

The Other Jesus:

The Gospel Perverted

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“For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus...” 2 Corinthians 11:4. “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel... and would pervert the gospel of Christ,” Galatians 1:6. The warning from God is quite clear: false prophets abound who preach another Jesus, another gospel, a perverted gospel which is no gospel at all. [Mat 7:13, 14]

We greatly underestimate the enemy of our souls. We can fully expect him to have a false plan of salvation to present to Bible believers; it will be an exact duplicate of the real thing, yet miss the truth just enough to miss Biblical salvation. The enemy will not deny the blood atonement nor the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, yet he will not place the blood atonement in its proper place. Of course, his plan would have to be so close to the truth that it would look exactly like the truth, thereby avoiding detection by even the ‘best scholars.’ [From this preacher’s experience, only those who have been caught in the deception are readily able to understand the perverted gospel’s devastating closeness to the truth, yet the lost condition of those in it.]

Though the perverted gospel claims the blood atonement, it avoids it ever so slightly just enough to miss eternal life. Can we expect anything less from the best deceiver ever created, the father of lies?

In these next few pages, we will attempt to look past the apparent perfect message, which makes the perversion so appealing, so that we might see its underlying perversion.

Many who read this will say, “You are splitting hairs.” Certainly! The father of lies is an expert at splitting hairs and misusing words. Did he not try to misuse the words of Scripture with the Lord Jesus? We can be assured that he will do no less to those today who believe God’s Word; what better place to misuse words than in the plan of salvation? [Mat 4:6] One of the primary responsibilities of a teacher of God’s Word is to “divide asunder the soul and spirit, and... the joints and marrow” with the word of God. [Heb 4:12]

This perverted plan probably has come into wide acceptance since the ’40’s. [Undoubtedly, it is deeply rooted in the “Christian” Mystics of old who longed for some kind of a mystical experience with God.] It is centered around various basic instructions: “You must ask Jesus into your heart to be saved - You must ask Jesus to save you - If you will pray and turn your life over to God, you will be saved - You must pray and trust the Lord to take you to heaven - You must pray and trust the Lord to come into your heart to save you - Receive God (Christ) into your heart, life, &c.”

There are abundant variations on this idea, none of which emphasize - most avoid completely - the absolute necessity of trusting in the substitutionary death and payment of

Christ for our sins. As we will see, all of Scripture points to this “Ask Jesus into your heart” plan of salvation as being the perverted plan of the other Jesus of Paul’s warning [Gal 1:6-9; 2 Cor 11:1-4, 13-15]. (Try to fit the idea of “Ask Jesus into your heart” into the law of the atoning sacrifice in the Old Testament. Were the people commanded to ask the bullock to come into their hearts or to turn their lives over to the bullock? [Lev 1:4] The only thing that will work according to the Old Testament sacrificial law is trust in the Sinless Sacrifice to pay the sin debt in the place of the repentant sinner. All of the Lord’s statements, e.g., John 3, must be viewed in the light of the Old Testament sacrificial law.) “Implicit in this justification is the substitutionary sacrifice for sin sincerely offered as noted in Ps 51:16-19. The righteousness of God’s heirs of salvation is the righteousness of the Messiah attributed to them by God through faith in the redemptive work of Messiah in which God declares them righteous only because of the grace provided through that redemptive work.” TWOT, Moody Press, pg. 755. This could not be any clearer. Any other emphasis is the devil’s lie.

The perverted gospel seemingly has all of the right words, feelings and works. [2 Cor 4:3-6] Its counterfeit is so perfect that only a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit can separate it from the truth. The true plan of salvation was best described by C.H. Spurgeon: “The gospel is that Jesus Christ suffered in the place of all sinners who trust Him as their Saviour; that He endured what they ought to have endured and made atonement to God for all the sins that they would ever commit; and if you thus trust Him, you are saved. The simple act of relying upon Jesus as your Substitute and Saviour puts away your guilt and sin forever.” He continues, “Pride must come down, self-righteousness must die, and the sinner must glorify the grace of God by knowing that he has no merit of his own, or he cannot be saved. ... Say, ‘Lord, I deserve to die; I deserve to perish; I deserve to be destroyed. I will have no cavils with Thee about my sentence, for how can a worm dispute with the Almighty? Who am I that I should reply against my Maker?’

