

## Your Comments and Questions

(Views expressed here are not necessarily those of the editor)

### 19 Years of Diakrisis

TA Ministries was begun in 1989 when 'To Catholics Whom I Love' was first written. It proved a springboard for evangelistic work with Roman Catholics. Later other resources were developed for ministry to various cult groups. In March 1996 this newsletter was first published and later named 'Diakrisis'. The readership grew rapidly to several thousands in Australia and overseas. The ministry became a teaching ministry with a mission to *inform, teach and equip* Christians in a day when the church is falling away from its original moorings. We thank the readers for their support and encouragement.

In 19 years there have been many articles written on various topics. Some can be accessed on our website (www.taministries.net) or the rest via a PDF search in Acrobat Reader.

### Prayer and Praise Points

- We will soon have our second u-tube presentation in the series on the Gospel. These short evangelistic/teaching segments are on *Diakrisis TV*.
- The Bible college students are continuing their course, now re-named 'Graduate of Theology'. Please pray for the Lord to impact the hearts of these students in the last 2 years of their studies. Many are pastors, ministers and elders and we desire that they would be well trained, rightly dividing the Word and to preach and teach others the truths of scripture (2Tim.2:2).

### Subscription Form

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# Diakrisis (Australia)

*'But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern [diakrisis] both good and evil', (Heb.5:14)*

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TA Ministries is a non-denominational faith ministry,  
*teaching, informing and equipping* the church.  
Editor: Terry Arnold (D.Th; MABS; Dip.Bib.&Min.)

The editor may not necessarily agree with all the views expressed by subscribers in this newsletter.

We welcome comments or items contributed by readers. Unless otherwise requested, these may be included in following newsletters at the discretion of the editor.

Articles in this newsletter may be copied or reproduced provided it is in context and proper credit and references are given. We encourage distribution of this newsletter that others might be *taught, informed and equipped*.

This Newsletter is distributed bi-monthly *free* of charge. The cost to this ministry is approximately \$20.00 per subscriber annually. Any donation to help with these expenses is received with gratitude.

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### Books-Tracts-CD's-DVD's

Pages 9-12 has a lift out of resources that are available from this ministry. There are some new items now in stock. These are the best of reference resources on any one topic.

Articles on most topics can also be sourced by searching the newsletters through a PDF reader. For information on how to do this, contact this ministry.

## Editor's Comment

Recently I received a request for the 'Gideons' to speak in our church. I gave them a short time slot to present their ministry. I have always supported any effort to have Bibles placed in public places.

But something that unsettled me was the Gideon 'salvation plan' which accompanies their material. In that evangelistic plan is the scripture from Revelation 3:20 '**Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me**'.

Just months before I had finished lecturing to college students for one week on evangelism. One of the highlights was to stress the importance of the correct use of scripture in evangelism or Gospel presentations. During the course we addressed what exactly the Gospel is and how to present it. One of the errors exposed was the misuse of this very scripture. This verse (Revelation 3:20) has nothing to do with the Gospel or salvation, nor is it addressed to unbelievers. It has everything to do with the *believing church*. It is, in context, addressed to the Laodicean church and never to the unregenerate. Yet how often do we hear Revelation 3:20 '*I stand at the door, and knock*' used for the pleadings of the Lord to the unsaved, when in fact it is a warning to an assembly of *believers* and to '*as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten*' (vs.19). Such love is never used to the unsaved in the New Testament.

I wrote to a Gideons representative and politely put my case and asked if anyone had thought of this. The reply was as follows: '*As to your questions of theology and the use of the Romans 3:20 you are asking the wrong guy. If you go to our website [www.gideons.org](http://www.gideons.org) there is the ability to contact the top of the line and pose those questions. All I know is that a lot of people are dying each day...and a Testament placed in their hands while living can mean the difference for eternity...*'

Firstly, it was not Romans I enquired about but a verse from the book of Revelation being used out of context. Secondly, it is a strawman to argue '*a lot of people are dying each day...a Testament placed in their hands while living can mean the difference for eternity*'. This does not change the misuse of God's Word. It is primarily the Gospel in the Bible that saves, not the Bibles or the work of Gideons. Unsaved people will never understand the Bible unless the Spirit is illuminating them or drawing them (1Cor.2:14; Rom.8:7,8; Jn.6:44).

