

Faith and Works LV

The Contemporary and Biblical Contexts

Col. 2:8

The Lie and the Light

In the New Testament, certain letters, among them the letter to the Colossians written by the Apostle Paul, and the first letter of the Apostle John address specific issues necessary to distinguish the Gospel of Jesus Christ from a religious system of thought that was not new, and which was of particular concern in that it had the ability to infiltrate the doctrine of Christ and redefine the terminology to represent its own foreign system of theology and thought. It was not a new movement, and indeed, in one form or another it has continued to exist since the fall of man.

Many seeking deeper spiritual knowledge are making an idol out of the man's very thoughts and not the knowledge and focus on God through Christ. That is why they react with alarm when their thought patterns, the structure they are trying to maintain is threatened by information that would question their foundational premises.

Gnosticism in its many forms goes beyond a legalization of actions or behavior followed in order to earn God's favor. It is a legalistic system that proscribes that act of certain kinds of thinking, and excludes others, in order for one to become as God.

It may involve control of the bodies actions, but focuses primarily on control of the mind based on the metaphysical premise that man unconsciously partakes of universal mind, and must through his thoughts take responsibility for the creation and manifestation of his reality.

Christianity concerns a relationship of the whole created man, spirit, soul and body, with his creator through knowledge of God's purpose and character. The Gospel of Christ offers restoration and reconnection of man who lost his original relationship with God when man sought through knowledge to replace his connection and dependence on God with dependence on what man could achieve by himself.

Gnosticism may take many forms, but at its core is the original lie of the fall which ever represents itself offering new insights to gain the understanding needed to know and thus operate as God. Man must acquire the knowledge he needs to redeem himself from his inherited fallen condition.

True Biblical faith is quite different from the world's religions, which include Gnosticism in its many forms. The Bible teaches that it is with the heart man believes a message that intellectually a child could understand.

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

2 Corinthians 5:16-21 Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Romans 10:1-14 For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, “The man who does those things shall live by them.” But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or, “‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart”(that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.” For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For “whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.”

Esoteric intellect and insight are only valid currency in bargaining for eternity in an economy where man is presumed dependant on his own ability to operate as God.

Jesus is to be lifted up. Our eyes are not to be on ourselves and preoccupied with our own thoughts, but instead we are to be focused on God's love and provision for us in Christ.

There are those who seek to use words of God, but their faith is in their own use of them, not in the truth they reveal about the faithfulness of God.

Instead of looking for spiritual techniques and insight, we are to abide in Christ. We are to be clothed with Him as we come before God. We are not to try to dress ourselves in the filthy rags of our own works in imitation of Him.

In the church, the building up of the body of Christ, the mutual edification of each member is made possible through the gifts of the Holy Spirit. But when

teaching, worship and fellowship that does not lift up Christ and draw attention to Christ is not fulfilling the commission to build the true church, which is Christ's body. The Holy Spirit is not at work in the body to make great people, He is at work through the various gifts, when they are properly operating in spirit and in truth according to the Gospel, to reveal Christ, and bring the body to the full confidence of faith and steadfastness in Christ.

When the modern church stops seeking to strengthen itself, and learns to do all things through and in the strength of Christ, then we can expect that God will be able to glorify not the church, but His Son, through various signs and wonders.

Acts 4:29-31 Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.” And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

Jesus is not a historic example, as was supposedly Siddhartha Gautama Buddha, of one who has attained enlightenment. Jesus is not teaching fallen man how to achieve illumination and thus attain or realize his own supposedly inherent god-like capabilities. In true Biblical Christianity as was practiced by the apostles and early church, Jesus is not a teacher of faith, He is the object, author and finisher of the faith of the Christian. Jesus is Himself the light of the world.

The nature and character between those striving to gain and possess eternal life by their own works and knowledge, and those who are resting complete in Christ, and showing to others the love and forgiveness they have truly by faith personally received will be darkness and light in these last days.

While many shall indeed rush to and fro and increase in knowledge, ever learning but never coming to a knowledge of the truth, which is the revelation of Jesus Himself as the Lamb of God, yet there will be those, a remnant, who are filled with the spirit that gives life. They will be lamps that burn bright in that last final darkness that comes just before the dawn. Their lamps will be supplied by the inexhaustible life that is found by those who have learned to rest and abide in Christ, making Him their new firm foundation, leaving as worthless the old foundation of sand inherited from the first Adam.

John 1:1-5 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

John 8:12 Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

2 Corinthians 4: 6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 5:14 Therefore He says:
"Awake, you who sleep,
Arise from the dead,
And Christ will give you light."

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