“When you have taken that position, rely upon the freeness of divine grace. Grasp, as with a death-clutch, this great fact and say, ‘Lord, Thou dost forgive sinners for Thine own name’s sake. Thou canst not find anything in us that is good, anything that can move Thee to pity! But, oh, by Thy mercy and Thy love, let men see what a gracious God thou art! For Thy great name’s sake have mercy upon us, and save us!’”

“You can plead that Jesus said, ‘Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.’ [Jn 6:37].

“Let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God for He will abundantly pardon.”

“I cast aside all my former confidences, and all my boastings, and come as the worst sinner must come, for I feel that, in some respects, I am the worst sinner who ever came to thee. I come as an utterly lost, undone, bankrupt sinner, and I look to the atoning

sacrifice of Jesus for all I need.” [Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Vol. 53, Sermon “Rule of Grace,” pp 500-502, Pilgrim Publications, Pasadena TX]

Observe: First, we must realize we are sinners without hope. Second, we must recognize that we can do nothing at all to avoid the wages of our sin. Third, we must understand that Christ paid all the penalty for our sin through His atoning sacrifice, enduring what we should endure. Fourth, the sinner must rely upon Jesus as his Substitute for his sins and as his Saviour. Fifth, this simple act puts away the guilt of sin forever. Anything less than this is not Biblical salvation. If these basic things are not made clear to the sinner before he makes a profession, then it is impossible for him to be saved. [Eph 1:12-14]

The sinner is saved because he has trusted in what Christ has already done; he has trusted in Christ to pay his debt for him, to pay what he should have paid: “To endure what he ought to have endured.” Then the Spirit of Christ comes to dwell in the heart of the believer. One is not saved because he asks the Spirit of Christ to come to dwell in him. If salvation were the result of the Spirit of Christ coming to dwell in a person, there would have been no need of the atoning sacrifice of Christ.

Notice the order in Ephesians 1:13, 14: “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance...” It matters not how much the sinner wept, the degree of conviction, his sincerity or the intensity of the emotional experience involved, if the substitutionary payment of Christ’s atoning work was not made understandably clear. How could he trust in something he didn’t know about?

We fail to recognize the tenacity of our soul’s enemy. Luke 9 records a man who brought his son to Jesus for help, and right at the feet of Christ, the devil made a final effort for the boy. (As he was yet coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him, v. 42.) The Enemy has not changed! Many with the world’s best intentions have been offered something else by the devil as a last ditch effort to keep them from trusting in the atoning sacrifice of Christ.

We have heard pastors preach “Trust Christ as your Saviour,” yet we see their congregations go out and spread the “gospel” as “You must ask Jesus into your heart to be saved.” Where is the salvation in this? The simplicity that is in Christ is “You must trust Christ to pay the penalty of your sin.” The other Jesus is: “You must trust Jesus to come into your heart.” Look at the two completely different things for which Christ is being trusted: one, you are trusting Him to pay the penalty for your sin; the other, you are trusting Him to come into your heart. There is a clear distinction between the two.

The argument arises, “Brother Need, you are arguing over semantics. All the best scholars agree that the two mean the same.” Being without Scriptural foundation, their argument is heretical because there is not one contextual Scripture which will support salvation as a result of trusting Christ to come into one’s heart. A text without a context is a pretext. [2 Pe 3:16]

Obviously, the dividing line between the two plans is only a hair's width, maybe only a word or two. But let us be reminded that our enemy specializes in splitting hairs and misusing words. His specialty is making a verse say something that it does not actually say.

