

The DEFENDER - December 2016

“... defending the faith once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3)

A monthly publication of the
IN DEFENSE OF TRUTH radio broadcast.



FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK: December Observations

As we approach Christmas there are a few things to keep your eye on here in America. Some are obvious, some are more subtle. With a new administration readying itself for a January inauguration, we can pray that the cancer of political correctness may soon be on its way to the trash bin of history. A fair test of whether or not this is happening may be seen in the reactions you get from wishing someone a Merry Christmas instead of a happy holiday. With a conservative-friendly administration on the horizon, the hope is that the war on Christianity will begin to subside. Of course with each Christmas season we seem to get the devil's annual attack on the deity of Christ. Satan continues to recycle the same old heresies, and with a new generation of gullible people every few years, he casts his net in the hopes of winning a few more over to his side. He'll use his minions to write a book or produce a movie that questions the divinity of Jesus. It will invariably question Christ's perfect nature in an attempt to bring Him down to the level of sinful humanity. If the devil can subtly and successfully sell the lie that Jesus didn't live a sinless life, then the Bible says He can't be our Savior. It's our job as Christians to refute those lies and be a good witness and testimony for our Lord.

In addition to the devil, there are false teachers who have made their way into Christian circles. Jesus was clear about the apostasy that would permeate His church in the latter days. Many question the very doctrines and tenets of our faith in an attempt to bring about compromise. Of course we know that compromising the truth is inevitable as the church slides more and more into ecumenical circles as time goes on. Ultimately that fall will take the visible church into the camp of the Antichrist and his false prophet. We who espouse a premillennial eschatology know that this has been prophesied, as has the rapture of the invisible, true church of Christ.

Those who are post-millennial in their theology, however, don't see the future unfolding the same way. One of the false claims I'm beginning to hear from some evangelicals is that president-elect Donald Trump has been given a mandate from God, to not only make America great again, but also to bring peace to the world so that Jesus can return. That's nothing more than classic Dominion Theology, posited by many post-millennials who see the world getting better. According to Daniel 2:21, Mr. Trump has been ordained by God to lead our nation at this time. And according to Matthew 24 as well as the Old Testament prophets, Jesus will not be returning to a world of peace, but a world of war. I guess our incoming president hasn't been given a mandate after all. Unless it's a false peace he ushers in. Which would make him the...??? Nah, not even Hillary could come up with something that far out. Merry Christmas, everyone!

Rev. David Lewis

The Snare of Easy Believism

Part II – Jesus Paid it All

By Robert Luthardt, Sr.

The Apostle John was led of the Holy Spirit to make BELIEF a central theme rather than deeds (John 20:30-31; 1 John 5:13). At John 1:12, he wrote, “to them gave He power to become sons of God to them that BELIEVE” Once God adopts a “child of wrath” (an enemy by nature—Ep. 2:2-3; James 4:4) as His beloved (Ep. 1:4-11) they are born-again and cleansed from all sin and covered with Christ’s perfect righteousness. All newly resurrected sons of God have a divinely granted new heart (Ez. 11:19-20; Rom. 8:11-16; 2 Cor. 5:17) and therewith are enabled to believe. Jesus is the AUTHOR and FINISHER and Captain of man’s salvation (Heb. 2:9-10, 12:2).

The part played by the children of disobedience in their own resurrection (Col. 2:11-13; Ep. 2:1-3) is circumscribed by God’s sovereign will as John 1:13 explains, “which were born NOT of blood, NOR of the will of the flesh, NOR OF THE WILL OF MAN, but of God.” God raises the dead physically and spiritually (John 11:25; 2 Tim. 1:9-10; Col. 2:13) by mercy alone (Rom. 9:15-16).

