

ARTICLES FROM THE PERSUADER VOLUME IV

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ARTICLES FROM **THE PERSUADER**

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The articles in this book appeared in our bi-monthly paper, **THE PERSUADER**, from 1997 to 1999. They were written by Edgar Lee Paschall, Pastor of New Hope Baptist Church, unless otherwise designated. These articles are designed to persuade one to take a fresh look at TRUTH and to RIGHTLY DIVIDE God's Word. If we can be of help in any way, please feel free to call or write. If you need more copies of this book or any of our other books please write to the above address. These books are free as long as funds are available to keep printing them. Use the material in this book any way that brings honor and glory to our Lord.

Because of Calvary,
Edgar Lee Paschall

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CRITERIA FOR SELF EXAMINATION

The Bible says "examine yourself" whether you are in the faith which means to check your experience to see if you are really saved. It also says to "prove" your own selves. The word translated "prove" is also translated "examine" in I Cor. 11:28, "But let a man examine himself. . ." Therefore, II Cor. 13:5 gives a double emphasis "examine, examine" yourselves to see if you are saved. The meaning of this word is to test or scrutinize to see whether a thing (in this case salvation) is genuine or not.

The problem is that many who try to examine do not know what they are looking for because they do not know what is involved in real salvation. If I tampered with a yardstick and shortened it by two inches and then gave that "so-called" yardstick to you along with a bolt of material and told you to cut it into yard lengths, what would be the results? Every piece of material would come up short, two inches short. The message of salvation has been tampered with (many times through ignorance), therefore many who have made "professions" will come up short. Mat. 7:22-23 says, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Many in this condition are measuring by the wrong criteria and as a result have a continual nagging doubt. This causes them to go to others looking for someone to tell them they are saved. Some would be thrilled if an angel told them they are saved, but the Bible says in II Cor. 11:14 that, "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." This is dangerous! Preachers, we are not "assurance givers" but preachers who set forth criteria (an accurate standard by which one can measure) so that a person may examine himself and allow the Holy Spirit to reveal that person's true condition. As a preacher of the gospel, I would like to set forth some criteria by which you may examine yourself.

1. Reality of a Time and Place

A person is saved at a specific time and place. There are many things involved in your experience that leads you to that time and place but salvation occurs at an instant, at a time and place. You may not know the minute, date, or hour but that time and place is etched upon your heart just as much or even more so than when you were married, if you are married. If you do not have a time and a place when you were saved, it is a good indication that you are not saved. Let me say this, you may have a time and a place of a "profession" you made and yet still not be saved because there was not a completed work of the Holy Spirit done in your heart, thus you are not saved.

2. Reality of Self

This is more than having a revelation that you are a sinner. When the Holy Spirit convicts you of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8), you will see yourself as you really are. Every man according to Eph. 2:1-3 is dead, dominated (controlled by the world, the devil, and the flesh), and doomed (children of wrath which remains upon every person who has reached the knowledge of accountability and not yet saved; John 3:36). Also every person has a deceived heart before he is saved. (Jer. 17:9; II Cor. 4:4) Before one is saved there will be a reality of self. You will recognize and realize who and what you really are.

3. Reality of Sin

John 16:8-9 states that the Holy Spirit will reprove (convict) you of sin. Notice sin is singular, therefore, it is not referring to the fruit of sin which is sins such as lying, stealing, drinking, murder, adultery, and etc. but it is referring to the sin of unbelief as verse 9 clearly brings out. "On" means to come to a point, place, and time with a purpose. This can only be accomplished by Holy Spirit conviction which brings a person to a place and time and enables him to believe "on" the Lord Jesus Christ. At that point all sins of that person were charged to the Lord's account and marked "paid in full."

4. Reality of Separation-Lostness

Many say that they are lost when they have never had a reality of that lostness or separation from God. What they have done we can call "inductive and deductive" reasoning. They heard the preaching of what real salvation is and realized they were not saved; therefore, they said, "I am lost." But their lostness is not yet a reality to them because the Holy Spirit has not completed His work and made their lostness a reality.