So I wrote to Gideons in Australia with the same question concerning the misuse of Revelation 3:20. No reply. I then discovered numerous internet sites where others had raised the same issue. But I have yet to see any replies from Gideons on this issue. (Perhaps readers may be able to have more response

## Terry's Itinerary

January/February (Sundays) 9.30am Hervey Bay Bible Church, Qld  
Ph.0411489472 [www.herveybaybiblechurch.org](http://www.herveybaybiblechurch.org)

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### Speaking The Truth In Love

*Reformation is truth, revival is love. Truth without love oppresses, mocks, scorns, and eventually decapitates everything else. In the process, it loses itself because it is fearsome and not beautiful. It eliminates the context in which it can be communicated. 'Speak the truth in love' we are admonished, and the Psalmist teaches us that 'lovingkindness and truth go before Thee' (Ps.89:14). Of the descendants of David, God says, 'I will visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. But I will not break off My lovingkindness from him, nor deal falsely in My faithfulness' (vs.32-33). In 'His lovingkindness' God establishes a way to redeem the covenant people without enervating the full impact of His truth. If we understand all mysteries and have all knowledge but do not have love we are nothing (1Cor.13:2). Truth itself is lovely - it is worth being loved because of its moral and aesthetic excellence. It can make its home, therefore, in a congenial way only in those who approve of and enjoy it for its excellence and loveliness. And if they enjoy truth because it is excellent and lovely, they themselves will live'.*

(Tom Nettles, '*Power Religion*': edited by Michael Horton, P.174)

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### Holiness

*'God will not accept lazy, slothful performances of some duties and abstinence from some sins. Crucifying sin, mortifying unrestrained lusts and not loving the world are all Gospel duties to be constantly maintained while we live in this world...*

*Indwelling sin will fight against holiness and will often prevail. It succeeds in wearying the mind with its continuous pleas for its old dominion. The hypocrite in time gives heed to indwelling sin, whereas the believer takes hold of the promise that 'sin shall not have dominion' over him (Rom.6:14)...A true Christian is not satisfied with a holiness that can be produced and can exist without Christ and His Spirit. The Christian knows that without Christ he can do nothing, much less produce a holiness acceptable to God (Jn.15:5)...An habitual life of sin is utterly inconsistent with evangelical obedience (1Jn.3:6-9)'*  
(*'Apostasy From the Gospel'* by John Owen, P.112,113)

## Your Comments and Questions

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*Dear Terry, Beth, I continue to enjoy and be challenged by 'Diakrisis'...It is also so good to read that God is adding to the church there, those that are being saved (Acts 2:47). ...Is 'Eternal Questions' still being published?*

(A.D., Qld)

**Editor's reply: 'Eternal Questions' is still in print. It is our attempt at a salvation 'tract' but it has also been used widely for Christians to check their understanding of the Gospel and salvation. It has now been reduced in price to \$1.50. Many have made professions of faith from this booklet. We recommend this tool in evangelism.**

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### Ellen G. White

*I am talking to a Seventh Day Adventist...He believes the 'heroes of the Reformation' were men of God...I asked him who he believed had the Word of God...Did Ellen G White? I said she was proved to be a false prophet and that an Adventist, Walter Rea, proved she plagiarised or stole most of her works from other writers, and yet she said her visions were from God...This Adventist man said I should get some of her books and see that she is not a false prophet...*

(R.M., Qld)

**Editor's comment: There are none so blind as those that do not want to see. Any person seriously wanting to discern this subject and wanting truth WILL come to the conclusion that Ellen G. White was a false prophet and her works were plagiarised from several other authors. The evidence is overwhelming. A look at a list of prophecies as well as transcripts of her works alongside other authors will prove the charges of a false prophet and plagiarism. The plagiarism is shown to be in many instances word for word, line after line and even paragraph by paragraph! Walter Rea's book 'The White Lie' is simply staggering as to its accurate documentation. But unless a person allows themselves to be confronted with truth that conflicts with their religious system, they simply will turn a blind eye. Otherwise, the result would be that they would be forced to leave the Adventist movement completely since the system is founded on false prophecies and misapplied doctrine as well as 'another gospel'.**

It is also interesting that the 'heroes of the Reformation' did NOT have Adventist doctrine such as laws of (Jewish) Sabbath keeping or the 'Investigative ('shut door') Judgement'.

www.taministries.net has copies of the false prophecies and this ministry has copies of some of the transcripts of plagiarism from Walter Rea's book.

than this author. Details are at the end of this editorial). \*

No sound exegesis will allow the use of this scripture in regard to salvation. And nothing in the text suggests such an application.

