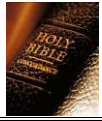


The DEFENDER — April 2026

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

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FROM THE DIRECTOR'S Desk:

Enter The Clowns

In what can only be described as an ecclesiastical clown show, Sarah Mullally, Bishop of London, was installed on March 26 of this year as the 106th—and first female—Archbishop of Canterbury, the highest office in the Anglican/Episcopal communion, and the de facto leader of the Church of England. Decked out in gold robes and a tall, pointed gold liturgical headdress, Dame Sarah has reached the pinnacle, or height, of irreverence in the visible church's heretical assault on one of the core doctrines of orthodoxy in the infallible, inerrant, Word of God.



The Apostle Paul was unambiguous in his first letter to Timothy, chapter 2, verses 11 & 12 when he wrote, concerning female leadership within Christ's church, that a woman should learn in silence with all subjection, not teaching nor to usurp authority over the man. There are no word games there. No contemporary debate about women pastors, preachers, or Archbishops. God's Word either says women can preach or they cannot. It isn't complicated. As with much of scripture, there's no gray area. It's either black or white, non-negotiable. It brings to mind the question that Elijah asked the Hebrew people in 1 Kings 18:21 ... “How long will you waver between two opinions?” Stop trying to serve two masters. Choose either the Lord or Baal. When we choose not to serve the living God, by inference then ...???

The Church of England bases its faith on the Bible, tradition, and reason, emphasizing salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. But it contains a broad spectrum of belief, encompassing Evangelical to Anglo-Catholic traditions. They offer what they describe as a “middle way,” claiming it's developed using a “3-legged stool” approach: scripture, church history (tradition), and reason. It makes one wonder on what else the Church of England would compromise. They have already adopted more liberal policies, including ordination of women as well as a more inclusive approach to gender and sexuality.

Perhaps this declension in the Church of England can best be summed up by a quote frequently attributed to that Prince of Preachers and Englishman himself—Charles Haddon Spurgeon—who said “A time will come when instead of shepherds feeding the sheep, the church will have clowns entertaining the goats.”

The Snare of Easy Believism and Our One Path to Eternal Life

Compiled by Robert Luthardt, Sr.

Can salvation come to one spiritually dead, cursed with an inbred spiritual nature, enslaved and blinded by Satan (Ep. 2:1-3; S. Cor. 4:3-4) if they ask Jesus into their heart? Yes, if we cite the many times Jesus and His Apostles led the spiritually dead to new life by that formula. We would only need to show the biblical record of the many times “the lost lifted themselves from darkness to light.” It’s just that there are none.

Satan delights in any teaching that misleads the unsaved to believe that they are reconciled to God by their own efforts or good works, to be added to that which God has ordained. Satan is well satisfied if a soul remains lost and enslaved to him after “asking Jesus to come into their heart.”

God’s true preordained plan is to adopt into His family the former “children of wrath” and “disobedience” by the power of His Word and Spirit alone (Ep. 1:4-12) and to change mortality to immortality (2 Tim. 1:9-10). This is accomplished apart from prefabricated prayers or clichéd phrases. While scripture shows Jesus comes by His spirit into the hearts of every chosen child of God, it is without man’s help or good works (John 1:12-13, 6:44, 14:6; Gal. 2:20; Col. 1:27).

When the Philippian jailer asked Paul, “What must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30-31), he was immediately directed AWAY from any thought of “works righteousness” to “simply BE-LIEVE” - on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house ... believing and trusting only “Christ’s FINISHED work” is solely by the undeserved Gift of faith alone by Grace alone (John 17:4; Ep. 2:8-10).

All unsaved, unregenerated sinners must first be “drawn” by the Father (John 6:44) to be enabled to truly trust in Jesus’ name (Acts 4:12). Now the regenerated heart is birthed with a willingness to “learn of me” (Matt. 11:29). Only Christ’s sacrifice could ransom our lost souls (Heb. 1:3, 2:9, 10:10-17; 1 Pet. 3:18; 1 John 2:12). In Christ, every adopted child of God will be found in true belief and genuine trust in the Lord (John 3:16, 5:24, 11:24-26).