In a futile attempt to justify the perverted gospel, there are many verses offered by the devil which are commonly wrested from their context: "Behold I stand at the door and knock..." [Rev 3:20]. Notice the context is speaking to a church with no reference at all to salvation; therefore, any effort to make it say more than it does is similar to Satan's efforts against the Lord. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" shows the result of trusting Christ as one's Substitute and Saviour. Any effort to make it stand alone not only does great harm to the context, but removes salvation from the passage. [Rom 10:9-14] "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." [Jn 1:12] Within the context of the gospel, this is receiving His redemptive work as payment for our sins in our stead. To use it as "receiving Him into our hearts" changes the plan of salvation and makes salvation a result of Jesus coming into one's heart, which it is not. The Spirit of Christ coming into the believer's heart is a result of salvation.

John 3:16 is probably one of the greatest verses in Scripture. But again, the devil is no fool as he uses even this precious verse to present his another Jesus. How? By changing the meaning of a word. The meanings of words change with their usage. Again, the dividing line is only a hair, a word or two, but enough to miss salvation.

I have read how new editions of the dictionary are assembled. The editors have "listening stations" all over the country, and when the usage of a word changes enough, the dictionary is updated. An example of this would be II Thessalonians 2:7, where *letteth* means *hinder*, but today, this word means *to permit*. The Scripture gives us a fixed language where the meanings of words like *letteth*, *believe*, and many others, do not change. However, the meanings of these same words have changed in our usage over the years, and is reflected in our dictionaries. Our enemy then uses these changes to subtly present his another Jesus.

Note the word believe: The usage of this word today indicates, "to believe something as a historical fact." James 2:19 points out that the devils believe there is a God - they know the fact that He exists. A good secular humanist education is required to know more than the devils do: There is no God. Scripture teaches that even the devils will bear witness to who He is and that they will confess and praise Him, but He will not accept their praise. Therefore, just because someone acknowledges, confesses or praises God and Christ does not mean he loves God or is saved. [Mat 8:29; Ma 1:23, 24; 3:11; 5:7; Lu 8:28; Ac 16:16, 17; 19:5]

Consequently, if a person claims for salvation, "I believe Christ died, was buried and rose again for sinners and I now confess that with my mouth," he could have nothing more than the belief of devils. The Bible definition of saving belief must be trust or

reliance. Thus Paul's statement, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," Acts 16:31, would mean to place one's complete trust or reliance in His payment for his sins, "To endure what we ought to endure." Anything less is not Biblical salvation.

Matthew 7:21-23 strikes at the heart of the matter. First, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." The sinner might have cried out, "Lord, save me," or, "Lord, I trust you to come into my heart and save me," but he did not have a clear understanding of the substitutionary, redemptive work of Christ. Or maybe he did not have the Holy Spirit's light to enable him to understand the substitutionary death and payment for his sins. [1 Cor 2:10-16; 2 Cor 4:3-6. God's judgement will be according to His one standard of truth, Rom 2.] Whatever is prayed must be firmly grounded in understanding and receiving what Christ has done for the sinner, or he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

An objection to our argument for the necessity of a clear understanding of Christ's work might be: "I didn't understand about Christ's redemptive work when I made my profession, but I do now, so I'm OK." Observe: Ephesians 1:13, "In whom ye also trusted after... ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation," and Romans 10:14ff, "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed (trusted)? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? . . . So then faith cometh by hearing." Clearly, according to God's word, trust and reliance, thus salvation, can only come after hearing and understanding the truth of Christ's atoning work.

Another objection might be "Well, how about children? The atoning work of Christ for the sinner and the sinner's trust in His atoning work is too difficult for them to understand; therefore, we must place it down on their level by telling them they must ask Jesus into their hearts."

It is an absurd devil's lie to say that the Lord has provided two plans of salvation: one for children, one for adults. Romans 2 clearly tells us that all judgment is according to God's one standard of truth. Furthermore, when we lower the gospel to the level of natural understanding, we depart from the truth and exclude the Spirit of God from regeneration. Is not one of the reasons for standing against modern perversions of the Scripture their reduction to the level of the natural man? In an honest evaluation, rather than placing the true plan of redemption through Christ's atoning work on a child's level, we see the false child's plan ask Jesus into your heart, etc. brought to an adult level.

