

The DEFENDER— November 2024



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

A monthly publication of the
IN DEFENSE OF TRUTH radio broadcast
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FROM THE DIRECTOR’S DESK:

The Gift of Pain

Perhaps the Lord has not yet given up on the United States of America. Perhaps He’s giving those who claim that America is still a Christian nation one last chance to seek His mercy. Charles Spurgeon said that “anything is a blessing that makes us pray.” Are there enough righteous people in the land to pray for God’s mercies? Lamentations 3:22-24 tells us “because of the Lord’s faithful love we do not perish, for His mercies never end. They are new every morning “ and “great is (His) faithfulness.”

So the question is, have we in America had enough pain yet to drive us to our knees in prayer? Perhaps not. It’s reported that there are some 80 million self-professing Christians in America today. That’s a large enough number of votes to make a difference in any election. And if the Christian moral code is being trampled upon by the anti-God progressives, as many Christians rightly claim, then a strong turnout of the Lord’s people should stop them in their tracks. The question now begs, why are only half of that number, 40 million, even registered to vote in the first place?

There’s more. It’s reported that only half of those, (20 million), will even bother to go to the polls. And of that number, roughly two in ten voted for Joe Biden in 2020. That computes to roughly four out of five Evangelical Christians who could make a difference refusing to do so. WHY? Only two possible answers that I can see. Either they don’t care, or they’re not feeling enough pain from the opposition. The rest of us feel the pain. Why don’t they? The economy affects everyone. Inflation has us all paying 20-25% more for the essentials of life. Things like food, utility bills, gas for our cars, and car insurance. Maybe they just don’t care who runs the country. Maybe they don’t care about killing babies, sex-change operations, child sex trafficking, and fentanyl poisoning. But God does. It’s just a shame, that many who call themselves God’s chosen ones, including many pastors, don’t seem to have any desire to follow Him. Their speech says He’s my Savior but their actions give no indication that He’s their Lord.

So where do we go if our apathy brings us up short in what God requires from His people? We certainly have enough examples in Old Testament scripture to the price Israel paid for their self-absorption. Consider this your wake-up call, Christian. The faux believer will compromise until the last one is also swallowed up by the anti-God agenda to which they truly belong. Then we who have not bowed the knee to Baal will die knowing our suffering is not meaningless, because we are part of a greater battle that will be victorious in the end. And it will be our everlasting honor to say, as our Lord and Savior did, not my will, but Thine be done.

Rev. David Lewis

The Nation of Israel in Biblical Prophecy Saved by God's Will Alone

By Robert Luthardt, Sr.

Our Lord Jesus Christ has assured all those who have received Him in Saving Faith that He also gave them the "Power to become the sons of God," but NOT by or through man's righteousness or by man's will, but of "God's will" (John 1:12-13).

It is Almighty God who can open our hearts to believe the Gospel of Christ, and to repent of our sins, and to seek after our God-given righteousness and eternal salvation (Acts 16:14, 24-31). God's blessings through Jesus Christ bring comfort and joy to all "He Calls" when He says, "Let NOT your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me; In my Father's house are many mansions ... I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go ... I will come again" (John 14:1-3).

Sometime after Jesus' resurrection, our Lord joined himself to two disciples traveling down from Jerusalem to Emmaus. Along the way, He observed their sadness and Jesus asked them why? They replied about Jesus' death and missing body; Jesus diverted to the many scriptures and fulfilled promises and prophecies of "Moses and the Prophets," and said, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, to enter into HIS GLORY?"

Still later, when they sat down to a meal, Jesus took bread and blessed it and gave the now broken bread to the Disciples. Immediately their "eyes were opened, and Christ vanished out of their sight" (Luke 24:13-31).

The men and women who lived in the days of Jesus' earthly ministry, the "Israel of Galilee," were Jesus' own kinsmen who knew the Old Testament scriptures from the Prophets and to some, the return of Christ to earth became paramount. From Genesis to Malachi, many prophecies and promises of God pertain particularly to the "second coming of Christ." In addition to the Bible, countless books of Prophecy have been published regarding the prophesied destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 A.D. and the scattering of God's people for 2,000 years. Nevertheless, God has never forgotten Israel and today millions of Jews have returned to the "Promised Land" (Ez. 37; Rom. 11:1-5, 25-27; Rev. 21:1-4) though they remained in unbelief (2 Cor. 4:3-4).

