

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Look for Salvation in the Right Place

By John C. Robertson

The book of Hebrews exposes the problem of Judaism. Many Jews, during the days of the early church, believed that Christians should keep the Mosaic Law and circumcise their children to be saved (Acts 15:1-5). The Hebrew writer combats this line of reasoning in a most effective way. He shows that the Mosaic Law is a shadow, figure, picture, or model of the actual Christ and law that saves.

Consider Hebrews 10:1, *“For the law having a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things, can never with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect them that draw nigh.”*

The obvious objective is *“perfection”* (see Hebrews 7:11, 18, 19; 9:9, 14 and 10:1). The question to answer is what it means to be *“perfect.”* Let us do a basic connect the dot or cross reference study of Bible perfection. To be perfect is to be righteous (compare Galatians 2:21 to Galatians 3:3). To be righteous is to be saved (see Rom. 1:16-17). To be saved is to be forgiven of sins and receive the promise of God (see Acts 13:23, 26, 38). Each term used considers the subject at hand-written by differing words for deeper understanding.

Let us get back to our original issue. Many Jewish Christians were looking for salvation beyond Christ in the Mosaic Law and circumcision. They were demanding that others comply with their conclusions. The Hebrew writer effectively combats this by saying that the Mosaic Law and circumcision are the shadow, sketch or drawing, or a model of the actual Christ (and his New Covenant Law) that saves. The value is seen in that it is far better to have the actual thing that a picture or model of it.

Would you rather have a nice picture of a house on the wall or the house itself? The answer is obvious. Jewish Christians demanding others keep the Mosaic Law and circumcision for salvation were as those that chose a cheap painting or model over the actual thing itself. The line of reasoning illustrates the foolishness of such choices.

A further application of the matter may be established in today’s religious world. Most people choose to worship a sketchy form of Christ and truth as opposed to absolutely trusting and following him. If one worships at a Baptist church, for example, there are bits and pieces of the real Christ, yet the picture is not complete or perfect. To miss any part of Christ (truth; John 14:6) is to sin (1 John 3:4) and no such condition shall be in heaven (Revelation 21:27). The glaringly obvious error of the Baptist church is its name. The Bible knows only a church that belongs to Christ (Acts 20:28). The church, in fact is the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23 compared to Ephesians 4:4). You would not call your body a name other than yours, would you?

Why would one want to accept a shadowy sketch of Christ when they can have the actual Lord and salvation? If you will seek, search, and knock you will find him (Matthew 7:7). Perfection, righteousness, salvation, God’s promises, and or forgiveness is within reach for those that are blessed enough to see and hear (Matthew 13:16).

The matter is quite simple. The apostle Peter states that baptism saves (1 Peter 3:21). The one baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of sins receives God’s promise, they are perfect or righteous through justification (Acts 2:38). They are added to the one body of Christ (Acts 2:47; 5:14; 11:24). This is why Jesus told his apostles to go into the world and baptize people in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and to teach them to observe all the Lord’s commandments (Matthew 28:19-20). ■

“MAD” AT THE PREACHING OF THE TRUTH

By Jerry Joseph

God has specified what every faithful gospel preacher must proclaim. **“Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine”** (2 Timothy 4:2). We cannot pervert, modify, or alter God’s Word in any form (Galatians 1:6-9; 2 Peter 3:16; Revelation 22:18-19). We must declare the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:20, 27).

When the Truth is preached some become angry and mad. In Acts 7:51-60, some became so mad at Stephen’s preaching that they stoned him to death. Others, became so angry with the truth that they began to make false accusations against the proclaimer, as with Jesus (Matthew 11:19; John 10:20) and Paul (Acts 26:24).

Why do some become angry and mad when the truth is preached? Some, when they hear the Truth proclaimed become mad because...

They have heard what they NEED, not necessarily what they want. There are some who are like those in Isaiah’s days who say, **“Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things”** (Isaiah 30:10). Some want their ears tickled with fables and foolishness (2 Timothy 4:3-4). Too many people want to hear what pleases them rather than what God demands that must be preached.

They have heard NEGATIVE preaching. It is amazing how that some believe that there is no place for negative preaching. Just preach positive lessons is the demand that some make. Such is evident that one does not understand God pleasing preaching. In 2 Timothy 4:2-4, Paul declared that in the preaching of the Word there is to **“reproving”** and **“rebuking”** (that’s negative) as well as **“exhorting.”** There must be the preaching of both the positive and the negative.

They have heard NAMES called or mentioned. Is it wrong to identify those who are making havoc of the Truth? Is it wrong to identify false teachers? The answer is No. How can one do what Paul said must be done in Romans 16:17-18, pertaining to “marking” and “avoiding” without first, identifying the person? Paul mentioned some by name who had sinned in 2 Timothy 2:17-18 and 2 Timothy 4:14-15. Was Paul wrong for doing so? Certainly not! Today, some do become angry and mad because a false teacher is condemned publicly by name. But, yet will not say one thing when that same false teacher will publicly proclaim his false doctrine and lead others astray causing them to lose their souls. Indeed, isn’t that strange? Such is a demonstration of the wrong attitudes toward God, His Word and the Church.

We must not become MAD with the MESSAGE nor MESSENGER of Truth. ■

Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it. When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit” (Acts 7:51-59).

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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