No doubt there are many sound Gideons, and this editorial is not to denigrate the work they do and their desire to see Bibles reach into public places. The work is surely admirable.

Some will see my question to Gideons as nitpicking or unnecessary, even legalistic. But I do not attack the Gideon workers or their desire to minister the Word of God by giving out Bibles. Rather, I wish to highlight the general apathy today to doctrine and for the purity of the Gospel. Can we afford to be wrong in the Gospel or its presentation? Is it permissible to take even one Scripture out of context? Is God pleased with a gospel that is misrepresented or His Word taken out of context? God forbid we should be so casual with His Word and His Gospel!

The Gospel must be kept pure. The Gospel and its presentation is non negotiable and cannot be compromised. I may be accused of being too hard and 'theological' here but are we not to contend for the Gospel (Phil.1:7,17; Jude 1:3) and present it with the utmost accuracy? What of the warnings of 'another gospel' and 'another jesus' (2Cor.11:4; Gal.1:6)? Are we not to 'rightly divide the word of truth' (2Tim.2:15)?

In Revelation 3:20 God is actually not pleading with sinners to 'open the door'. He is not knocking at the hearts of people waiting for them to open their hearts. This is a false jesus. The real Jesus is the 'author and the finisher of our faith' (Heb.12:2); He 'saves to the uttermost' (Heb.7:25). He draws, He saves, and He 'raises' those same ones up (Jn.6:39,40,44,65).

In Revelation 3:20 Jesus is rather knocking at the door of a lukewarm Laodicean church calling them back to the faith once delivered. Does that faith now allow for the misuse of scriptures such as Revelation 3:20?

The lack of concern with this issue shows the lack of regard today for sound doctrine and for a high view of the Word of God. To many this issue is just 'theology'. Pragmatism reigns - if it works it must be of God? However, people who continue to use such scriptures out of context show an utter lack of regard for His Word. On the day of judgement we will give an account for such behaviour. Yes, it's that serious! And any silence on this is no excuse. '**He that rejects me, and receives not my words, has one that judges him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day**' (Jn.12:48).

**Terry Arnold**

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## The Pope and the Big Bang



*The Big Bang, which scientists believe led to the formation of the universe some 13.8 billion years ago, was all part of God's plan, Pope Francis has declared. The Pope said the scientific account of the beginning of the universe and the development of life through evolution are compatible with the Roman Catholic Church's vision of creation. He told a meeting of the Vatican's Pontifical Academy for Sciences: 'The Big Bang, which today we hold to be the origin of the world, does not contradict the intervention of the divine creator but, rather, requires it.'*

*The Roman Catholic Church no longer teaches creationism - the belief that God created the world in six days - and says that the account in the book of Genesis is an allegory for the way God created the world...evolution was all part of God's plan, he explained. 'He created life and let each creature develop according to the natural laws which he had given each one.'*

**Editor's comment: The Bible timeline dates the world in thousands of years, not billions. Most evangelical churches teach creationism, yet they are clamouring to be in unity with this Pope and Catholicism. If creation in Genesis is an 'allegory' then what of the doctrines that stem from this book - the fall of man, sin, redemption, atonement, etc? One's view of Genesis will affect one's view of the entire Bible.**

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## Mary Guides Us To Jesus?