5. Reality of the Saviour.

John 16:8, 10 states that the Holy Spirit will reprove (convince) of righteousness which really is a person, the Lord Jesus Christ who has been made unto us righteousness. (I Cor. 1:30)

Many "professors" know about Jesus as Saviour but have no reality of Him as their Saviour because He has never become a reality as "the way, the truth, and the life." (John 14:6) I John 5:12 make it very clear that one must have the Son (Righteousness) to have life. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

6. Reality of Repentance

Repentance is a must to be saved. Luke 13:3 states, "Except you repent, you shall all likewise perish." Repentance is more than turning over a new leaf. It is a change of mind which leads to a change of heart, attitude, and direction. It means to turn from sin, self, and the world and turn to the Lord, taking up sides with Him against yourself. One can only repent after godly sorrow (Holy Ghost conviction)

has produced repentance in his heart. (II Cor. 7:10)

7. Reality of Trusting

Eph. 1:13 indicates those saved "trusted" on the Lord Jesus Christ after they heard the Word of Truth. This means more than to just believe some facts about Jesus. It means to commit to, rely on, and submit to Jesus Christ as one's Lord. This can only be done after "faith" as been given by the grace of God. (Eph. 2:8)

8. Reality of Assurance

Assurance does not come from man but from the Holy Spirit bearing witness with your quickened spirit that you are saved. (Rom. 8:16) If you are saved the gospel came to you not in Word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance. (I Thess. 1:5) Isa. 32:17 reveals that assurance is forever.

These criteria must be present in your salvation experience in some quantity or in some degree. If they are not present you are not in the faith, you do not know your own self, and you are "reprobate" (not approved; not standing the test). Our text, II Cor. 13:5 verifies this. You may refuse to examine now or you may refuse to admit you do not measure up after you examine, but one day when you stand before the Lord, if these criteria are not present, you will not measure up and then He will tell you "I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Mat. 7:23) How sad that will be and it will be too late to do anything about it. But now you can do something about it. Examine yourself and be honest about the criteria you find or do not find and then allow the Holy Spirit to complete His work of conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

We have this complete message on tape that explains in more detail each criteria. If you would like a copy, please feel free to call or write. Our tapes and booklets are free for the asking. If we can be of help in any way please let us know. We care!

THE PERSUADER - June-July, 1997

THERE MUST BE A BALANCE OF SPIRIT AND TRUTH

"God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and truth." (John 4:24)

Jesus made it very clear to the woman at the well in John 4 that for one to truly worship God, they must do so in Spirit (Holy Spirit) and truth. There must be a balance. One without the other leads to error. Truth without the Spirit leads to orthodoxy and deadness. Spirit without truth leads to fanaticism.

This same principle also applies to salvation. For one to be genuinely saved, there must be a balance of Spirit and truth. God's written Word is truth but one cannot be saved by Word only. Paul stated in I Thess. 1:5 that, "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. . ." This verse indicates it is necessary for one to have the Word (truth) to be saved, but that it not enough by itself. The Word must be empowered (sharpened) by the Holy Ghost (Spirit) or one will never be convicted (reproved) of sin, righteousness, and judgment. (Heb. 4:12; John 16:8-11) No one has ever been saved nor will they ever be saved without Holy Ghost conviction.

There are many Baptist churches who pride themselves that they preach the truth. I will have to agree that the words they preach are according to the Bible which is truth, but there is not a balance of truth and Spirit. The result is that those churches are filled with those who have made professions, but they have no life. They are dead and orthodox.

Thank the Lord for the written Word, but life is not in the written Word but the living Word. "In him (the Lord Jesus) was life." (John 1:4) "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (I John 5:12) For one to have the Son requires believing the written Word (called "the record" in I John 5:10-11) which is really like a sign pointing to the real (the living Word: Jesus). One must not stop at the written Word but believe on the living Word and receive Him as their Lord. (John 1:12) So many have settled for the sign (written Word; truth) instead of having a balance of Spirit and truth. I Cor. 12:3 states, "... no man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." Truth without the Spirit will lead to error and many such churches are filled with the product of this imbalance.

On the other side, there are many churches who say they have the Spirit. They shout and seem to praise God in their so called worship. But let us look and see if they have a balance. Most of these churches teach that you can lose your salvation. This means that they are depending on works to be saved or works to keep saved. This is not truth. Why? The Bible says so in Eph. 2:8-9, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast." The Spirit without truth leads to error--fanaticism.

This leads me to another principle found in the Scriptures. Jesus said, "Howbeit

when he, the Spirit of truth, is come he will guide you into all truth. . ." (John 16:13) This verse states plainly that the Holy Spirit will guide you into truth. Therefore, we have to draw the conclusion that those churches who say they have the Spirit but teach not the truth really do not have the Holy Spirit, but another spirit which reveals them another god and another Jesus. You cannot have the Holy Spirit without truth, because He will guide you into all truth.