During Jesus' earthly ministry, He made a promise to His disciples just before He was to depart back to Heaven, that He would return to save Israel and save His Church. Jesus said to all, "... where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3), and this scripture is called by Christian theologians the believers "blessed hope and glorious appearing of Jesus Christ" (Matt. 24:27; Heb. 9:28; Titus 2:13-14).

Jesus gave us signs of His return that will be more prominent as time passes, especially regarding His literal return to earth which Jesus said would be "at hand, even at the doors" (Luke 12:40; 1 Thess. 5:2; Rev. 16:15, 19:7-9).

Since many believe the Rapture precedes Christ's return, it is even closer, "at any moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (Matt. 24:33; 1 Cor. 15:51-52). We possess the writings of scripture (the Bible) from the Apostles of Christ, including Paul of Tarsus who was called by the WILL OF GOD on the road to Damascus according to the promise of Jesus Christ to him. We, like Paul, are called by the GRACE OF GOD who "...has saved us and called us with a Holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

We also have many reliable books that have been published that properly inform the followers of Christ that the authenticity of Christianity truly teaches of both the Second Coming of Christ but also the Rapture of the truly faithful.

The concept of the Rapture derives its name from the Latin word RAEPITUS which describes the future time when believers in Christ will be "CAUGHT UP" to be with our Lord: both the living and the dead, in their resurrected, changed bodies and heavenly bodies. Just as the word BIBLE is not found written in God's Word, the word "RAPTURE" is not found there either, but being "CAUGHT UP" is definitely there in First Thessalonians, Chapter Four (4:13-18).

The Apostle Paul wrote, "But I would not have you to be ignorant Brethren, concerning them that are asleep (deceased) that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope; for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with Him: For ...by the Word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent (go ahead of) them which are asleep. For ... the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be 'CAUGHT UP' together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 5:1-9).

If a Christian follows the path of God, that narrow road to eternal life (Matt. 7:14) they find mankind's greatest joy. We know that "all sinners are in need of salvation" – no exceptions. We see this from the fall of Adam and our own iniquity (Rom. 1:18-22, 3:10-23). But we too know that God sent to us the "seed of the woman" to become the Divine Son of God (Gen. 3:15; Luke 2:30-38) who knew no sin but who became the propitiation (payment) for the sins of all who call upon Him (John 3:15-17). Those who come by the blessings of God the Father (Eph. 1:3-5) who has chosen us in Him "BEFORE the foundation of the world," come by the Faith of Christ Jesus.

We know that every true believer has the Grace of God and who sincerely calls upon Christ is "accepted in the Beloved" and have eternal redemption by the "Cross of Christ and His blood shed upon it" (1 John 1:7; Col. 1:20).

All believers are the "Children of God" by Grace ... through Faith ... the Gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast (Eph. 2:8-10, 13). For ... there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond or free ... neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus and if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise of God?

Even as He believed God ... it was of God's righteousness ... so then they which be of the faith of Christ are blessed with faithful Abraham; and now could the Apostle say, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me ... by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).

It matters not whether one comes to Christ with worldly honors and degrees or acclaim from men or whether one comes as a child dying in the saving faith of the Gospel of Christ; God is "no respecter of persons" (Matt. 10:14; Acts 2:39). Simply, whomsoever will, may come.

Jesus also plainly said, "I am the bread of life, he that cometh to me shall never hunger" spiritually (John 6:37). "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any eat of this bread he shall live forever" (John 6:51). "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst."

John, who gave us the words of Jesus, wrote "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, no crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away ... I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end" (Rev. 21:4-7). Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus.

Keep looking up (Luke 21:28-36).



Sin and Righteousness: The Law and The Gospel in Matthew

By Joseph Burghauer

In Matthew, the first book of the Bible's New Testament, we read how the eternal Son of God became a sinless man, putting on human flesh, while remaining fully God (the Incarnation). The reason He became a man is stated in Matthew 1:21. " ... thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins "

What is sin? The Bible describes sin as rebellion against God. Sin is "missing the mark" of God's standard of perfection (Romans 3:23). Sin is breaking the Law of God. 1 John 3:4 " sin is the transgression of the Law."

What is the Law? The Law refers to God's commandments. (The Law can also refer to the first five books of the Old Testament.) The Law defines what we must do to be declared righteous (justified) by God to have eternal life. The Lord Jesus Christ confirms this in Matthew 19: 16-17 .

"And behold, one came and said unto him, 'Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?' And He said unto him 'Why callest thou Me good? There is none good but ONE, that is, God. but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments'."

God's law is His yardstick by which He measures human righteousness.