Note that we are not speaking against reaching children for the Lord. Obviously, our future hope lies in reaching young people for the Kingdom's sake and teaching them to observe all the Lord's commands. We must do all we can to reach children for Christ, [Lk 18:6] but for us to say there is a way for anyone to come to Christ other than through His substitutionary death corrupts the gospel. "[He] that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." Everlasting life comes only through trusting Christ as our Substitute and Saviour. We cannot add or detract anything, for His revealed plan is complete. [Jn 6:37-40; Rev 22:19]

Consider this example. A little girl about six years old heard that she had to ask Jesus in her heart in order to be saved. She expressed her desire to her mother and followed her mother's instructions to ask Jesus into her heart. Her mother then assured her that she was saved.

Only by violently wresting Scriptures beyond all recognition from their obvious contexts can we believe that there is any Scriptural redemption in the actions of the little girl. [Wrested, we might add, to the destruction of all involved, Ps 56:5; 2 Pe 3:16.] We cannot find one hint in contextual Scripture that this "gospel" will save anyone. Certainly, the believer has Christ in him, the hope of glory, but only as the result of trusting Christ as his sin-bearer or substitute. [Col 1:27]

To tell a child, as this mother did, that she can be saved by "asking Jesus into her heart" presents to her the other Jesus. Although the other Jesus undoubtedly did come into the girl's heart with good feelings and works, he is not the One who died for sinners. We receive that Spirit of Christ by trusting in His payment for our sins, not by asking Him into our hearts. Jesus Christ lives in the believer only through faith in His atoning work not through faith in a prayer. [Ac 20:29; 2 Cor 13:5]

Have we not been warned that he passes himself off as an apostle of Christ and a minister of righteousness? He may even stand in the pulpit preaching righteousness, but, regardless of his righteous appearance, the total of Scripture exposes him for what he is: a false teacher. [2 Pe 2:1-3]

The Master Deceiver

Remember, the enemy is a MASTER deceiver. A deceiver imitates and/or misuses truth; therefore, Satan counterfeits every spiritual gift of Romans 12 and Galatians 5. As a deceiver, his specialty is not obvious works of the flesh; rather, it is "truth" misused to serve his purpose. What would the enemy do to prevent one from seeing and/or acting on his need of the substitutionary death of Christ? Would he not give the necessary feelings and good works to prevent one from coming to Christ as his Substitute and Saviour? Would he not give "conviction of sin" if that "feeling" would draw a person away from Christ and to something else? He is the deceiver and an expert at using peoples' emotions. [Rev 12:9. The devil is a spirit, specializing in working with man's spirit against God's spirit.] Also, one's refusal to believe that he can be deceived will give the enemy greater ability to draw him away from the truth. [2 Tim 3:13; Jam 1:22]

The little girl, unless the Spirit intervenes, will always look back and say, "I'm saved because I did what they told me: I asked Jesus into my heart." She may go on to understand the necessity of trusting Christ, but until she gives up what she was told as a six year old and realizes that she is a lost sinner on her way to hell who must come to Christ to pay for her sins, she will not enter into the Kingdom of God. In other words, we cannot "grow" into salvation; it is a one time event of being born again preceded by the presentation and understanding of Christ's atoning work for them.

Our responsibility is to emphasize, as simply as possible, the atoning work of Christ and the sinner's need to repent and trust in that work for his sin payment. It is the Spirit's responsibility to make it understandable. Anything less than this is another Jesus. To tell a person he will be saved by "Asking God to forgive his sins and asking Jesus into his heart, then trusting Christ to do that" avoids His atoning work and gives a false assurance of salvation which will take a supernatural working of the Holy Spirit to remove.

For our own benefit, we need to be reminded that the Holy Spirit MUST convict of sin and open the understanding to the Gospel. Far too often, we try to do the Holy Spirit's work; it is HIS job to convict of sin and draw the sinner to Christ. If the Spirit's drawing is not present, in Christ's words, there can be no salvation. [Jn 6:37-45; 15:16; 16:8]

Back to Matt. 7:21: "...but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Here we have two points. First, 2 Peter 3:9: it is "not God's will that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Luke 13:3-5 also covers this: Repentance, a turning around, is required. But a turning from what? It is a turning from the sin for which a person is already condemned, especially his refusal to trust Christ as his Substitute and Saviour. [Jn 3:18; 6:39]

Therefore, God's primary will is that all men should turn from their own ways of salvation to God's way of salvation. Furthermore, the Father's will is defined in John 6:39, 40: that we believe, that is, trust in His completed work, and, in doing so, have everlasting life.