Folks, I am not trying to anger you but help you to see truth. I see many churches on both sides of this issue which are filled with people who have a false hope and false assurance that they are saved and will be in heaven one day. But these are the ones Jesus was referring to when He said, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Mat. 7:22-23) How sad that day will be!

But it does not have to be that way for you. Get honest with yourself. Do you have a balance of the Spirit and truth in your salvation experience and worship? If you do not, allow the Holy Spirit to sharpen the truth, complete His word of conviction (reproval; John 16:8-11), and point you to the Lord Jesus Christ, the living Word. "In Him is life." (John 1:4)

If this article angers you, then that is a good indication that the spirit in you is not the Holy Spirit. If you have Him, you would agree with truth for He is the Author of the Word of God. (II Peter 1:21)

If I can be of help to any of you in any way, please feel free to write or call. I am your friend. I care.

THE PERSUADER - Aug.-Sept., 1997

Attention: Is Christ YOUR Lord?

We do not ask, Is Christ your "Saviour," but is He, really and truly, your **LORD**? If He be **not** your **Lord**, then most certainly He is not your "Saviour." Those who have not received Christ Jesus as their "Lord," and yet suppose Him to be their "Saviour," are deluded, and their hope rests on a foundation of sand. Multitudes are deceived on this vital point, and therefore, if the reader values his or her soul, we implore you to give a most careful reading to this little tract.

When we ask, "Is Christ your **Lord**?" We do not inquire, "Do you believe in the Godhead of Jesus of Nazareth?" The demons do that (Matt. 8:28, 29) and yet perish notwithstanding! You may be firmly convinced of the Deity of Christ, and yet be in your sins. You may speak of Him with the utmost reverence, accord Him His divine titles in your prayers, and yet be unsaved. You may abominate (hate) those who traduce (slander) His person and deny His divinity, and yet have no spiritual love for Him at all.

When we ask, Is Christ your **Lord**, we mean, does He in very deed occupy the throne of your heart, does He actually **rule** over your life? "We have turned every one to his **own way**" (Isa. 53:6) describes the course which all follow by nature. Before conversion every soul lives to please self. Of old it was written, "every man did that which was right in his own eyes," and why? "In those days there was no king in Israel." (Judges 21:25) Ah! That is the point we desire to make clear to the reader. Until Christ becomes your King, (I Tim. 1:17; Rev. 15:3), until you bow to His septre, until **His** will becomes the rule of your life, **SELF** dominates, and thus Christ is disowned.

When the Holy Spirit begins His work of grace in a soul, He first convicts of sin. He shows me the real and awful nature of sin. He makes me realize that it is a species (condition) of insurrection, a defying of God's authority, a setting of my will against His. He shows me that in going my "own way," (Isa. 53:6) in pleasing **myself**, I have been fighting against God. As my eyes are opened to see what a lifelong rebel I have been, how indifferent to God's honor, how unconcerned about His will, I am filled with anguish and horror, and made to marvel that the thrice Holy One has not long since cast me into Hell. Reader, have you ever gone through this experience? If not, there is very grave reason to fear you are yet spiritually **dead**!

Conversion, true conversion, saving conversion, is **a turning from sin to God** in Christ. It is a throwing down the weapons of my warfare against Him, a **ceasing** to despise and ignore His authority. New Testament conversion is described thus: "Ye turned to God from idols to serve (be in subjection to, obey) the living and true God." (I Thess. 1:9) An "**idol**" is **any object to which we give what is due alone unto God**--the supreme place in our affections, the molding influence of our hearts, the dominating power of our lives. Conversion is a right-about-face, the heart and will **repudiating** (refusing) sin, self, and the world. Genuine conversion is always evidenced by "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6) It is an unreserved surrendering of ourselves to His holy will. Have you yielded yourself to

Him? (Rom. 6:13)

There are many people who would like to be saved from Hell, but who do not want to be saved from self-will, from having their own way, from a life of (some form of) worldliness. But God will not save them on their terms. To be saved, we must submit to HIS terms. Listen to His terms: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord (having revolted from Him in Adam), and He will have mercy upon him." (Isa. 55:7) Said Christ, "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath (all that is opposed to Me), he cannot be My disciple." (Luke 14:33) Men must be turned "from darkness to light, and the power of Satan unto God" before they can "receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified." (Acts 26:18)