There is a narrative of the Child-Evangelist who noticed a certain 12-year-old that came forward week after week to get saved. When the opportunity came, the evangelist asked the 12-year-old what he had been told previously. He replied, “I was told to ask Jesus into my heart.” The evangelist inquired, “Did you?” The 12-year-old confirmed that he had but did not know if Jesus had really come. The evangelist gave him the following explanation: “Though we are all hell-deserving, rebellious sinners (Roman 3:10-12, 23; 6:23a) God himself came to be born of a virgin to become as one of us (John 1:14), and to willingly die as our necessary perfect sacrifice and in our place.” He rose out of the tomb and paid “our sin debt” (1 Cor. 15:3-4; 1 Tim. 2:5-6; Is. 53:5-6). Eternal life follows only upon man’s exercise

of God's free GIFT of grace and faith (Rom. 5:15, 17; 6:23; Ep. 2:8). Christ charged His disciples to come with "childlike faith" or remain in banishment from the Kingdom of God (Matt. 11:25; Luke 18:15-17; Mark 10:14-16). No enemy of God (James 4:4) or unsaved spiritually dead sinner is regenerated (born again) by "asking Jesus into their hearts" (Rom 3:24-28; Gal. 2:16-20; Titus 3:5).

Once the 12-year-old's name was inserted into John 3:16, "he was finally able to trust Jesus and thank Him for saving him. He came forward no more." John Newton wrote, "I once was lost but now AM FOUND ... the hour I first believed." It is futile and unavailing to parrot asking Jesus to come into your heart, without first understanding one's sentence to eternal condemnation (John 3:18-19, 36; 2 Pet. 2:9-10, 17) or the Gospel of God's grace. Jesus' sacrifice alone can deliver the lost from interment in a natural rebellious spiritual state (Jer. 17:9-10). The apostle Paul wrote, Christ died for "our sins" (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

The true Gospel centers in Jesus Christ alone who left heaven to become a man (John 1:1-4, 14) to provide our redemption by serving "OUR sentence," dying in our place. Now all the formerly helpless and hopeless are impelled by the Holy Spirit to recognize and exercise God's undeserved "Gift of faith" in Christ's work alone (John 17:4, 19:30; Heb. 4:3a). Now adopted, God's children proclaim His Gospel to all the World. Christ is our King and we are His Ambassadors. His plan for man's salvation comes not from any rote prayer to "ask Jesus to come into your heart" without fully understanding our just condemnation or of Christ's vicarious sacrifice that rescues the hopelessly dead from an eternity in Hell. Sinners must be first convinced of their imminent and eternal danger (Matt. 7:21-23, 8:12, 25:30).

Those expressing an interest in Christ's Gospel could be asked probing questions such as: "If you were to die today, are you certain you would be in heaven?" If you were standing before Jesus who asked, "Why should I let you into my heaven?" what would you say? "Can you do or fail to do something to lose your salvation?"

Sometimes people are carelessly told they are saved because they made a commitment or came forward or "surrendered all to Christ or asked Jesus into their heart" without their ever understanding that condemned sinners are only reconciled to a Holy God by the mercy purchased by the blood of the Son of God (Heb. 9:22; Ep. 2:1-10) and all sinners can do is believe in and trust in Christ's offer of SALVATION. The Bible explains how sinners are saved; "Only through Christ's sacrifice is forgiveness available and only when God ordained genuine belief is manifested. Through God's divinely appointed sacrifice of His only Son, Jesus Christ, can sinners be justified (Is. 53:5-6; Heb. 2:9, 13:12; Gal. 1:4) in everything that law-keeping or invented rituals or man's works are powerless to do (Act 13:38-39). All whom GOD justifies and reconciles are made so by an undeserved Gift of faith (Rom. 8:28-30). Those who pridefully insist on adding their works to Christ's perfect sacrifice must satisfy "ALL the Law's requirements" (Matt. 5:48; James 2:10). Only Christ's complete and perfect sacrifice satisfied God's requirements and provided a righteous "covering" (Gen. 3:21; Matt. 22:11-14; Rom. 4:4-8).