What is righteousness? It is God's standard of acceptable human character and behavior - God's own perfection: Matthew 5:20: "For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." (The scribes and Pharisees were the religious experts and leaders during Christ's earthly ministry) Many of them were hypocrites (see Matthew chapter 23), but even the best of them were unrighteous sinners (Romans 3:10, 3:23), as we all are. Matthew 5:48 states: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Does this mean that we should strive to be as perfect as God, but since He knows that this is impossible, He will reward our sincere best efforts? No!! (God will not reward those who have not placed their faith in Christ alone for their righteousness). The misconception is dealt with in the account of the young man in Matthew 19. We continue with verses 13-26 dealing with keeping the commandments to obtain eternal life as the Lord lists some of the Ten Commandments found in Exodus Chapter 20.

He saith unto Him, "Which?" Jesus said, "Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honor thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The young man saith unto Him, "All these things I have kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?" Jesus said unto him, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow Me " But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. Then said Jesus to His disciples, "Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. "When His disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, "Who then can be saved?" But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, "With man this is impossible; but with God all things are possible."

The rich young man of Matthew 19 showed his self-righteousness by stating that he had kept all of the commandments! Since he had asked the Lord what he needed to do to obtain eternal life, he was given the answer - keep the Law. After he erroneously claimed to have kept the Law, he was told to sell all he had, but due to his sinfulness, he could not obey. The young man had to perfectly obey God's commands with no exception

(James 2:10, Galatians 3:10). Because he was a slave to sin, he chose to remain in his sin over obeying the great commandment in the Law. Matthew 22:37-40.

"...Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind This is the first and great commandment.
And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.
On these two commandments hang all the Law and the prophets."

These two commandments summarize the Ten Commandments. The young man did not perfectly love God nor his neighbor. As Ephesians 2:1 tells us, he was still " ..dead in trespasses and sins," and although it seemed he was seeking after God, God tells us in Romans 3:11: "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God." He was self-deceived. We read in Jeremiah 17:9: "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

The young man would not come to Christ to have life (John 5:40) If he had understood the Lord's remark in Matthew 19 above, " ..there is none good but One, that is God," he should have worshiped Christ and begged Him for mercy. To not believe that Christ is God will result in eternal separation from Him (John 8:24). He should have been like the despised tax collector in Luke 18:13-14 who said. "God be merciful to me a sinner." The Lord said about him, "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other." This despised tax collector was declared righteous by God, but the respected self righteous Pharisee was not.

Since it was commonly believed that being wealthy showed God's approval, the disciples were "exceedingly amazed" that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. The disciples then asked, "Who then can be saved?" The answer the Lord Jesus Christ gave applies not only to the rich, but all of mankind: Matthew 19:26. With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible." God states that salvation (eternal life) is impossible with man, but it is possible only with God!

The first man, Adam, was created sinless and was our representative. Adam's perfect obedience to God would have been credited to us as our righteousness unto eternal life. Adam failed to obey. After his (original) sin, he became unrighteous. His unrighteousness resulted in physical death and spiritual separation from God which would be passed on to all mankind! Fallen humanity cannot keep the Law. But we are still required to keep the Law perfectly if we are to be righteous. We saw this in Christ's conversation with the rich young man And there is still the matter of our sin imputed to us from Adam's original sin. This is very bad news! We are ready for the good news of the Gospel!!!

What is the Gospel? The word "gospel" means "good news." It is often used to refer to the first four books of the New Testament. More narrowly it refers to what God has done to provide salvation to His people (who believe): Romans 1:16.

Matthew 1:21 reads " ..thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins." The Lord Jesus Christ was virgin-born (Matthew 1:23). He did not have Adam's original sin imputed to Him because He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 2:35). We read of the Lord's righteousness in Matthew 3:15. His baptism was "...to fulfill all righteousness." And in Matthew chapter 4 we read how Satan failed to get the Last Adam, Christ, to sin (see 1 Corinthians 15:45) Christ obeyed the Law perfectly. As the second (or Last) Adam, Romans 5:18-19, as well as the God-man, Christ's infinite righteousness can be credited or imputed to His people. Even the name Jesus means "Yahweh saves" or "The Lord is Salvation."

Returning to Matthew chapter 5, we read in verses 17-18. "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." Christ came not only to fulfill the many prophecies made about Him (some have counted 351 in the Old Testament), He also came to perfectly obey the Law for His people (Galatians 4:4-5). This is the good news - God Himself saves sinners.