*In his Angelus address for the Solemnity of All Saints, Pope Francis said... 'In the great assembly of saints, God has wanted to reserve the first place for the Mother of Jesus, '...Mary, he said, 'is the centre of the communion of saints, as the singular guardian of the bond of the universal Church with Christ'. 'It's the communion which is born of faith and unites all of those who belong to Christ by reason of their Baptism'. Whoever wants to follow Jesus on the path of the Gospel can find a secure guide in Mary, the Pope explained,*

*(Vatican city, November 1, CNA/EWTN News)*

**Editor's comment: Mary has the 'first place' among saints? The Bible Teaches all believers whether dead or alive are 'saints' (Eph.1:1; Phil.1:1; Rom.1:7) and have been saved by grace alone (Eph.2:8,9). God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). Mary was a self confessed sinner like all of us and brought her sin offering like all Jews (Lk.1:47; Lk.2:21-24). The teaching of Mary as sinless, a special saint and a co-mediator, is a later invention by the Roman church unheard of in early centuries.**

**We do not 'belong to Christ by...Baptism' but by grace through faith, not of works or anything of ourselves (Eph.2:8,9; Rom.4).**

such techniques but statistics show that the vast majority (85%) are not.\* Because of the many false gospels and shallow messages today most of these people simply do not understand or believe the true Gospel. These modern methods were introduced less than 150 years ago and the huge fall away rates can be attributed to many of these new inventions.\* Today there are multitudes in churches who are decisional converts but not saved. Is this a harsh judgement? The scriptures teach this very fact! Matthew 7:21-23 teaches '**many**' will call Jesus '**Lord, Lord**' and think they are saved, yet will be sent to Hell. Many of these people will be people who '*asked Jesus into their lives*'.

The danger also is that some people will 'receive Christ' for selfish motives. Some might receive him as a sin bearer in order to be free of personal guilt; as an escape from Hell because eternal punishment puts the fear of God in them; as a healer, hoping for bodily healing; or as a wealth giver, hoping to be rich. But Christ must be *known* and received for the majesty and beauty of His *person*. Our desire to be in Heaven should primarily be *to be with the person of our Lord*.

This 'Decisional Regeneration' as it is often called, gives many a false sense of security. Many of these people end up being hardened against Christianity when they fall away. Many live unholy and fleshly lives, thereby making a mockery of true Christianity.

### **Should we ever judge a persons salvation? - the dilemma**

People who outright deny the Gospel or do not live separated lives that honour Jesus are to be considered as unsaved. But rather than openly confronting and judging them, we must desire to disciple them with truth. Salvation is of the Lord (Ps.3:8; Jn.1:12-13; 6:44; Heb.5:9-10). Only God knows with 100% certainty who is saved and who is not. We do not know the true condition of anyone's heart. Salvation is not based on what a person says or does.

From a pastoral concern, I personally give the benefit of the doubt to professing Christians and continue to look for fruit and preach and disciple them with truth. The apostle Paul had this philosophy in thinking the best of professing Christians (Rom.14:10-13; 1Cor.4:1-5). Only if a person contradicts the Gospel outright or is preaching another gospel entirely will I discern the need to evangelise. We must judge righteous judgement and not by appearances (Jn.7:24). We should not set our own standards over other Christians. We can lovingly encourage all professing Christians to examine themselves and test themselves to see whether or not they are in the faith (2 Cor.13:5) and have the fruit of salvation as listed above. At the end of the age, His angels will separate the true from the false. It is not our duty to do this. Our duty is to preach the Gospel and disciple people in the ways of our Lord.

**Terry Arnold**

\* See '*Foundations For Evangelism*' by this author



(1Jn.2:15); *‘And be not conformed to this world’* (Rom.12:2).

Spurgeon warned his students: *‘Do not suppose that the Gospel is magnified or God glorified by going to the worldlings and telling them that they may be saved at this moment by simply accepting Christ as their saviour, while they are wedded to their idols, and their hearts are still in love with sin. If I do so I tell them a lie, pervert the Gospel, insult Christ, and turn the grace of God into lasciviousness’*. (*‘The Soul Winner’* by Charles Haddon Spurgeon, P.24).

#### *The Gossiper*

Many might be surprised that this category would be mentioned. But in years of pastoring I have become convinced that these people are not true Christians. A confirmed gossiper is not only slandering fellow Christians but slandering Christ who is their Lord. The ‘fruit of their lips’ is not that of Christ, but of the flesh. They damage the very body of Christ. They lack love for the saints, holiness and the fruit of the spirit - all fruit of true conversion. People who say they love their brethren and constantly trouble the church with gossip are not Christians and should never be called as such.