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Salvation is by God's MERCY apart from all human effort because work is not grace (Rom. 9:15, 11:6). No sacrifice of man can justify the guilty and only our "High Priest Jesus Christ" can present us pardoned before a Holy God (Heb. 9:12-14, 28). By all the works of all men combined, "No flesh shall be justified" (Gal. 2:16). Any other teaching, any other religion that prescribes works – righteousness or ritualistic law-keeping, is tantamount to thievery and robbery (John 10:1, 7-10). Christ is the only "DOOR to eternal life" and His justified ones were given life by faith (Rom. 1:17). So then it is "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy, He saved us "... justified by His grace, that we should be made heirs ... of eternal life" (Titus 3:5, 7).

It is a most serious offense before God to mislead an unjustified, unsaved sinner into a false sense of security by the implementation of unscriptural man-centered side paths of modernistic Easy Believism methodologies. There is an eternity of difference between, "I asked Jesus into my heart" and trusting our eternal souls to God's mercy alone. God first removes the strong heart (Ez. 11:19) and opens it (Acts 16:14) and grants us "eyes to see and ears to hear" (Mat. 13:9-16). Only God the Son can raise the dead and redeem the lost by His own shed blood (Rom. 5:8-10; 1 Pet. 1:18-21).

The whole focus of Christ's Gospel is completely AWAY from man's vaunted rituals and vain repetitions (Matt. 6:17) and points rather to Christ's exclusiveness. "No man can come to me except ... the Father DRAW him" (John 6:44) and no man cometh unto the Father but by me (John 14:6).

Many are honest and sincere in their evangelistic endeavors to bring the lost to Christ and many unsaved sinners are truly convinced that their “own efforts” have brought them salvation. Their asking “sinners prayers” or “asking Jesus into one’s heart before long fell away proving they were unchanged “children of wrath” (Ep. 2:2-3).

We are cautioned by God’s Word to rely on nothing but what He has provided for life eternal and to abstain from man-made rites and rituals and above all, to place no reliance on human good works but to look to and lean on Christ’s finished work on Calvary alone. From cover to cover, the Bible teaches that salvation of lost men and women is solely of the Lord and depends on nothing that man has devised to “supplement” God’s grace. Sinners are simply called to believe in and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ who washed our sin-stained souls with HIS own blood (1 John 1:7). One day He will present His Bride “arrayed in fine linens, clean and white” (Rev. 19:8).

No one can save themselves by “asking Jesus into their heart” since that possibility is not found in scripture. Each must be taught of man’s hopeless depravity, but also of God’s sovereign mercy (Heb. 12:2). “Keep looking up” (Luke 21:28).



John 3:5: “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” (KJV)

Born of Water and of The Spirit”: The Holy Spirit Gives Eternal Life

By Joseph Burghauer

Some interpret “water” in our verse to refer to water baptism, although not all who hold to baptismal regeneration (that water baptism is necessary for salvation) use John 3:5 in defense of their position. This view of water baptism being necessary for entering God’s kingdom is refuted in the context of this verse. John 3:15-18; 36 clearly states that eternal life is given by God through the means of faith alone. Water baptism follows the new birth and is not a means to it. (See also John 6:28-29; 10:31; Acts 10:47; 16:30-33.)