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, walk ye in Him." (Col. 2:6) That is an exhortation to Christians, and its force is, Continue as you begin. But how had they "begun"? By receiving "Christ Jesus the Lord" by surrendering to Him, by subjecting themselves to His will, by ceasing to please themselves. His authority was now owned. His commands now became their rule of life. His love constrained them to a glad and unreserved obedience. They "gave their own selves to the Lord." (2 Cor. 8:5) Have you, my reader, done this? Have you? Do the details of your life evidence it? Can those with whom you come into contact see that you are no more living to please self? (2 Cor. 5:15)

Oh, my reader, make no mistake upon this point: a conversion which the Holy Spirit produces is a very radical thing. It is a miracle of grace. It is the enthroning of Christ in the life. And such conversions are rare indeed. Multitudes of people have just sufficient "religion" to make them miserable. They refuse to forsake every known sin--and there is no true peace for any soul until he does. They have never "received Christ Jesus the Lord." (Col. 2:6) Had they done so, "the joy of the Lord" would be their strength (Neh. 8:10). But the language of their hearts and lives (not their "lips") is, "We will not have this Man to **reign** over us." (Luke 19:14) Is that your case?

The great miracle of grace consists in changing a **lawless rebel** into a living and loyal subject. It is a "renewing" of the heart, so that the favored subject of it has come to loathe what he loved, and the things he once found irksome are now winsome. (2 Cor. 5:17) He **delights** "in the law of God after the inward man." (Rom. 7:22) He discovers that Christ's commandments are **not** grievous," (I John 5:3) and that "in keeping of them there is great reward." (Psa. 19:11) Is this your experience? It would be if you receive Christ Jesus THE LORD!

But to receive Christ Jesus the Lord is altogether **beyond** unaided human power. That is the last thing which the unrenewed heart wants to do. There must be a **supernatural** change of heart before there is even the desire for Christ to occupy its throne. And that change, none but God can work (I Cor. 12:3). Therefore, "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found." (Isa. 55:6) "Search for Him with all your heart." (Jer. 29:13) Reader, you may have been a professing Christian for years past and you may have been quite sincere in your profession. But if God has condescended to use this tract to show you that you have **never** really and truly

received Christ Jesus **the Lord**," if now in your own soul and conscience you realize that SELF has ruled you hitherto, will you now get down on your knees and **confess** to God your self-will, your **rebellion** against Him, and beg Him to **so work in you** that, without further delay, you may be enabled to yield yourself completely to His will and become His subject, His servant, His loving slave, in deed and in truth?
-- A. W. Pink

POSTSCRIPT TO ARTICLE

It is very hard to find a tract in this day of "easy believism" that is scriptural. But this is one tract we can recommend. In fact we will print them in quantities with your Church's name and address if you will write us.

Jesus becomes one's Lord when that person is saved. "No man can say Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost." (I Cor. 12:3) Therefore it takes a work of reproof (Holy Ghost conviction; John 16:8-11) for a person to get to the end of himself and receive Jesus as Lord. For a person to deny that is to join the apostates Jude warns us of in Jude 4. And they will perish (enter the lake of fire) one day just as sure as Core did in his opposition. (Jude 11)

May these thoughts provoke you to examine yourself (II Cor. 13:5), get honest and admit your lost condition if Jesus is not your Lord, and allow the Holy Ghost to work a complete work of conviction in your heart that will enable you to receive Jesus as YOUR Lord.

THE PERSUADER - Oct.-Nov., 1997

MUST A LOST MAN CONTINUE IN THE WORD TO BE SAVED?

For an answer to this question we need to look at the Word of God. God's Word gives a lot of light on commentaries, tradition, and opinions and reveals their error. By God's grace we want to line up with His Word even if it goes against our opinion and tradition or against our favorite commentary.

Therefore, to answer this question let us go to John chapter 8. There we find Jesus speaking to a group of Jews with the Pharisees present. (verses 12-13) He declares in verse 12, "I am the light of the world." His discussion and teaching recorded in verses 12-29 are to the point, revealing who He is--the Son of God. As a result of this message verse 30 says, "many believed on him."

