hebrews 10:14). Finally, they have degenerated to the level that they believe "born again" people can still be homosexuals, alcoholics, drug addicts, pornographers, adulterers, gamblers, etc. Many of them have begun to teach the same "twelve step" program that was designed by the world. Claiming to be the "children of God," they face each day saying "I'm a sinner, I'll always be a sinner, I will probably sin today, but I am working through my problems one at a time." They fulfill the scripture that says "...having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof (II Timothy 3:5)," which also admonishes us, "from such turn away."

When I was just a young man, there was a Baptist preacher on the radio that started and ended every broadcast with the saying, "It does make a difference what you believe." Over the years these words have come to mean much to me, for I know that each of us is a result of what we believe. When Paul said in Romans 1:16, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ," he gives the reason he is not ashamed in the next phrase; "for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." You may be a believer, but the question is, what do you believe? Your answer may be, I believe in Jesus, that He is the Son of God. If "salvation" were merely that God receives everyone into heaven on the basis that they believe that Jesus is the Son of God, your answer would be correct. He doesn't! Salvation by definition is "saved from sin." When the angel of the Lord announced the birth of Jesus to Joseph, he said, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21)." The gospel of Jesus Christ reveals what was accomplished on our behalf when the Son of God died on the cross. "For therein (in the gospel) is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith (Romans 1:17)." The purpose of this, Paul's letter to the Romans, is to reveal the "righteousness of God" at Calvary. Romans 3:24-26 tells us that God "set forth" His Son Jesus to be a "propitiation (sacrifice victim)" to declare the righteousness of God for the remission of sins. "Knowing this," Paul continues in Romans 6:6-7, "that our old man is crucified with Him (Christ), that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin." In this text the word "might" and "should" do not suggest "possibility" or "liability," but rather indicate the very reason for the cross of Christ; to "destroy sin" and to "free it's slaves." Is this the gospel you believe? Someone told me several years ago, "Brother Surface, if I believe these things, I'm lost." I answered, "No, brother, if you don't believe them you are lost, but if you do believe, you will be saved." Believing the truth of the gospel does not damn you. Jesus said it was "he that believeth not" that would be damned (Mark 16:15-16). The truth of the gospel is invested with such power, because it simply reveals the "whys" and the "whats" of Calvary. Why did the Son of God die on a cross? What was accomplished for me in His death? Why was His blood shed, and what is the power of His blood? When you know the truth of the first question you will inherently know the answer to every other question concerning our redemption. Everyone that knows and believes that truth is made free from sin (John 8:31-36), and that is what salvation is. "It does make a difference what you believe."

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

Galatians 1:6-7

Paul wrote these words to the churches in Galatia less than a generation after Calvary, and probably less than ten years after they had first believed in that region. The case at hand was that these Gentile "believers" were being drawn into the ritual and ordinances of the law (except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved...Acts 15:1). Paul clearly told them in Galatians 5:4, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." "Christ is become of no effect!" They had believed a lie. They had "eaten" a meat (doctrine) that did not profit them. In I Corinthians 1:17, "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of word, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect." In the Galatian churches, the "ordinances of the law" had made Christ "of no effect." In the Corinthian churches, the "wisdom of words" had made the cross of Christ "of no effect." These were the "meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein (Hebrews 13:9)."

We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.

Hebrews 13:10-11

The meat of a child of God is the “*flesh*” of Jesus Christ. The Apostle says, “*We have an altar...*” The body and blood of Jesus is offered unto God upon that altar. It is commanded to every child of God to “*eat*” at that “*altar.*” It is there that we are made “*partakers of Christ.*” Jesus spoke of these things to His disciples in the sixth chapter of John. “*Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.*” When His disciples heard these sayings of Jesus, many of them said, “*This is an hard saying; who can hear it?*” From that time many, if not most, of His disciples departed and walked no more with Him. So many of them forsook Him that Jesus turned to the twelve and asked, “*will you also go away?*” It was Peter that answered for the twelve, “*To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.*”

The Old Testament Jew was commanded to eat a portion of every sacrifice they brought to the altar with the exception of the “*sin offering.*” They were forbidden to eat the flesh of the sacrifice who’s blood the high priest brought into the sanctuary for the sins of the people. The bodies of those animals were burned outside the camp. We, on the other hand, are commanded to “*eat*”, or, be partaker of our “*sin offering.*” Our “*sin offering*” is the precious “*lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*” It is our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

The message of the flesh and blood of Jesus is just as offensive today as it was in that day. Nothing has changed. Jesus Christ is still “*the same, yesterday, today, and forever.*” We must be partakers of all that He offered in sacrifice at the cross of Calvary. Again, the Apostle said, “*We have an altar...*” That altar is our table, the “*table of the Lord.*” His flesh is our “*meat.*” It “*profits*” all who partake of it. “*Meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein,*” are the “*divers and strange doctrines*” the Apostle warned of in our text. Our “*meat,*” the “*flesh and blood*” of Jesus is then, the “*doctrine of Christ.*” The importance of this “*doctrine*” is shown in II John 1:8-11: “*Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.*”

The “*doctrine of Christ,*” the “*faith of Christ*” and the “*gospel of Christ*” are almost synonymous terms. The “*gospel of Christ*” is the message of Jesus Christ to the sinner. The “*faith of Christ*” is the gospel “*believed*” that justifies the sinner (Galatians 2:16), and the “*doctrine of Christ*” is our daily meat and drink. Each of these is centered around, and does not depart from, the “*death and resurrection*” of Jesus. The “*bloodless*” and “*crossless*” gospel of the modern church world is also “*powerless*” and does absolutely nothing for those who believe it.

