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"Preaching grace in the Dispensation of grace"
A Bible Study

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IS YOUR GOOD NEWS REALLY GOOD NEWS?

BY RICHARD JORDAN

In modern evangelism there is much talk about preaching the gospel, but too little is actually being preached. Many are talking in vague language about Christ-language which misses the key issues altogether. Much of the common language presently used to "preach the gospel" is confusing at best and heretical at worst. Surely this is not the arena in which to be shoddy and imprecise. Evangelism is like heart surgery-it demands our total concentration; it requires maximum precision.

Today the gospel message is being confused with a "goosey" evangelism that asks man to imagine he must do, feel, experience or surrender in order to find peace with God. When we add *anything* to the age-old formula: "*faith in Christ's blood*", we lose everything.

Notice how some commonly used appeals that seek to "present the gospel" and at the same time lessen the "offense of the cross" totally lack an adequate basis for salvation:

"*Give your heart to Christ*" sounds positively romantic. But we are not saved simply by falling in love with Jesus. We are saved by believing in His finished work on Calvary. Yet this appeal in no way encourages a person to rely upon the sufficiency of His work there as a basis for acceptance with God.

Moreover, salvation is not my gift to God; It is *His gift to me*: "*the gift of God*: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8, 9, Rom.6:23).

"*You must forsake and turn from your sins (i.e., repent).*" This is a popular appeal, yet it is an utterly absurd statement.

Did *any* of us stop sinning when we were saved? Have we stopped even yet? Of course not! The book of Corinthians alone provides ample evidence that sin *remains* a problem in the life of every believer long after he is justified.

Why, then, tell *unbelievers* that they must turn from their sins and forsake them in order to find salvation in Jesus Christ? How much better to tell them the truth: that God accepts us just as we are, and that it is *God* "that justifieth the ungodly" (Rom.4:5).

Forsaking sin and changing the way we live clearly has to do with Christian conduct *after* salvation in Christ the believer has been made a part of an absolute and total victory program over sin-but the order of Eph. 2:8-10 is definite. First we are saved by grace through faith, totally apart from *any* human merit or works; then, as "*His workmanship*," we are to walk in the "good works" for which He created us.

"*You must surrender all to Christ*," we are told. No. No. It was Jesus Christ Who made the full surrender when He yielded His life on Calvary. It is His surrender that saves us, not our surrender in any way to Him. Again, Rom. 12:1 is written to believers--not unbelievers.

"*You must make Jesus Christ Lord of your life*." But this too has the cart before the horse, for this is the obligation of the believer to his Savior *after* he is saved.

There is a vast difference between acknowledging Christ to be Lord (as in Rom. 10:9) and making Him Lord of your life-in other words, promising to obey Him for the rest of your life. Christ is first to be the Savior of our souls, *then* Lord of our lives. To exhort the lost to make Jesus Christ their "Savior and Lord" is to mix salvation and service into one impossible package and confuse the issue.

It is sometimes said that "if Christ isn't Lord of all, He isn't Lord at all." But this is simply a preaching ploy-and not a very accurate one at that. My friend, Jesus Christ is Lord whether you, I or anyone else recognizes or likes it! He is Lord; it is the believer's privilege to recognize His Lordship and to live in light of this blessed fact. For the unsaved to recognize His Lordship would be nothing less-nor more-than to trust Him fully as the One Who died for their sins and rose again for their justification.

"*Make your decision for Christ*" is another popular invitation. But again, no adequate basis for salvation is found in this proposition. We cannot pass over the blood shed at Calvary and merely receive Christ (Heb. 9:22). An invitation that focuses on the person of Christ and ignores the work of Christ in our behalf is dangerous.

"*Have you made your commitment to Christ?*" This too is heard over and over again when invitations are given. But God is not asking the unbeliever to make *any* commitments to Him. He offers salvation as a FREE GIFT to those who will put their trust in Him Who died for them.

WHY THESE TERMS?

Many other catchy phrases from popular terminology could be added to this short list to illustrate the lack of an adequate basis for faith to rest upon.

In our day of mass media mania we are constantly under the pressure and temptation to dilute "the offense of the cross" in order to appeal to greater and greater audiences. No doubt this is one important reason why neoevangelicalism has flourished in our day. It is a system of compromise mainly concerned with eliminating the offensive aspects of our message so as to appeal to greater audiences.

"The offense of the cross," of course, lies in its total disregard for all human effort and merit. If we clearly understand the wretchedness of our lost condition, the horror of our enmity against God, the deep-rootedness of our sinfulness, we would not attach human requirements to the gospel of the grace of God.

This is no minor issue. The souls for whom Christ died are at stake. There is no room for a mixture of human works; rather, the only issue is what Christ has done *for us* at Calvary.

This is exactly why, amid the theological confusion of our times, we should be careful to rightly divide the Word of Truth so that we will clearly *know* and fully *understand* God's great message for today.

Never allow yourself to stray from the bedrock issue. Make those five blessed words of I Cor. 15:3 the issue: "*Christ died for our sins.*" Christ, at Calvary *paid in full* the penalty for our sins-this is the issue, the truth for the lost to believe, the message for the saved to boldly make known! Our message to the world, like Paul's, should be "*the preaching of the cross*" (I Cor.1:18). Remember: this is the message that is "*the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth*" (Rom. 1: 16).