Sounds great doesn't it? Most Baptists would have this group signed up, baptized, churchized, choirized, deaconized, and preacherized. But the question comes when we study this chapter in context, "Are these Jews really saved?" Most would say sure because they believed. Do you not know that James 2:19 says, "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble." A lot of Baptist have said they believe but they do not tremble, so if that is all one has he is no better than the devil. Therefore to "believe" is not enough.

Look at what Jesus said. "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:31-32) Notice Jesus is speaking to the Jews whom the Bible says, "believed on him." He is not speaking to the rest of the Jews nor the Pharisees. It is evident from these verses and the rest of the chapter that these Jews were not saved. "Shall know" is future tense which means "come to know." "The truth" is more than just a verse in the Bible. It refers to the Lord Jesus who is "The Truth." (John 14:6) An individual who has the Son (The Truth) has eternal life (is saved; I John 5:12). Therefore, these Jews were not saved.

Jesus also told them that their father was the devil in verse 44 and that did not know God in verse 55. Then in verse 59 these Jews who the Bible said "believed on him" took up stones to kill Jesus. This is not the action of saved men!

For years we have read this chapter and thought it referred to the Pharisees, but Jesus declares plainly that His is talking to those Jews that believed on Him. (verses 31-59) This brings up another question, "Could they have been saved?" Yes, if they had met the condition that Jesus laid down in verses 31-32--"if you continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed (truly)."

This brings another question, "What does it mean to continue in His Word?" It means to do what you know to do at the time or to put it another way, step (obey) in what light (truth) you have and the Lord will give you more light and bring you to Himself so that you may be saved--delivered from your bondage of sin, tradition, and customs that are contrary to the Scripture. Peter said it another way when asked on the day of Pentecost, (Acts 2:37) "What shall we do?" He answered in

Acts 2: 40, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation." This means you need to lay aside some things in your life or at least be willing to, to know The Truth. Jesus Himself said, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." (Luke 13: 24)

Some say this is works for salvation. Oh no! It is His work in salvation as the Holy Ghost produces godly sorrow, convinces of sin, righteousness, and judgment (II Cor. 7:10; John 16:8-11), and produces repentance and faith, enabling one to repent and believe with saving faith. These Jews in John 8 only had intellectual faith and that is not enough for one to be saved.

Others say that this is "progressive salvation." Oh no! Salvation is at an instant, at a point where man passes from death unto life. But there is a progression in Holy Ghost conviction. And anyone who has experienced that will tell you the same thing. When one is saved he will give all the glory to the Lord because without Him and the completed work of the Holy Ghost no man would or could ever be saved.

Notice John 8:31 says, "Continue in my word." This is the Lord's Word and not some preacher's. It is true God uses preachers to preach His Word but unless the Holy Ghost makes that Word alive, real, and personal to you, you cannot believe it nor act upon it. If you just take man's word for your assurance, you will hear the awful words of our Lord one day, "I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Mat. 7:23) And then, you will be cast into the lake of fire for ever. How sad! But it does not have to be that way. Step in what light you have. Do what you know to do at the time. Continue in the Word of God as He quickens it to you and allow Him to make the soil of your heart good ground (Mat. 13:23) with understanding so that you might come to know The Truth and be saved.

I conclude with an answer to the question at the beginning of the article--**MUST A LOST MAN CONTINUE IN THE WORD TO BE SAVED?** The answer--yes. This is not what I say but what the Lord said. Check it out. Search the Scripture whether these things are so or not. (Acts 17:11) You are noble to do so!

If you would like more information (an in-depth study) concerning this subject, please order our audio series, "**The Road of Light.**" It is free for the asking. If I can be of help in any way, please feel free to call or write.

THE PERSUADER - Dec., 1997-Jan., 1998

ENEMIES OF THE GOSPEL

"Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)" Phil. 3:17-19

The word gospel means good news. The gospel of Christ means good news about the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. (I Cor. 15:1-4) This involves the virgin birth, sinless life, vicarious death (substitutionary death on the cross), burial, resurrection, ascension, ministry of intercession, and Christ's bodily coming back again. The focal point of the gospel is the cross in which Paul said he would glory. (Gal. 6:14) Paul also stated that there were many who were enemies of the cross (Phil. 3:18) which is equivalent to our title--"Enemies of the Gospel."

You may ask who would be an "enemy of the gospel?" Let me answer that by saying, "Anyone who would short-circuit the work of the Holy Ghost in salvation." When His work is short-circuited then the gospel ceases to be the "power of God unto salvation." (Rom. 1:16) Let me give you some examples of those who are "enemies of the gospel."