#### *The Felt ‘Needer’*

I have met many people who have desperate needs in their lives as a result of drugs, alcohol or abuse. They often reach a ‘crisis point’ and make a ‘decision’ for Christ. Many of these people gravitate to Charismatic/Pentecostal type fellowships where the feelings and emotions are given some outlet. Often they will find the love, acceptance and fellowship that will keep them on a more stable platform in life. But many of these conversions are ‘reformations’ rather than regeneration. The ‘recovered’ person’s life may be more moral and altered yet the focus is not on the Jesus of the Bible, but on their own behaviour and feelings, emotions. The fall away rate in this group is substantial. Yet there may be just enough of a Jesus in their life to convince many they are regenerated.

#### *The Moralist*

These people have an emphasis on not sinning, on living a moral life of purity. They will often teach and attempt forms of sinless perfection (‘Entire Sanctification’). The Pharisee in Luke 18 believed he was a morally good person who would probably ‘not sin willingly’. Yet Jesus stated he was not righteous in the sight of God. By comparison the tax collector near him cried out ‘God have mercy on me a sinner’. Jesus said *‘this man* [the tax collector], *rather than the other* [the Pharisee], *went home justified before God’*. Our works or morals can never merit salvation. Only the blood sacrifice of Jesus satisfies God.

#### *The Decisional Conversion*

These are people who base their salvation on a decision, often made by ‘altar calls’ or praying a ‘sinner’s prayer’. Some people may be truly saved in spite of

## Rick Warren, the Pope and the Ecumenical Church



*On Monday, November 17, 2014, Pope Francis hosted a global ecumenical conference featuring Muslim leaders, pagans, [Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu, Jaina Shasana, Taoist and Sikh religions] and Rick Warren from Saddleback Mega-Church in California.*

*The official website said that the Colloquium is sponsored by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith [Catholic Office of the Inquisition]. The real reason for the global confab was to continue Pope Francis’ work of merging all religions into the One World Religion.*

*The conference was held November 17-19 at the Vatican...Rick Warren tweeted: ‘Welcome Pope Francis, Cardinal Jorge...you have our prayers.’*

**Editor’s Comments: The ecumenical church continues to grow. Sadly ‘Protestant’ or ‘Evangelical’ leaders are entertaining this merging of false religions and faiths. We have been warning of Rick Warren for years despite opposition from those who admire his books and programmes. But the deception is now more open than ever. We are warned to come out of this movement, as it will be severely judged by God Himself (Rev.18:4,5).**

## Media Buries Islamist Motivation Behind Siege



*Despite demanding to speak with the Prime Minister, asking for an ISIS flag, and telling hostages that the media was covering up ISIS responsibility for the attack, the narrative in the Sydney siege quickly shifted to portray culprit Haron Monis as an ‘isolated figure’ who had no real political motivations.*

*Two people, including the gunman, died after commandos stormed the building, ending a 16-hour siege.*

*Whether or not Monis was an ISIS member or merely inspired by ISIS, to downplay that his actions were politically motivated is patently naive...he was driven by extremist Islamist ideology. Monis made numerous demands during the siege that were deliberately not reported by the media. When those demands leaked out onto Facebook and YouTube, the posts, videos were quickly deleted.*

*Hostages...related Monis’ assertion that the incident was an ISIS attack and the media was covering up the fact that the attack was inspired by ISIS...the media now seems to be very keen on emphasising...that Monis was a ‘lone actor,’ ...and had ‘no known links to jihadist groups’.*

*...The Grand Mufti of Australia, the highest Muslim authority in the country, also sought to downplay political or Islamist connotation, referring to the incident as a ‘criminal’ attack...A campaign called ‘I’ll ride with you,’ encouraged Australians to accompany Muslims travelling to work, went viral, despite no reports of any violence towards Muslims as a result of the incident...*

*(Paul Joseph Watson - Prison Planet | December 15, 2014)*

## The Real Rick Warren

Recently an address by Rick Warren was posted by the *Catholic News Source*. We urge readers to view this short (2 minute) statement by Rick Warren\* as well as a reply (12 minutes) by apologist James White.\*

