
THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR

Volume 3, Issue 1

<http://www.magpage.com/~dmills>

January 2002

I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.
Revelation 22:16

Can Faith Save?

Can faith save him? Is this not an alarming verse in scripture, found in the second Chapter of James in verse 14? Is James truly contradicting Paul's teaching that salvation is by faith alone? Are we not told in Ephesians 2:8:9 that "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."?

Actually, James is not teaching that salvation can be had by any means other than faith. He makes that very clear in James 2:10, where he points out that by one offence we are guilty of all, leaving us hopeless in our works, if that be our religion.

However, he is making the very pointed rebuke that faith without works is dead. He points out 4 times in Chapter 2 that faith without works; faith without labour is as dead as a corpse (nekros). It is indeed, a declaration against the hypocrisy of pretending to have faith without demonstrating it with works.

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"If God Permit"

Hebrews 6:3

Many personal commentaries that I have read have stated that "No person can "go on to perfection" if God will not allow it!"

One has stated, with respect to our target verse, that "The point of our text is that stubbornly remaining in spiritual infancy brings a hardness to the heart. An "evil heart of unbelief," which is unquestionably condemned by God, can overtake the individual that is not advancing."

The problem is, that this "going on to perfection" for many has been tied to salvation and God's willingness to permit us to enter into heaven based upon our spiritual growth, or lack thereof.

It then brings about such teachings as these, (which were made in reference to Hebrews chapter 6) whereby a statement was made by the North Jackson Church of God that "Jesus wants you to know there is a place for you in the kingdom of God but only those who are willing to leave everything for Christ need apply for this position." Another wrote, that "Salvation is a free gift of God, however, God has placed conditions on the obtaining and retaining of that gift". Finally, as another "theologian" stated, "This text describes Christians who not only accepted Jesus by faith into their life, but also personally tasted God's Holy Spirit. What happens to them if they "fall away"? This text is clear. It is impossible for them to be brought back to repentance, and thus obtain eternal salvation, because they did sin against the Holy Spirit. They have lost it!"

It is true that if we refuse to grow up spiritually, that God may not bless us as he would like to. And that

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In verse 24 of James chapter 2 we see that a man works to show, or better yet to render unto God what is His. As the old hymn goes, “Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe”.

This salvation may very well have been perverted into a talk of holiness, without the walk of holiness. Faith must and does produce a change of life. How can one be transformed (Romans 12:2) and made a

God Can!

(I Repeat)

As Christians, we expect those we witness to, too believe that God created everything.

God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.

God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:

God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.

God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

HOWEVER, MANY OF THOSE SAME CHRISTIANS DON'T BELIEVE THAT THE SAME GOD CAN PRESERVE ONE TINY BOOK **FOREVER.**

new creature (2 Cor 5:17) without showing it outwardly. This is what some may call “fruit-producing faith”.

James, as does Paul in Chapter 4 of Romans, uses Abraham as an example that faith will, by the power of God (Romans 1:16), be shown through works if it is real. It was by Abraham’s obedience that his faith was visible. So, James and Paul do not contradict each other, but rather enlighten each other by showing that genuine faith can be seen.

I believe that Romans Chapter 4 and verse 4 sums it up nicely, where we read that “Now unto him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. Our sin debt (Matt 18:32) was graciously forgiven by a merciful, faithful and holy God, and we in turn are indebted to serve Him. †

Apostasy

(A glimpse at Jude)

As we read in Ecclesiastes 1:9, there is no new thing under the sun. And how true it is as we are sometimes surprised at the apostasy of this day. However, as Jude urged his readers then to earnestly contend for the faith (v.3) he knew and warns of the past apostasy and its judgements, knowing how much worse it would get during these end times.

As noted by many, the book of Jude is the only book devoted entirely to the great apostasy. It appears to be the preamble to the Revelation. Jude very quickly, within 25 verses, takes us on a journey through history, encompassing all of creation, one that describes the apostasy through examples, metaphors and God’s judgements.

Initially wanting to address the subject of the common salvation and victory in Christ Jesus that they had in the brotherhood of the saints, Jude feels lead by the Holy Spirit to address the ever present and ever worsening problem of apostasy.

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He may include a restriction of “going on to perfection”, as defined as allowing us to grow in the grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 3:18, Eph 4:12) Thus, magnifying our responsibly to grow up (Eph 4:15) and studying to shew thyself approved unto God. (2 Tim 2:15)

We must keep mindful that it is by God’s grace alone (Eph 2:8), and not by any works that we are granted the privilege of entrance into heaven. And the Lord is not slack concerning his promise (2 Peter 3:9).

However, this does not negate the truth of scripture which clearly teaches that some will suffer loss (1 Cor 3:15), but we must remember, that they themselves “shall be saved”.

As stated in Barnes' Notes, this should not be taken as though God has an unwilling heart.

Disobedience to God is one way that He may be forced to disallow or not permit one to continue on in a certain manner, direction or activity. Because of one’s lack of dependence and obedience to God, he has no choice but to justly restrict us, and if He sees fit, bring judgement.

We see this example in 1 Kings and chapter 13, where the Man of God was called by God to carry out the Lord’s work. He clearly knew that God had commanded him not to eat and drink in that place and he disobeyed God in the end. And because of his disobedience, God could not “permit” him to continue on, and ultimately took his life.

However, we must keep in mind that God took his life but not his salvation.