THE LORD'S SUPPER and THE PASSOVER

BY RICHARD JORDAN

While various arguments are advanced to support the contention that the Lord's Supper is in reality an extension of the Jewish Passover, one point seems to be consistently overlooked. The Passover was a *Jewish feast* and, as such, was to be celebrated *only in Jerusalem*, The instructions as to *where* the Passover was to be observed are quite clear:

"Thou mayest not sacrifice the Passover within any of thy gates, which the Lord thy God given thee:

"But AT THE PLACE WHICH THE LORD THY GOD SHALL CHOOSE TO PLACE HIS NAME IN, THERE THOU SHALT SACRIFICE THE PASSOVER at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt' (Deut. 16:5,6).

"*The place*" the Lord later chose is clearly *Jerusalem* [1Kings 11:36, II Chron. 6:5,6, Psa. 132;13,etc.) and it was *there* the Passover was to be observed annually by Israel. Notice Moses' further instructions concerning the three great feasts of Israel:

"Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy GOD IN THE PLACE WHICH HE SHALL CHOOSE; In the feast of unleavened bread [Passover], and in the feast of weeks [Pentecost], and in the fest of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the Lord empty" (Deut 16:16).

Scripture unmistakably specifies that the Passover-as well as Pentecost and Tabernacles-was to be *celebrated in Jerusalem*, yet the Apostle Paul had given the Lord's Supper to the Corinthian saints for their observance *at Corinth*. In light of Paul's obvious awareness of both the feasts themselves and the requirement that they be observed in Jerusalem (See Acts 18:21; 20:16, etc.), it would be unreasonable to suggest that it was the Jewish Passover he taught the Corinthians to keep at Corinth.

Further, Paul's instructions concerning the Lord's Supper were given to him as part of the special revelation he received from the ascended Christ, and this is the basis on which he delivered them to the Corinthians:

"FOR I HAVE RECEIVED OF THE LORD THAT WHICH ALSO I DELIVERED UNTO YOU, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread:

"And when He had given thanks, He brake It, and said, Take, eat this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me.

"After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink It, in remembrance of Me.

"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come"[1Cor.11:23-26]

Thus rather than being the Passover and looking back to Israel's deliverance from Egypt's bondage, the Lord's Supper looks both to the cross of Christ and His soon coming, and is a fitting memorial for those who look *back* in faith and *forward* in hope.

Some will object that even this memorial was first given to our Lord's disciples "the same night in which He was betrayed" and is thus also Jewish in its origin. *Why* would the Savior, they wonder, give the same memorial to both Israel and the Body of Christ? But do not our Lord's words, "*this do in remembrance of Me,*" give the answer clearly?

The destinies of *both* Israel and the Body of Christ are inseparably linked to the cross and what Christ has accomplished there. Far from being an extension of the Passover, the Lord's Supper is a reminder that all we-and Israel-have is bound up in Him who "*loved us and gave Himself for us.*"

FURTHER CONSIDERATINOS

The following outline comes from the pen of our beloved friend and brother, Pastor Roy Lange of the *Forest Park Bible Church*, Mobile, Alabama, and will provide further study in the contrasts between the Passover and the Lord's Supper.

THE PASSOVER FEAST	THE LORD'S SUPPER
1. Practiced by the Lord (Luke 22:14:18).	1. Instituted by the Lord <i>after</i> the Passover. Never called the Passover (Luke 22:19, 20, 1Cor.11]
2. Only the circumcised could eat the Passover (Ex 12:43-49)	2. Both Jew and Gentile partake (I Cor. 1:18; 12:2,27; Rom.11:13).
3. Only in Jerusalem (Deut16:5, II Chron. 6:6; 30:1-3).	3. Given to the Corinthians at Corinth (1 Cor.11)
4. Priests and Levites were essential (IIChron.35:1-19).	4. Priesthood changed. (Heb.7:11-28).
5. Roast lamb, unleavened bread, bitter herbs (Ex.12:8).	5. Bread and juice only (I Cor. 11; 5:7,8).
6. Legal ordinance for Israel (Ex. 12:1-11)	6. No ordinances of the Law for the Body of Christ (Rom.3:19,20; 10:4; Eph.2:14-

	16;Col.2:14)
7. Given to Israel (Ex. 12).	7.Given to Gentiles as members of the joint Body(1Cor.11:23).
8. Definite time (first month, fourteenth day, Ex. 12:2,6).	8. No set time (1Cor.11:26).
9. Commanded as a memorial of the Exodus (Ex. 12:14).	9. Given as a memorial of the blood and body of Christ ("In remembrance of me").
10. Part of the Old Covenant (Lev.23:4,5).	10. The blood of the new covenant, but is not the New Covenant (1Cor.11:25).

Something to think about.

WHAT IF?

How many of us would serve God *if* He offered nothing but *himself*? No healing. No success. No prosperity. No worldly blessings. No miracles.

What if-once again" we had to take joyfully the spoiling of our goods?

What if-instead of painless living, we suffered cruel mocking, stoning, bloodshed, being sawn asunder?

What if --instead of our comfortable homes and cars, we had to wander about in deserts in sheepskin, hiding in dens and caves?

What if- instead of prosperity, we were destitute, afflicted and tormented?

And *what if* the only better thing provided for us was *Christ Himself*?

"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the Excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord:" (Phi.3:7-8).