Rick Warren is increasingly showing his true colours in his ecumenical endeavours with Catholicism and Islam, as well as diluting the Reformation. Referring to Roman Catholics he says: *'The most important thing is, if you love Jesus, we are on the same team'*. As an ex Roman Catholic my response is: I 'loved Jesus' as a Roman Catholic but I was not born again! Which 'Jesus' did I have? It was not the Jesus of grace alone through faith alone and not of works. It was a 'Jesus' that believed that the sacraments were 'necessary for salvation', as in Catholic teaching. And what of the Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses and even Muslims who also 'love Jesus'? As one Internet response put it: *'This is the biggest revival in the history of humanity, more than 2 Billion people just got saved!'*

Warren then itemises the things Catholicism apparently has *'in common'* with 'Protestants' (is that word still in use?) - *'the Trinity, the Bible, the resurrection, salvation through Jesus...these are the big issues'*. However, belief in the 'Trinity' does not save. And which 'Bible' exactly is meant here? The Catholic Bible has extra books and they do *not* believe that those books alone are the word of God (Catholicism has oral traditions added). When Warren says *'Salvation through Jesus Christ'* - again, which 'Jesus' is he referring to? Is this the Jesus sacrificed once only (Heb.6:6; 9:26-28; 10:10); or the Catholic 'Jesus' who is sacrificed on every altar many times over at each Catholic Mass? The Catholic Jesus allows Mary to lead people to him. It is the Jesus that purges our sins in a mythical place called Purgatory instead of wholly and completely on the cross of Calvary. Which 'Jesus' is Warren really speaking of here? The differences cannot be boiled down to the list that Warren isolates. What of the 'different gospel' which Paul curses? What separates us defines the problem, not what unites us. Is Warren ignorant of Catholic teaching, or is he a deceiver?

Amazingly Warren then says of the 'saints': *'when you understand what they mean by what they are saying...there is commonality...'* Yet Catholic teaching on the 'saints' and Biblical teaching could not be further apart! The 'saints' in Catholicism are those endorsed by the Pope. The saints in Scripture are all those believers dead or alive who are born again by God's Spirit!

Unity is in truth not in what is *'commonality'*. Rick Warren is a false teacher putting forth a false view of a false religion. ***'Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils'*** (1 Tim.4:1).

**Terry Arnold**

\*Rick Warren: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=6Ha0311JX1c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=6Ha0311JX1c)

\*James White: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=6Ha0311JX1c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=6Ha0311JX1c)

when this new heart occurred. Some might remember the 'drawing' time before the actual point of salvation. But nevertheless, it is about a heart being 'opened' and being regenerated (Acts 16:4).

### **The Counterfeits**

#### *The Religious*

A person might appear zealous in external acts of duty and religion. He may not be aware he needs a changed heart to be pleasing to God. The law written on his heart might stir his conscience morally to do religious acts, attend church, pray, do works. Such people may be 'reformed' to an extent in character, yet not radically *changed in the heart*. They may compare themselves to others who are 'worse' - drunkards, murderers, blasphemers, etc. *Their hearts will commend themselves to themselves*. But they are no better than the Pharisees and the religious leaders of Jesus day. Many of these people will be hard workers in the church and keen to be on church boards or in offices of ministry.

The question for these people is - were they ever convinced of their sinful state, the evil of their sinful natures and their lost condition in the sight of a holy God? Have they seen their righteousness as *'filthy rags'* (Is.64:6) and have they become *'poor in spirit'*? (Matt.5:3)

People can also be a part of a 'denomination' simply because it provides a social network, meaning and a purpose for them in life. Unconverted people who are looking to improve their lives may seek out a church that promises great things. Their lives may be enhanced, families strengthened, new friends acquired, yet salvation may be entirely lacking. Many people when asked when they were born again say they were 'baptised' into a certain church. But this is not salvation, which cannot be anything of ourselves or anything of any work we can do (Eph.2:8,9). Worse, some people attribute their salvation to their birth in a religion or denomination.