Ultimately, we need to understand that it is not our will and effort but “it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” (Phil 2:13) And without God's blessing, the cultivation of the ground does not succeed (Heb 6:7).

“God will permit, His will.” †

CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN WORSHIP MUSIC GAINING GROUND

Integritymusic.com reports that "more and more churches are incorporating modern Christian music into Sunday morning worship services." Contemporary Christian Worship (CCW) music is "the fastest-growing genre in the Christian recording industry," and it is being accepted into "churches of all denominations." CCW songs are described as "mostly uptempo, simple to sing, [and] have a soft-rock sound." We can testify of the growth of this new music. CCW, which could also stand for Contemporary Charismatic Worship music, is moving rapidly even into many independent Baptist churches. It is the nose of the New Evangelical-ecumenical camel that is getting its head into the fundamentalist tent. My friends, the Charismatic movement is extremely dangerous and is deadly to sound doctrine and practice. Music that is created in the womb of the Charismatic movement, which is doubtless true of CCW, is as dangerous to the spirit as it is pleasant to the flesh. It cannot be brought into a fundamentalist church without tragic consequences.

Friday Church News Notes, January 4, 2002
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In verse 5, Jude is determined to put them in remembrance of things that he obviously feels they have forgotten, only to bring the past to the present, as the apostate teachers were apparently following in the footsteps of old.

At the height of his warning, Jude jumps ahead to Jesus’ promise to return (Rev. 22:12) and His promise to execute judgement, reminding them that there will be a price to pay.

Then as He always does, God through Jude once again reminds and gives hope to the saints. He encourages us to be diligent in our study of His Word, in prayer, not forgetting to continue to look forward to the blessed Hope we have in eternity with our Lord Jesus Christ (v.21), and not to overlook our charge and responsibility to carry out the great commission.

And finally, verse 24 makes it so very clear that we serve a Holy, Omnipotent God who is able and willing keep us and was willing, by his shed blood to make atonement for us, for His glory with exceeding joy. †

5 FACTS YOU MUST FACE

Every man is entitled to his opinion. That is his right. But no man has a right to be wrong in his facts. Friend, here are 5 Facts you must face. You can ignore them but they will not cease to exist. Truth will always be true and it will always be. **You must face these facts!**

LIFE IS SHORT

In the Bible, Methuselah lived to be 969 years old (Genesis 5:27). Yet the Bible says life is like vapor (James 4:14). It appears, then vanishes away. Psalm 90 portrays life as a short sleep passing quickly (vs. 5); as grass that grows and is cut down (vs 8); as a story told it's soon over (vs. 9). You may live to be 100, but what is that when you stand at the door of death? It is a single grain of sand on the shore of eternity. Your years already are passing too quickly. The days of man are 70 years. If you are 35 years old life is already half over. Who can be sure of tomorrow?

YOU MUST FACE THE FACT - DEATH IS SURE

The Bible says "It is appointed unto men once to die.." (Hebrews 9:27). Every funeral home, every cemetery with its tomb stones as ghostly fingers pointing to the sky is evidence that death is sure. Death is no respecter of persons. The young and the old, the wise and the simple, the beautiful and the plain, the famous and the unknown, the rich and the poor, the sinner and the saint cannot escape its resistless call. Death for you is as near as a car bumper, the skipped beat of the heart or even the swarming of malignant cells of cancer. Just as life is short, death is sure.

YOU MUST FACE THE FACT OF JUDGMENT TO COME

Again the Bible steadfastly proclaims that after death "comes the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). That is why men fear death. They know they must face God. The very God they had no time for on earth; the very God whose name they blasphemed; the very God they mocked by breaking His laws will be their final and righteous judge. If there was no God as Judge, death would not bring the fear it does to your soul. But men fear death because the honesty of their soul will not let them forget that they will face God.

YOU MUST FACE THE FACT - THERE IS A HELL TO FLEE

Some preachers may take Hell out of the pulpit but God has not taken it out of the Bible. You can not lower the temperature of Hell by one degree with your denial of its existence. You have not put out a single flickering flame of the Lake of Fire by your foolish jokes of this place of the damned. The Lord God calls this Hell a place of everlasting fire (Mark 9:45); a tormenting day and night forever (Revelation 20:10); a place of separation (2 Thessalonians 1:9). In this place called Hell there will be no church, no preacher, no tracts like this one you are reading and there will be no gospel invitation for you to be saved. You must face this fact of Hell; if not in this life, then certainly in the next.

YOU MUST FACE THE FACT THAT HEAVEN CAN BE YOURS

Almost 2,000 years ago the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross for your sins, was buried and rose again the third day. He bore your penalty, He shed His blood, He paid the price of sin that was yours. He took your place so you could be forgiven if you repent of your sin and trust Him as your Savior. The Bible says "*For God so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*" (John 3:16). "*For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved*" (Romans 10:13).

Friend, face the facts: **Life** is short, **Death** is sure, **Judgment** is certain, **Hell** is real and **Heaven** can be yours. These are the facts. You must face them someday. May today be the day you ask the Lord Jesus to be your Savior.

*IF YOU ARE SAVED, PLEASE SEND US WORD SO
THAT WE MAY REJOICE WITH YOU.*

Bright and Morning Star Publications
Compliments of: Born2Serve
www.magpage.com/~dmills
Fax: 856-358-1876
Email: borntwoserve@hotmail.com
Editor: David C. Mills

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P.O. Box 1303
Waterbury, CT 06721
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