There is a way that seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. It seems right to be saved by "Asking Christ to save you," but the end of that way is death to the sinner if he has not understood and trusted in the atoning work of Christ. The sinner must turn from his way to a complete dependence in what Christ has done in his place, "the just for the unjust," and accept His payment in the sinner's place.

The context of Luke 13:1-5 indicates that the ones to whom the Lord spoke when He said, "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," were religious hypocrites who displayed correct outer actions yet refused to turn from their way to God's way. [Lk 12:56. Hodge gives us an extremely good insight on these religious leaders; they had a total, but false, assurance of heaven because they were circumcised decedents of Abraham. Charles Hodge, ROMANS, Geneva Series, Banner of Truth Trust, pg. 63. Therefore, what the Lord said here was "fighting words" to His hearers.] In other words, the Lord's strong message to repent here is given to the outwardly moral person.

Matthew 7:21, "...will of my Father..." John 6:29, "Jesus answered and said unto them, this is the work of God, that ye believe (trust) on him whom he hath sent." [Compare this with Rev 20:12; I Jn 3:23.] The only work that will please God for heaven

is trusting Christ as our Substitute and Saviour. Thus both the will and the work of the Father for salvation is the same: trusting, receiving what Christ has done for us.

Matthew 7:21-23 tells of a person who had called upon the name of the Lord (“Lord, Lord”) without instruction in, and understanding of, the atoning work of Christ for him, and of his necessity of trusting in that work alone for the payment of his sin. “...Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name...” Many have preached great sermons and won many to the Lord; however, a person’s preaching of the gospel or leading multitudes to the Lord does not mean he is born again. “...and in Thy name cast out devils, and in Thy name done many wonderful works.” Many have worked bus routes, sung in church choirs, taught Sunday School classes, entered into great missionary endeavors, accomplished tremendous social programs and even held important church offices. But the Lord forbids looking back on those wonderful endeavors with the thought, “I wouldn’t be doing all of these things if I weren’t saved.” [Rev 19:10, “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” Telling others about Christ or “prophecy” does not mean we are saved.]

Notice what the Lord will say to them: “...I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity...” The Lord tells these “Christian workers” that they are workers of iniquity because they had never trusted in the atoning work of Christ.

The devil is smart deceiver! He will not come as a roaring lion to Bible believers who profess to love God; he will come as a purring kitten, as a minister of righteousness, as a minister of Christ. He will not come with a blatant departure from the truth; he will come in crabways along side the truth with something that looks, sounds and feels like the truth. He will attempt to present his message as being the same as the truth, but, when exposed to the light of God’s total word, it is clearly not the truth.

Both Paul and Peter warn of heresies, that is, erroneous opinions which are a substitute for the truth, that might accompany the truth within the church. [1 Cor 11:19; 2 Pet 2:1-3] They warn of a quiet subverting of the gospel from the atoning work of Christ by something that approximates the truth. [For an excellent treatment of this, see “Barnes’ Notes, James-Jude,” p 236, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI] Heresy is not an obvious departure from sound doctrine. Predominately, heresy is something passed offhand accepted along with the truth. It is among you, from within the fellowship of believers, not from without. *Privily* speaks of the very “subtle” manner of introduction. Our enemy is an expert at bringing in his subtle departure from the truth completely unnoticed until he has control. [See Vine’s Dictionary, “Treatment of Heresy,” p 574, and “Privily,” p 887, Riverside Book and Bible House, Iowa Falls, IA]

If a person feels he is saved because he has “Asked Jesus to come into his heart and life and has trusted Him to do that (&c.),” yet at the time was not properly instructed in the necessity of trusting Christ as his Substitute and Saviour, then there is a problem. There can be no salvation apart from the clear instruction of what Christ has done for the sinner and his trust in Him to take the sinner’s place.