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.

John 3:16

John 3:16, the most popular and well known verse in the New Testament, often called the “*golden text*” of the Bible, or, “*the gospel in a nutshell.*” This verse tells us much about the Father. His love for the lost world was so great that He gave His only Son to redeem us. On the other hand, John 3:16 tells us very little about the “*Son.*”

Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

Hebrews 13:12

This verse I believe to be the greatest gospel verse in the Bible. In only seventeen words it tells us about the Son of God, and everything we need to know about the gospel. Every journalist knows there are six things every news report must contain. They are; “*who,*” “*what,*” “*where*” “*why,*” “*how,*” and “*when.*” Hebrews 13.12 answers every one of these but one. If you can receive this report, your experience with God will be transformed. Let’s examine this verse as a news reporter would.

1. **Who? Jesus**
2. **What? Suffered**
3. **Where? Outside the gate.**
4. **Why? That He might sanctify the people.**
5. **How? With His own blood.**
6. **When? Not answered in this verse, but we know when**

Oh, what a saviour. His purpose when He suffered the cross was to wash us from our sins in His own blood. He didn't die to forgive our sins. He died to save us from our sin. Yes, He forgives, but His purpose was to "*cleanse us (I John 1:9).*" No mention here of "*covering us*" with His blood; only "*sanctifying us*" with His blood. Making us pure, clean, and holy, even as Paul said in Titus 2:14, "*(Jesus) gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*" Paul concludes this thought with these words to the minister of Christ, "*These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.*"

Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

Hebrews 13:13

A great man of God of the last generation, Lester Roloff, said, "*the people of God are always outside the camp, but inside the veil.*" How true these words are, and it has always been so. In Exodus 33:7 the scripture says, "*And Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass, that every one which sought the LORD went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp.*" The camp of Israel had corrupted itself. They had not only rejected the word of the Lord (Exodus 20:19), they had built a golden calf and worshiped it as the the "*god that brought them up out of Egypt (Exodus 32:4-5).*" Notice that not only did Moses pitch the tabernacle "*outside the camp, far off from the camp,*" but also it was said "*everyone which sought the LORD went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp.*" Throughout all the history of the people of God, whenever the camp has corrupted itself, the people of God have moved outside the camp. "*Jesus also*" the scripture said, "*suffered without (outside) the gate.*" It follows, as the Apostle says in our text, that the people of God will worship Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. This is not an appeal for the people to forsake faithful pastors and churches, but it is an appeal for those pastors and churches to forsake the corrupted camp and bear the reproach of Jesus Christ who suffered and died for us outside the camp. Stephen, just before he was stoned to death for His testimony of Jesus, said the "*fathers*" of Israel had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, but they took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and worshiped an image of the star Remphan (Acts 7:41-44). History repeats itself. Martin Luther had to go outside the corrupt camp of Catholicism for the protestant reformation. Then, the protestant camp corrupted itself, and the Pentecostal was "*driven*" outside the camp a hundred years ago. During the past generation, much of the Pentecostal camp has corrupted itself, and has even sought a return to the Catholic camp. Two thousand years ago, Jesus was crucified outside of the camp of Israel, but today, he is crucified outside of the camp of secular "*Christianity.*" According to history, Peter was fleeing the coming persecution in Rome when one night in a vision he saw Jesus carrying a cross. "*Why do you carry the cross,*" Peter cried to the Lord? "*I go to Rome,*" was the answer, "*for I must be crucified there also.*" Jesus is coming to America. Will there be revival, are will He be crucified here also? In either case, we must go out to Him and bear His reproach.

When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

I Corinthians 13:11

The Apostle Paul told us to examine ourselves, "*whether ye be in the faith,*" and whether Jesus Christ is in us (II Corinthians 13:5). There is a time that we must examine, not only ourselves, but also what we believe. Why do we believe what we believe? Where did we receive what we believe? And most importantly, as a Christian, can we go to the Bible to show why we believe what we believe? Paul said "*When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child.*" Notice that all he speaks of is his "*thinking,*" his "*understanding,*" and his "*speaking.*" When I was a small child I had a brother that was six years older than me. I thought he was wise, and that he knew everything. The things he told me recorded in my mind as truth and wisdom, even though he was but a child himself. Years later, probably in my teens, or early twenties, I sometimes acted on the wisdom I had received many years before from a twelve year old. I grew up in church and Sunday School. Some of the teachers that taught me were in the classes only as an attempt to keep them faithful to the church. They were immature, possibly not even saved in some cases, yet