A variation of this view is that the “water” refers to John the Baptist’s demand for repentance as he baptised, but this view usually defines repentance as a “decision” of man as he changes his mind about sin and freely turns from it. This conflicts with our Lord’s teaching of the passive role of man in the new birth. The passive verb, translated as “born of”, stresses that this new birth is not a work of man. Repentance is granted by God, but it does not cause our new birth; repentance is the result of God regenerating us. (See Westminster Confession of Faith—Chapter 15, for more on repentance.) And, again, it is through faith alone that we are saved (Ephesians 2:8-9). We are not saved through our repentance, but repentance will follow true faith.

A third view is that “water” refers to physical birth; that our Lord is stating that we must be born physically and spiritually. “Water” is taken to refer to the amniotic fluid involved in the ‘water breaking’ before birth. However, experts in ancient Jewish and Greco-Roman literature do not find birth described in such terms. More importantly, there seems to be repetition in John 3:3 and 3:5. “Born again” seems to be parallel to “born of water and of the Spirit.” So, the “water” most likely refers to the new birth, not the physical birth.

A fourth view is that “water” refers to the washing or cleansing by God’s Word (John 15:3; Ephesians 5:26). We saw that I Peter 1:23 and James 1:18 are examples of verses that show us that God uses His Scriptures to bring about our new birth. So, some would take John 3:5 to be “The Word and the Spirit”. However, below is an interpretation of “water” that seems to better fit the context of our verse.

The Greek word translated as “and” in John 3:5 may also be translated as “even”. So, just as “born again” can be translated as “born from above”, “born of water and of the Spirit” can be translated as “born of water, even of the Spirit.” The Old Testament uses water as a symbol of the Holy Spirit’s cleansing in His work of giving eternal life. Nicodemus was rebuked for not understanding this (see verse 10). Nicodemus should have known what “water and the Spirit” means from the Old Testament. Water is used as a symbol of God’s creative power (Genesis 1:2), and as an instrument of judgement and deliverance (Genesis 6-9; Exodus 14). Water is used in cleansing rituals (Exodus 30:17-21; 40:30-32; Leviticus 14:8). Water is a symbol and example of God’s provision (Exodus 17:6). Water is also a symbol of spiritual life. Isaiah 55:1-3

tells of coming to God to satisfy one's thirst for eternal life. Conversely, to forsake the Lord is to forsake "the fountain of living water" (Jeremiah 2:13;17:13). Water and its imagery are linked to The Holy Spirit in Isaiah 44:3; Joel 2:28; Ezekiel 36:25-27.

Ezekiel 36:25-27:

"Then I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgements, and do them."

The Old Testament tells of the Holy Spirit in Genesis 1:2; Psalm 51:11; Isaiah 63:10-11; Ezekiel 2:2; Micah 3:8. We read of "a Spirit from the Lord" coming upon men: Numbers 11:17; Judges 14:19; 15:14-15; 1 Samuel 10:6, 10; 11:6; Isaiah 11:1-2; 61:1 (these verses from Isaiah refer to the Messiah (Christ), Who is God as well as man). So, Nicodemus should have known of the Holy Spirit, His coming upon men, and His work in the salvation of sinners.

The Gospel of John continues to use "water" as a figure of speech to represent eternal life produced by the Holy Spirit (John 4:14; 7:37-39). John 14:17 records our Lord's telling His true disciples that the Holy Spirit "shall be in you." And, at the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), the imagery of the pouring of water corresponds to the "pouring" of The Holy Spirit on believers as He comes to permanently dwell within them. Acts 2:16-21 quotes Joel 2:28-32. Both passages conclude with "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" ["delivered" in Joel].

Reader, do not neglect God's promise to deliver you from His Wrath, if you will call upon His Name by trusting in Christ alone, as He is revealed in the Scriptures alone, to save you.

In conclusion, it may be best to interpret "born of water and of the Spirit" in John 3:5 as a reference to the cleansing from sin and eternal life given by the Holy Spirit.

In Titus 3:5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost".

1 Corinthians 6:11: "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

"Happy Resurrection Day"

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.

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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	12:30 pm
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:00 pm