Moses described God’s action as “circumcision [cleansing] of the heart” (Deut. 30:6) as did Paul (Rom. 2:29; Col. 2:11). God opens dead hearts (Acts 16:14) enabling sinners to believe to be saved (30-34). Until then man is hopelessly and desperately depraved (Jer. 17:9; Rom. 1:1-25). Jesus pointed back to the Brazen Serpent (Num. 21:8-9; John 3:14) – a ‘LOOK’ in faith gave deliverance and a look in faith at Calvary’s cross brought mankind’s only salvation (John 3:14-15, 14:6). There is no other hope for the spiritually dead to be again in fellowship with God. As with natural physical birth, the spiritual re-birth is solely something man experiences, the latter being by God’s grace purchased with Christ’s blood (Rom. 3:24-25a).

God sent forth the “Spirit of His Son” (Gal. 4:6) to secure our adoption (Ep. 1:4-11) without our ever asking Jesus to come into our hearts. Jesus said, “All that the Father has given me shall come to me.” We were adopted because we were foreordained, predestined, called, justified, and glorified (Rom. 8:29-30). God sent His Son to resurrect the lost to newness of life (Rom. 6:4-5; Gal. 4:7). Christ’s Spirit in us is “the hope of glory” (Cor. 1:27). God alone ordains and consummates salvation (John 5:21, 6:63; Rom. 8:11) and is not initiated by asking Jesus into our heart.

Believer’s ceremonial baptism with water is likewise ineffectual in initiating spiritual regeneration. It is only a ceremonial representation of the indwelling Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9-11) in union with a believer in new spiritual life. Though it is proper to use water in ceremonial baptism for new believers, it can never produce salvation in those still enslaved by “the prince of the power of the air” (Ep. 2:2-3; 2 Cor. 4:3-4) and neither do rote recitations such as to “ask Jesus into your heart” cause new birth. Only when the Father draws a lost one to Christ (John 6:44) are they able to cry, “Abba, Father.” In Him you also trusted after you heard the WORD OF

TRUTH ... After you believed ... you were then “sealed” (Ep. 1:13). Everyone divinely chosen and called by God is justified, redeemed, reconciled and forgiven (definitely apart from and even without asking). These blessings from God’s grace come the moment one is enabled to trust and believe in Christ by the gift of faith (Rom. 5:8-10; Ep. 1:7-9; Col. 1:13-14). Christ’s sacrifice for our redemption is a FINISHED work (John 17:2-4, 19:30) and needs no overlay of man’s righteousness (Is. 64:6). Christ cautioned His disciples that the simple faith of a little child was the one necessity to enter the Kingdom of God (Luke 18:17; 1 Thes. 2:13) but pride keeps many on the broad road that ends in eternal destruction (Matt. 7:13, 18:1-4; 1 Cor. 1:26-29).

Some have reported the distress caused them when asking Jesus into their heart after that formula was suggested. Is one asking enough? Some testified it was not enough for them. Was I serious enough? Did I ask properly? Could it lead new believers to lack assurance? Worse, could it lead the unsaved into false assurance? Some have related that this happened to them and small wonder since that tool of Easy Believism is foreign to the Bible. Scripture teaches in absolute terms; “God has given us eternal life.” “He who has the Son has life.” “You may believe” (John 5:11-13, 20:30-31; 1 John 5:13).

Those God has chosen He has called and redeemed (Ep. 1:4-5; James 2:5; 1 Pet. 2:9) for God is both “JUST and the JUSTIFIER” (Rom 3:23-26). He is just because He requires that sins’ penalty be paid (Gen. 2:17) with an acceptable sacrifice: an atonement to cover every adopted child’s sins. The wages of our sins is death (Rom. 6:23a). Yet He is our Justifier as our “lamb without spot or blemish,” our sinless Savior. Jesus poured out His blood and gave His life on Calvary’s Cross for every believer defeating Satan, death and Hell (23b).

Since eternal life is an unearned, undeserved GIFT, true believers who have nonetheless asked Jesus into their hearts have received Christ’s Spirit in spite of and NOT because of this or any modernized ritual of Easy Believism. Once ADOPTED “in the beloved” (Ep. 1:6) those “born again” happily confess their love, trust and allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ and the fact of His resurrection (Rom. 10:9-10, 17). A redeemed person’s supernaturally regenerated heart is God’s “TEMPLE” in the New Testament era. By God’s initiating grace alone are dead sinners made “partakers of the DIVINE NATURE” (2 Pet. 1:1, 4-8, 19).