Now What?

As we have presented the preceding message, we have seen the Spirit work to bring questions in the hearts of many individuals. Our purpose is not to create confusion; our purpose is most certainly to shake those things which can be shaken. [Heb 12:27] Here is what we suggest for those who feel shaken over the preceding message: 1.) they should put aside everything they have been taught, 2.) they should lay aside all confidences which they might receive from their good works, 3.) they should lay aside all assurance that others might try to give them, e.g. "If anyone is saved, you are."

Then they should completely read the Book of John, and 1 John, at least once with a burning desire for the Lord to speak to them regardless of what they believe or want to believe. Furthermore, they should ask God to take away anything they might be depending on other than Christ. They should ask God to reveal their true conditions to themselves either by taking away all false assurance or by giving a firm passage for assurance. All of these suggestions are based upon 2 Corinthians 4:3-6 and Philippians 3:15 claiming the work and light of the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth about one's salvation.

Through prayer and searching of the Word, many times we have seen God move, opening an individual's understanding of the work of Christ for him, and the sinner fleeing to Christ as his Substitute and Saviour.

No doubt the NUMBER ONE lie among Bible-believing people today is: "You must ask Jesus into your heart to be saved and trust him to do that (come into your heart)," etc. But look at what this is saying! "You are saved because you asked Jesus into your heart." There is no Scriptural support for this false plan of salvation which is devastating to the cause of Christ; it places the emphasis upon a prayer that is said and what the sinner can do rather than upon what Christ has done.

An objection might be: "I don't see any difference." Okay, then why not change the message to something that reflects the person's placing his trust in the finished work of Christ's substitutionary payment in the sinner's place?

Then the objection might be, "But not everyone is able to understand that message." If we accept this argument, we say we must reduce the gospel to the level of the natural man, removing from it the work of the Holy Spirit.

What has happened to the plain, simple and clear plan of salvation as preached by past saints of God? "...The simple act of relying upon Jesus as your Substitute and Saviour puts away your guilt and sin forever... (CHS)" It cannot be said any better.

It is not an act of praying, but it is an act of faith. There will be none in heaven because they prayed and turned their lives over to God or because they asked the Lord to save them, etc. We will be there only because of what Christ did for us and our simple faith in His work. A lost person's growth into this faith, his "I didn't understand back

then, but I do now,” is no more possible than is evolution. The Scripture teaches a new creation, not an evolution of the old. The enemy, a master deceiver, knows and uses our weak points. [Gen 3:1; Jn 8:44]

Proper Action

We pray this little work has been a help for you. If God has used this to speak to your heart, let us encourage you to take the proper action in this most important of all matters. First, one must realize he is a sinner without hope. Second, he must recognize that he can do nothing at all to avoid the wages of that sin. Third, Christ paid it all through His atoning sacrifice, enduring what we should endure. Fourth, the sinner must rely upon Jesus as his Substitute for his sins and as his Saviour. Fifth, this simple act puts away all guilt of sin forever the moment one puts his complete trust in the Lord Jesus Christ to pay the penalty for his sins.

We have found that the deception dealt with herein is so well entrenched today that a onetime confrontation against this false doctrine has very little effect upon it. It took a consistent confrontation over a period of many months before the Holy Spirit was able to start exposing this lie with His truth at our Baptist Church. When He started moving, we saw over 50% of our church members saved. His Word is a hammer, and the stronger the grip of false doctrine, the more it must be hammered at and chipped away a little at a time. The first time this rock is struck there may not even be a chip, but it will break if we do not grow weary.

Hardness & Hostility

A man who represented Accelerated Christian Education in our area once told me in the midst of an intense discussion about the plan of salvation presented in ACE’s material: “All the best scholars agree that the terms are the same—Ask Jesus into your heart and trust Christ as your substitute.” He went on to say that if what we were saying was correct then he was lost. That ended the conversation, for it was then obvious he was not defending God’s Word; rather, he was defending a false profession.