In the Bible, the Law is contrasted to the Gospel. The Law shows us what is required for us to be righteous (Romans 2.13). It shows us the enormity of our sin (Romans 6:23a) and our need to look to Another (Christ) for our righteousness (Galatians 3.24). The Law was not given for us to try our best to be "good enough" for God. We must perfectly meet its requirements to merit eternal life but we cannot do this ourselves.

The Gospel is the good news that God has provided Another (Christ, the sinless God-man) to perfectly obey His law, to give us His righteousness, and to pay for the sins of His people. He came to save and deliver His people from eternal separation from God **Christ perfectly obeyed the Law of God for them**. His righteous life is credited by God to His people (those He chose and to whom He gave the gift of faith). Also, since the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23), **the Lord Jesus Christ had to die in the place of His people**. He paid the infinite price to appease the wrath of God for their sins.

Christ did not remain dead 1 Corinthians 15:1-8 is specifically called "the gospel." Verses 1-4 state:

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures "

It is important to note that Matthew 1:21 states "He shall save His people from their sins." In this verse, "shall" means definitely "will," not "May if we let Him" or "He wants to but He leaves it up to us to decide Christ did not just set an example for us or open the door to heaven to make it possible for us to cooperate with God's grace to earn eternal life. He Himself is the Door (John 10:9) He earned eternal life for His people. Christ accomplished His work to guarantee our salvation. John 19:30: Christ said, "it is finished" which means paid in full: He actually purchased our salvation. We read in Hebrews 12.2: "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" Christ actually saves His people. God the Father declares His people righteous (justification).

Justification does not depend upon our works but upon God's choice of those He will save by giving them faith (trusting and resting) in Christ's finished work. Faith is receiving Christ, not doing something or even being something to attain eternal life. Faith can be said to be the means that God uses to save His people on the basis of the finished work of Christ. God the Father chose (elected) those to whom He would give saving faith. God the Father gave these people to the Lord Jesus Christ, from eternity past, making them His people. See Ephesians 1:4-7 and John 6:37, 65. His people are a gift from the Father to the Son for the Son's promised obedience, including His sacrificial death in their place for their sins.

What does God tell us we must do to glorify Him and have eternal life in heaven? He tells us that we must obey His Law perfectly, which as sinners we cannot do. But if God has chosen to give us eternal life, we will obtain it by what He has done for us. Everything in our salvation is from God, even our faith (trusting and resting in Him). See Ephesians 2:8-9.

God's people must believe what God's Word reveals of their sin and unrighteousness and believe the Gospel. The Gospel is: Christ fulfilled the Law and died for His people's sins to give them His righteousness and to pay the penalty for their sins. They must trust in Christ and in His finished work alone to save them, and rest in Him. (After they trust in Christ alone, God's Law becomes their guide as they imperfectly strive to obey it to show their love for Him.)

The Second Person of the Triune God invites sinners such as you and I to come to Him. Matthew 11.28-30.

"Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give

you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart. and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

God promises eternal life to all who are burdened by their sins and trust in Christ alone for their righteousness. Also see Acts 16:30-31; John 1:12, and John 6:28-29.

Please ask God for this gift of forgiveness of sins and the righteousness of Christ.



Thanksgiving

By Hank Arthur

The Pilgrims in 1621

Held the first Thanksgiving meal.

To celebrate their harvest and

The friendships that were becoming real.

The calendar says Thanksgiving Day

Comes once a year, but brother,

Thanksgiving can come any day

We are in harmony with one another.

So Thanksgiving Day can be when we choose.

It can begin for you right now.

Go to the Psalms and listen to David.

He'll be happy to show you how.

Lift up your voice, sing God's praise.

Jesus paid your debt that day.

We must give thanks to the Lord above

For leading us along the way.



Psalm 100

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise; be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.



Thank You, Lord, For Calvary

By Hank Arthur

Jesus stopped, overlooking Jerusalem
And wept for the sins of man.
He said, "This temple will be torn down;
But in three days, it will be raised again."
He had His last meal with His chosen men
There in the upper room.
But one of them sold his soul that night
And sent his friend to a borrowed tomb.

Jesus went to pray in Gethsemane
And was arrested by the rulers' throng.
He was tried, beaten, and sentenced to die
Even though He had done no wrong.
They made Him a crown of thorns,
Then won His robe at a gambler's toss.
They called Him a king and laughed as He died
Upon that cruel cross.

But three days later that king arose
Victorious over the grave.
And now, He sits at His Father's right hand.
Waiting His church to save.
He did it all for you and me.
He paid our debts to set us free.
His love held Him to the cross that day.
Thank you, Lord, for Calvary!

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.
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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