Extra-biblical clichés are powerless to adequately encompass the enormity of man’s eternal shipwreck let alone “all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). All potential converts to Christ should be made fully aware that God’s justice requires the punishment of every rebellious sin and that penalty is the “second death” in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:6-8). Jesus repeatedly warned of the never ending horrors of Hell of which He described would be “weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 8:12, 13:41-42).

Many quote Revelation 3:20, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock ... open ... I will come in.” This verse is frequently cited during evangelistic services. Not found in this verse are phrases such as “ask Jesus” or “your heart” so what is the true meaning of this verse?

The context for this verse are the letters sent to the seven churches (Rev. chapters 1-3). Each were existing congregations of professing Christians when John wrote. Many teach that these seven were typical of congregations in every era of history in its various stages.

In Revelation (3:14-22) the church of Laodicea was warned about their “lukewarmness” and distastefulness to the Lord. In verse 19, Jesus declares, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten, therefore ... repent.” When adopted sons of God fall into sins of commission or omission, they become subjects for providential chastening to return to faithfulness and to again be “partakers of His Holiness” (Heb. 12:5-10). Those who have NEVER been converted and clothed with Christ’s perfect righteousness are not rebuked as wayward sons, but rather remain as Satan’s “children of the wicked one” (Matt. 13:38) “children of the devil” (1 John 3:10).

After Christ’s rebuke of Laodicea comes His merciful invitation, “I stand at the door and knock ... If any open ... I will come in ... (Rev. 3:20 and sup with him.” In this symbolism, Christ is standing outside the door of the CHURCH meeting place and knocking. This Congregation of professing believers is the subject of Revelation (3:14-20) NOT the hearts of unbelievers. “If any hear my voice” refers to Jesus’ warning in verses 14-19, “and opens the door” refers to the gathered believers to which Christ’s warning is directed because while His, they are in jeopardy as wayward sheep to receive chastening.

If the recipients of the letter are obedient and open they benefit from Christ’s promise to come in and sup with them. In this context, Christ offers to come through the Meeting Place Door; not into anyone’s heart. These verses in Revelation 3 give no warrant for anyone to “ask Jesus into their heart.” Restored fellowship for wayward believers, already a part of Christ’s invisible church (true believers), is in view and not the salvation of those still in their natural state of enmity against God. The earliest days of Christ’s church saw great strides in evangelism well before Revelation 3 was ever written.

Easy Believism’s asking Jesus into one’s heart confuses Christ’s real message of salvation, especially for children. Children think in concrete terms of “black letter” rules. They wonder how Jesus can come into that “blood pump” in their chest. They, too, wonder if they have asked Jesus in properly or were sufficiently sincere. They are easily misled to little or no assurance, or worse, false assurance. Lessons for children are said to be more “caught than taught” as they observe the conduct of parents and teachers – adults in their orbits.

Those who come to trust Christ after first being appraised of and understanding their helpless state before a Holy God (Hab. 1:3; Matt. 5:48) and who Christ truly is and the perfect sacrifice that only He could provide, may be justified by faith (Rom. 5:1) for we are adopted to be “children of God by faith” (Gal. 3:23-26). Jesus made it so that even children are born again, “He that believeth in me HAS eternal life (John 6:47). After we have been enabled to believe and are saved, then we yield to the Holy Spirit in the life-long process of sanctification.

Some scoff that this is just semantics, and they are right for the wrong reason. Words have meanings and the Bible is God’s infallible, inerrant Word. We do well to hear and obey.

Keep looking up.

Main Source: Seven Reasons Not to Ask Jesus Into Your Heart
Author: Dennis M. Rokser
Publisher: Duluth Bible Church (218.724.5914)
www.duluthbible.org

If It Wasn't For His Love

By Nancy Long

2 Cor. 9:15 -- ***"Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift"***

The word "love" the theme of "love", is probably one of the most discussed, yet least understood topics in the world today. The world wide, universal search for love seems to have always had its difficulties, possibly because there continues to be a basic misconception of its **true** meaning. God is love!!! Christian love comes from, and is rooted **in** God!! Christian love is in total contrast with the world's understanding. Mere words cannot describe it. It's special! It's different! It's unique!! There's absolutely nothing like it!!