We confronted a missionary who worked with a printing ministry in the South over the false plan of salvation used in their materials. After a lengthy, heated discussion, he said that he had asked Jesus into his heart here in our church many years ago, and if that did not save him, then he was not saved.

We have found that those who become the most “hostile” over what we are saying are more often than not unsaved themselves. They are defending their own false profession of faith as surely as a man defends a city. Normally, their defense is not Scriptural, and if they admit that what is presented herein is true, they must admit that what they have is false. On the other hand, those who have trusted Christ rejoice over the message contained herein.

Not one time in Scripture is there even a hint that one can be saved by asking Jesus into his heart; it is a false plan of salvation being used by the devil to draw multitudes down the broad road to destruction.

The man from ACE said, "Boy, you sure are narrow!" when I would not consider any argument except Scripture. Yes! I am; furthermore, the Lord was very narrow, calling all others thieves and robbers. [Jn 10]

A Personal Testimony

The truth presented herein is largely overlooked in our day; therefore, I realize many who read this will not understand what we are trying to say. But, obviously, the risk is far too great to dismiss this lightly.

Though I am apprehensive about mentioning personal experience (the Spirit deals with individuals as individuals), I think it would be useful to mention that this little booklet is written from personal experience. This preacher was "deceived" by this other gospel for many years. Whereas there are "other gospels" which are just as dangerous as the one presented herein, this one appears to be the most prevalent today. Our prayer is that the Holy Spirit might see fit to use this little booklet to perform the same work in others which he did in this preacher's life at 11:30 A.M., Oct. 29, 1977. Please do not attempt to compare experiences, for our only comparison must be with the Word of God. The Lord deals with unique individuals, and calls each to Himself in His unique way within the bounds of His Word.

When I got out of the Service in 1965, I worked construction during the day and took some evening Bible College courses. Our church had a large bus ministry, and the head of the bus ministry talked me into driving a bus, then into taking a bus route. The Lord allowed a successful bus route, so successful in fact, that when he left I was asked to take over the ministry. While I was there, the Lord dealt with my heart about salvation. I had gone forward as a nine-year old child. I am certain I went through all the proper religious motions because I was baptized at that time. As I got older, I could remember nothing about it, and the message I kept hearing was, "If you can't remember asking Jesus into your heart, then you aren't saved." I could not remember; therefore, one evening, in deep emotional distress, I went to one of my instructors saying, "I need to talk to you." He took me into his office and I told him, "I'm not saved."

"Ovid," he said, "if anyone is saved, you are."

I replied, "No, I'm not. Show me how to be saved." He proceeded to show me that I needed to ask Jesus into my heart which I did.

The Lord moved us to another church where, once again, we were placed in charge of the "soul-winning" visitation and the bus ministry. With very few exceptions, each Sunday we had someone whom we had "led to the Lord" in their homes, walk down the aisle and publicly profess asking Jesus into their hearts.

After three years, we went on to the staff of another church and again were given charge of the soul-winning visitation program. Here my job included door-to-door “soulwinning,” as well as following up the new children from the buses. I spent six hours a day, five days a week, doing this. In my files I still have record of close to 1,000 names and addresses of those whom I led to pray, “Jesus, come into my heart, and save me.” The only reason I mention this is to point out that, in this particular area, I am not a novice. I have been there.

I noticed something different about the pastor at this new church. He used a soul-winning plan called “Circles and Steps” which he picked up from Tom Wallace. I saw the difference in this presentation as he pointed out the necessity of the substitutionary death of Christ before he said to the prospect, “If you are willing to trust Christ as your Saviour, take my hand.”

I felt this was a much better way of presenting the Gospel, so I changed the plan I used from “Ask Jesus into your heart to save you,” to “Take my hand to show you are trusting in Christ as your Substitute and Saviour.”

I had no problems with this until my pastor and I held a Christian workers’ conference in a little church in Missouri beside the Mississippi River. At the conference, I was teaching a class on soul-winning and was speaking about how so many people believed they were saved because they had walked down the aisles, shook the preacher’s hand and told him they believed that Christ died and rose again (Romans 10:9, 10). Then they would go on to be baptized, yet their sincerity didn’t save them. A lady on the back row raised her hand and said, “If that’s true, then I’m not saved.” Others raised their hands speaking their agreement with her.