When preachers point men to the written Word only instead of the living Word they are "enemies of the gospel." Thank the Lord for the written Word but life is not in the written Word but the Living Word--Jesus. John 1:4 says, "In him (Jesus Christ--the living Word) is life." Also I John 5:12 states plainly, "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." The written Word is the record God gave of His Son and we must believe the record but we must not stop there. We need to follow the record which is like a sign pointing to the Son; therefore, we need to go to the Son--the living Word if we are to have eternal life. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (I John 5:10-12) This is all a work of the Holy Ghost and not your doing nor the preacher's doing. Therefore, any preacher who would be instrumental in causing you to stop short of having the Son is an "enemy of the gospel."

Also anyone who tries to give assurance to someone else is really an "enemy of the gospel." Giving assurance is not man's job for when the gospel comes it produces assurance. "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. . ." (I Thess. 1:5) And this assurance lasts: "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." (Isa. 32:17) It is not man's job

to give assurance. It is the Holy Ghost's job. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Rom. 8:16) Therefore, anyone who tries to prop someone else up and give them assurance is really an "enemy of the gospel."

Another "enemy of the gospel" is one who tries to play God. It is true that one "whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God." (John 3:34) But it is also true that those words are just words to someone until God gives them an ear to hear. Those words must be quickened by the Holy Ghost (Heb. 4:12) for them to be effective. In Rom. 10:17 "word" means every utterance of God. In John 6:63 Jesus refers to the words He speaks. This refers to more than just the preacher's words even though the preacher is in Christ's stead. (II Cor. 5:20) Therefore, any preacher who tries to play God is an "enemy of the gospel." He may think he knows where you are and what you are going through but He is not God. Every preacher is human and subject to a margin of error. God must quicken the word the preacher preaches to an individual before he or she can have faith to act upon it. Thus, any body who tries to play God is really an "enemy of the gospel."

Yet another "enemy of the gospel" is one who tries to get someone to hold to an experience of salvation when it is not Biblical. When someone is having doubts and confusion, it is a good sign that something is missing in their salvation experience. And the last thing they need is some well meaning person to tell them, "I would not be too quick to throw that away." or "Your experience sounds ok to me."

These sayings are detrimental to the confused individual by causing them to hold on to some experience that is not real. Instead you need to pull all props from such individuals. You say, "That would harm them." Oh, no! If they are lost it will help them to get honest and seek the Lord to be saved. And if (I say "if" because most in this condition are lost) they are saved they will come forth stronger because the Holy Ghost will assure them and guide them into all truth. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. (John 16:13) So I say those who try to get people to hold on to an experience that is not Biblical are really "enemies of the gospel."

There are those who embrace a doctrine, which can even be true, instead of embracing the God of that doctrine. For example: the local church is a doctrine that is true. There is no such thing as a universal, invisible church for the word "church" means assembly which is local and visible. But there are some who have embraced that doctrine instead of embracing the God of the local church. These are "enemies of the gospel" for they preach more about the church than they do the Lord of the church.

Then there are those who worship the King James Bible instead of the God of the Bible. They will sit silently while the cross of Christ is being preached but will shout at the very mention of the KJV 1611. Thank God for the preserved Word but we need to thank God more for His Son who died on the cross for our sins--the gospel. Men who practice such as I have mentioned are truly "enemies of the gospel."

Last, but not least is those who practice easy-believism are "enemies of the

gospel." Easy-believism comes in two forms. One, by having the lost to raise their hand and repeat after them a short prayer. This is done without any mention of the sanctification work of the Holy Ghost. "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." (II Thess. 2:13) Another form of easy-believism is using the Roman Road method of so called "soul winning" and have them call audibly ("For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Rom. 10:13) and then accusing them of calling God a liar when they do not have assurance. All these methods do is make such "twofold more the child of hell." (Mat. 23:15) Those who practice such methods are "enemies of the gospel."

Paul refers to those who are "enemies of the gospel" in Phil. 3:19 as living for the flesh. This would apply to preachers of our day who are more concerned about nickels and noses than they are souls of men. He also says their end is utter destruction not "the prize of the high calling" (Phil. 3:14) but everlasting death.