Jesus addressed this subject in a portion of His Sermon on the Mount: ***"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you, that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven"*** (Matthew 6:43-45a).

God's very nature, His very core and essence is love of which Jesus is the human expression. Without God's kind of love, our society is headed for destruction. God's love, agape love, perfect love, is the **highest** form of love that which completely and utterly gives of itself. It is completely selfless and **delights** itself in giving, even though it might not receive anything in return.

God loved us so much that ***"He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life"*** (John 3:16). In the beginning God walked with our first parents, Adam and Eve, and their lives were full of joy and peace. Then sin and darkness entered their hearts, and the beautiful lives they had once known in the presence of their Father was gone.

Nevertheless, our sovereign God had a marvelous plan in place before the foundation of the world, and the humble birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, in a stable, was a part of His purpose to restore His creation back to fellowship with Himself. Jesus left His home in glory. Jesus willingly, and **joyfully**, departed from a perfect, matchless fellowship with His Father He gave up everything!! He came to earth, walked a flawless, righteous path, and eventually died a cruel death, in order to save an undeserving people who weren't really looking for Him at all. ***"As it is written, there is none righteous,***

no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God" (Romans 3:11).

Yet, God's infinite, unending, unfathomable love, never stopped reaching!! It cost Him more than we could ever know. Try and picture, if you will, that kind of love the depth, the intensity, the enormity of it!!! Who can really understand?!

God, who *is* love, has given us His Son, and once again we celebrate His most precious gift at this wonderful time of the year we call Christmas. Accept it, my Defender Friends. It's the only gift that will last eternally. It costs us nothing but gave us everything!! If it wasn't for **His** love, **where** would we be?!

Merry Christmas!!



The Gift of Christmas

Many a child is recognized at birth to be a gift of God and many are given names which all their lives testify that their parents realized that God had bestowed upon them a great and priceless gift. Nevertheless One Child was, and is, God's Supreme Gift, a Gift not only to us as individuals but also to the whole world.

Thus when we think of Christ's Birth one of the very important things to be considered is the whole world. "God loved a world of sinners lost and ruined by the fall." That world is still lost and ruined and uncounted millions know not even that the Savior was ever born, to say nothing of knowing Him as Redeemer.

We rejoice and praise God as we think of the Lord's Birth. We realize too that the most perfect praise is a life of full obedience to our Lord, but do we understand that full obedience embraces love, loyalty and entire consecration to our Lord's purposes and for the whole world?

In our day Christ's full purpose for the world may be said to be summed up in the command "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."

Make the commitment to spread the joy of the gift of salvation to those you love this Christmas.

—Rev. Keith Coleman

If Thou Had Been There

If you had been there beside the manger;
If you had seen Him, the tiny Stranger,
His hands that made you, His eyes that love you,
You would have adored Him at His birth

He was Emmanuel, the King of Israel,
Almighty Father; the great I AM.

If you had been there to hear the Angels,
To see the brightness that filled the earth,
If you had been there,
You would have adored Him,
And bowed down before Him at His birth.

—Nancy Chavers

Our mission through the broadcast of In Defense of Truth and the publication of The Defender newsletter is to earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3). Our vision today is just as strong as it was back in 1963 when Dr. John Dekker began this outreach. We pray that you will continue to stand with us as we hold true to God's holy Word.

The Defender is available, free of charge, on audio CD.
Please contact us if you would like to receive a copy by mail.

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on WCBM AM 680 in Baltimore.

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WRITE TO US!

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Upcoming Events!

If you are in or around the Baltimore area, we'd love to have you join us for these upcoming events!

Adult & Children's Sunday School	10:15 AM
Sunday Morning Worship & Children's Church	11:00 AM
Tuesday Afternoon Bible Study	1:30 PM
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:00 PM
Friday Night Youth Group	7:00 PM
Christmas Eve Service	7:00 PM