what they taught me as a child registered in me as truth. Years later, I was saved, filled with the Holy Ghost, and called to preach. The Lord made it clear to me that I was to study only the Bible. Thank God, I was kept from the sermon helps and outlines that were available at the Bible bookstores. When I searched the scriptures for my messages, I soon began to discover that so much I had been taught simply was not in the Bible. Seeking help from older ministers, I was told that many of the doctrines we believed were the “*teachings*” of the Bible, even though the scripture did not exactly say the same things. “*The scriptures,*” I was told, “*had to be interpreted by some qualified person, someone educated in the doctrines of the church.*” I knew the “*doctrines of the church*” from childhood. My problem was that I could not find many of them in the Bible. It was clear what the Bible said, but hard to see what I was told it taught. Finally, I came to the understanding that the Bible does not teach anything. It declares, it commands, it speaks truth, it is the source of all spiritual truth, but it teaches nothing. You don’t need someone to tell you why it doesn’t mean what it says, just believe what it says and you will come to the truth, and the truth will make you free.

Paul said, “*When I became a man, I put away childish things.*” The “*childish things*” he speaks of were the childish thinking, the childish understanding, and the childish speaking, that he mentioned earlier in the verse. As long as I held to the “*doctrines*” only because someone had taught them to me as a child, I had to try to make the scriptures say what the doctrines said. From that view, and the view of most in the church today, the “*doctrines*” of the church are the “*benchmark*” of truth, and the scripture must be twisted to fit the doctrines. Oh, how wrong this is. Jesus told the Pharisees they worshiped God in vain, “*teaching for doctrines the commandments of men (Mark 7:7).*” In the thirteenth verse, He said they made the word of God of no effect through their traditions. If the word of God is made of “*no effect*” through man’s traditions; if the cross is made of “*no effect*” through the wisdom of words (I Corinthians 1:17); and if Christ is made of “*no effect*” through faith in ordinances (Galatians 5:2-4); then we have “*divers and strange doctrines,*” or, “*meats*” that have not profited them that have been occupied therein (Hebrews 13:9).

There came a time in my experience with God that I consciously began to “*put away childish things.*” I put away forever the “*blood covering*” and accepted “*blood sanctification (Hebrews 13:12, 10:10).*” I put away “*self crucifixion*” and accepted “*the cross of Christ by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world (Galatians 6:14).*” I put away “*we’re all sinners,*” and accepted “*for he that is dead is freed from sin (Romans 6:7),*” and, “*being then made free from sin... (Romans 6:18).*” I put away “*we all must sin from time to time,*” and accepted “*whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him.*” I put away the traditional “*grace,*” and accepted “*grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear (Hebrews 12:28).*” I suppose I could write many books about the “*childish*” things of religion I put away when I determined once and for all to simply believe what the scriptures say, and seek the wisdom that only comes from God for understanding.

Conclusion

A child is born. He (or she) is cute and cuddly. Everyone wants to hold the precious child. To give him bottle, even to change his diaper, is a joy. Plans begin almost immediately for this child’s education. He will have the best; he will become someone great. Months go by. The child is still “*cute and cuddly.*” He doesn’t seem to be growing well. Two or three years go by. He hasn’t begun to walk. In fact, he doesn’t seem to have the size or strength necessary. He isn’t speaking yet, and the parents begin to worry, but the child is still “*cute and cuddly.*” Five years go by, but the child is not ready for schooling. He still must be hand fed, and his diaper must be changed regularly. Ten years, fifteen years pass. While the neighbor’s children are involved in many activities, and even approaching graduation and college, these parents have many years ago resigned themselves to the fact that the rest of their lives will be taken in caring for their child that has never developed, either physically or mentally.

Since this is a “*hypothetical situation,*” anything can happen. One day it is discovered that from the beginning there was nothing physically or mentally wrong with the child, but the problem was in the food he was given. The child could have been as healthy and normal as any other child, but his “*food*” had not benefited him in the least. Then, it is discovered that the proper food will cause the child to grow and mature even at this late date in life. Will not the parents immediately change his diet, and give him that food that will quickly, even miraculously, free the child and the parents from this tragic situation? Of course they will.

This analogy is exactly what the Apostle is dealing with in our text for this message. “*Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein (Hebrews 13:9).*” Pastors, have you ever wondered why your people were

weak and sinful? If so, have you ever considered that a *“change of diet”* may be the answer? That Jesus said *“ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free (from sin)?”* Or, that the uncompromised, undiluted truth of the gospel of Jesus would not only free your people from sin, but free yourself from bottle feeding and diaper changing? Maybe you are a person who is in a life and death struggle with sin within yourself. Maybe lust consumes almost every thought. The enticements of pornography, gambling, drugs or alcohol are almost more than you can handle. I tell you the truth, there is something wrong with the doctrine you have trusted, with the gospel you have believed. It is impossible to *“know the truth,”* as Jesus said in John 8:31-36, and still be a *“slave to sin.”* *“Examine yourselves,”* Paul said in II Corinthians 13:5, *“whether ye be in the faith,”* because, as that Baptist preacher said so many years ago, **“It does make a difference what you believe.”**

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