I had to call in my pastor for help in leading them to trust in Christ. Everyone in attendance that afternoon was saved except the host church’s pastor, his wife, and a visiting pastors wife. 45 Christian workers from the area’s churches were saved.

As we made the 10-hour drive back home the following day, I was devastated, and wept most of the way. The question which kept burdening my heart was, “How could so many good, sincere people be so wrong?”

The next day, as we met with our ladies to send them out soul-winning, I told of what had happened in Missouri. As I did, I saw the lady who was in charge of our church’s nursery program began weeping. I gave an invitation, and she raised her hand. I sent her to my office to talk to her after dismissing the others. As I walked into the office, she said, “You got me, didn’t you?” Surprised over what happened, I led her to trust in Christ.

Later that day, as I drove back to the church following some hospital visits, the thought occurred to me: “Ovid, how do you know you are going to heaven?”

“Because I have asked Jesus into my heart,” was my reply, knowing that was not the right answer. I was then reminded that I had just led a lady to trust in Christ as her Substitute and Saviour who had my false hope.

I wrestled with the matter, arguing, “I wouldn’t be soul-winning every day if I wasn’t saved. . . . I wouldn’t be teaching the adult Bible Class. . . . I wouldn’t be scheduled to be ordained if I wasn’t saved.” (At this point I was the Associate Pastor, had been licensed by the church, was doing most of the baptisms and was going to be ordained in a few weeks.) “I wouldn’t be doing all of these Bible-based religious activities if I wasn’t saved.”

We had taken a \$600-per-month cut in pay to come to this church. I was spending four hours each morning with the Lord, as well as fasting and spending one night a week in prayer. As I thought on these things, I understood that I was basing my salvation upon all of my good works. (“I wouldn’t be doing all these things if I wasn’t saved.”) Furthermore, I remembered that God was not and would not be impressed with my good deeds.

Still not wanting to give in, I fled to some standard excuses which I had confronted so many times in others: “Well, I didn’t understand about the substitutionary death back then, but I do now.” Then I remembered that we do not believe in evolution. The final argument to fall was, “What will people think?” The answer to this was the one I had used so many times with others: “Which is worse, hell or what people think?” [These were all answers that I had used to convince others of their lost conditions. My own arguments were coming back against my false hope.]

I put off a decision for another day, until Saturday morning. When I could avoid the issue no longer, I called the pastor at his office. He came into my office, and I told him I had to be saved. His response was that he knew; every time he had asked me how I knew I was saved, I had answered, “Because I prayed and ask the Lord to save me,” or, “Because I prayed and accepted Jesus Christ into my heart and life.” I saw myself that morning as one who was trying to climb into heaven by some means other than through what Christ had done for me.

This pastor was caught in the trap; I must say with Paul in Philippians 3, I now count it all lost. I had spent 12 years under this false plan of salvation; I taught it, practiced it and told people by the thousands that they would be saved if they would “pray and ask Jesus into their hearts,” when all the time I had nothing and probably gave them the same nothing.

I fled to Romans 10:13 and Revelation 3:20, but using them alone wrests them from their contexts. Romans 10:13 is based on Romans 5:8 and 10:9-14, Revelation 3:20 is to a specific church. Anything less than a clear presentation of the atoning work of Christ is not the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; it is another Jesus, 2 Cor 11:3 & Gal 1:6. Anything less than trust in what He has done is not Biblical salvation. Every Bible scholar in the world can say differently, but that will not change God’s Word—“Yea, let

God be true and every man a liar” [Rom 3:4]. It is not possible to be saved unless God’s plan is first clearly heard and understood.

Do not compare your experiences with this pastor’s or any other person’s.

Let Us Know

If God has used this to speak to your heart about salvation, please let us know so that we may both rejoice and be encouraged as we do what we can to advance the Kingdom of our God.

—By Ovid Need, Jr.