The sad thing is there are many in our churches today just like this group of professed Christians whom Paul calls enemies of the cross whose end will be utter destruction. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Mat. 7:21-23) May we not be one of them nor be like the Psalmist who when he looked at them said, "My steps had well nigh slipped. When I thought to know (understand) this, it was to painful for me, until I went into the sanctuary of God. Then understood I their end." (Psa. 73:2,16-17)

I don't know about you but I do not want to be an "enemy of the gospel." May the Lord help me to find truth, embrace truth, preach truth, and practice truth so that I will not be labeled an "enemy of the gospel."

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WHO DOES THE LORD SAVE?

This question could have many various answers and they all could be right. Some would say the Lord saves whom He chooses and that is truth. Eph. 1:4 "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." But the Lord's choosing does not do away with man's responsibility in the salvation of his soul. With that in mind I would like to show you four things involved in answer to the question. "Who does the Lord save?"

1. THOSE WHO COME

An invitation is given for man to come. (Isa. 1:18 "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Rev. 22:17 "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Mat. 11:28 "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.") But there is nothing in man that enables him to come for he is dead (Eph. 2:1 "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.") and without strength. (Rom. 5:6 "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.") Therefore, for man to come to the Lord Jesus he must first believe that God exist. (Heb. 11:6 "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.") Then he must be drawn. (Psa. 65:4 "Blessed is the man whom thou choolest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple." John 6:44-45 "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.") In verse 45 we see for one to come ("cometh" = a continuous action verb) he must hear and learn. "Learn" means to understand. This requires teaching (Psa. 25:8 "Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.") even before one is saved. The Holy Spirit is the teacher.

The parable of the soil in Mat. 13 reveals the good ground is the only one who had understanding (Mat. 13:23 "But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.") and they are the only ones saved in this parable. "Cometh" in John 6:45 means to come along the path of understanding which is the narrow way that leads to the strait gate. (Mat. 7:13-14 "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait

is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.") The person who "cometh" to the Lord will not be cast out even while coming along that path of understanding or the narrow way. (John 6: 37 "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh (along the path of understanding) to me I will in no wise cast out.")

2. THOSE WHO CONTINUE

It is not enough to start out on the path of understanding. You must continue. Jesus told the Jews whom the Bible says believed on Him in John 8:31-32 ("Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.") to continue if they were to be truly (indeed) His disciples. They were given a conditional promise: "If" they would continue in His word they "shall know (experience) the truth" who is Jesus. (John 14:6 "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.") These Jews instead of continuing in His Word got angry and Jesus later told them they were of "your father, the devil." (John 8:44) These Jews were not saved because they did not continue. Let me say that the Lord is the one who enables you to come and continue in the narrow way (path of understanding) that leads to life.

3. THOSE WHO COUNT THE COST

Jesus put demands on the multitude that followed Him and wanted to make Him King in John 6:53. ("Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.") This verse means to receive Jesus as their Lord. When they counted the cost in essence they said, "The price is too high" and they left Jesus (were not saved). They were not willing to pay the price.

Paul counted the cost for three days as he lay blinded under conviction on the street called Straight in Damascus. He gave his pedigree in Phil. 3:4-6 ("Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.") and then stated he was willing to pay the price in Phil. 3:7-8. ("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: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.")

Jesus stated plainly the cost of becoming His disciple in Luke 14:26,27,33. (Luke 14:26 "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my

disciple." Luke 14:27 "And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." Luke 14:33 "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.")

You may say, "I'm not willing to pay such a price." No man is within himself but when the Holy Spirit begins His work in salvation, the Lord will enable you to pay the price (like Paul) because you will be made "willing in the day of thy (Lord's) power." (Psa. 110:3)

4. THOSE WHO CALL

(Psa. 55:16 "As for me, I will call upon God; and the LORD shall save me." Rom. 10:13 "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.") "Call" means to recognize one's need and one can not do that without a completed work of Holy Ghost conviction. (I Cor. 12:3 "Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.")

To call does not mean to say words with your mouth but to cry out from the depths of your heart which has been broken by Godly sorrow over your sin--root sin of unbelief. For you to call according to Rom. 10:13 you must recognize your need of Jesus Christ as your righteousness and Lord. (II Cor. 7:10 "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." John 16:8-11 "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness (Jesus), because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.")

Who does the Lord save? He saves those who come to Him (begin the pilgrim journey on the path of understanding--the narrow way) and continues all the while counting the cost. And when that person is made willing to pay the price then he can and will call on the Lord from the heart. At that point he will be saved and the Lord will get all the glory and He should because Salvation is of the Lord!

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