#### *The Worldly*

These professing Christians live as much in the world as they do in the church. There is little distinction between them and the worldlings in thinking, habits, dress, etc. Many have little separation between what the world thinks and preaches in regard to relationships, fornication, frequenting certain clubs and bars and in dress, morals and language. The question for them is - is not the world with its materialism, fun and enjoyment more in their *affections, desires and thoughts* than Jesus Christ? Is the heart divided and compromised? In the Parable of the Sower (Matt.13) Jesus taught that these people are like the seed which is *'sown among thorns'* (Mk.4:18) which *'choke'* the plant (Matt.13:22). The thorns are *'the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches (vs.22)...and pleasures of this life'* (Lk.8:14). There is no fruit for the Lord. The true convert will ***'love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him'***

for his brother but displays forgiveness, love and compassion (1Jn.2:9,11; 3:15; 4:16,20).

*The New Birth produces fruit*

The born again are known by their 'fruit'. If there is no fruit then the experience is not real. A word study of 'fruit' will show the following:

There is the *fruit of repentance*. A saved person will produce '**fruits meet for repentance**' (Matt.3:8). Repentance is not a once off fruit when saved, but a continuous state of a changed mind. A true convert admits he or she is a sinner. They do not believe they can go to Heaven by the false gospel of being a 'good' person. They understand their own sin nature (1Jn.1:8). Repentance is 'toward God' because it is God who has been offended and must be appeased. He made man for Himself, made man to obey His laws, but we have rejected His laws in Adam and in our own sins.

There is *fruit of good works* - '**being fruitful in every good work**' (Col.1:10). These are works '**which God has before ordained that we should walk in them**' (Eph.2:10). Faith without works is a dead counterfeit faith (James 2:17).

There is the '**fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ**' (Phil.1:11). The righteousness of God has been imputed to us because of what Jesus Christ has done to satisfy God for us by substitution. That new righteousness causes a changed life that strives to live according to God's standards.

There is the '**fruit of our lips**' - '**offering the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name**' (Heb.13:15).

There is the ninefold '**fruit of the Spirit**' - '**...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law**' (Gal.5:22,23). If one has this fruit then '**they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts**' (vs.24). If one has this fruit then they will be opposed to the fruit of the flesh - '**the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God**' (Gal.5:19-21).

All the above fruit may not be evident in the same amounts or even at all times. But they will and should be evident. That which does not bear the above fruit is '**cut down and thrown into the fire**' (Matt.3:10).

*The New Birth changes the heart to one of a 'new creature'*

**'Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new'** (2Cor.5:17). The Greek tenses of the word '*passed*' here indicate something has happened at a set time in the past. It is not a progressive occurrence. Many people might not know exactly

## **Saved or Unserved? - the Dilemma**

*What does it mean to be 'saved'? What does a person need to know to be saved? How do we know if a person is 'saved'? Should we ever judge this?*

These are questions I have wrestled with over many years. There have been times when I have determined a person was not saved yet others have said the person was saved. Are there counterfeits? By what yardstick do we judge this? Or should we withhold all judgement of such?

### **What does it mean to be 'saved'?**

One must be 'born again' to be saved. Jesus said '**Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God**' (Jn.3:3). The phrase '**born again**' is in the Greek aorist passive - it is a snapshot (aorist) of something that has or will occur and it is done to the person (passive) without the person taking any action to cause it to occur. The active agent is God; man is passive. The action here is *not ongoing* - one does not 'become born again' as in any process of events or actions.

To be '*born again*' literally means to be begotten *from above*, not below. Nothing on earth can save a person - no church, religion or deeds. '**By grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast**' (Eph.2:8,9). This salvation cannot be done by *anything* involving us: '**Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God**' (Jn.1:13). This is why the scriptures teach that it comes by the will of the Spirit alone: '**The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound thereof, but you cannot tell where it comes from, and where it will go: so is every one that is born of the Spirit**' (Jn.3:8). (The words '*spirit*' and '*wind*' are the *same* Greek word - '*pneúma*').

Being born again is synonymous with 'regeneration' (Tit.3:5). It occurs by the Word of God: '**Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which lives and abides forever**' (1Pet.1:23). It occurs when a person's heart is changed and they understand the redemptive work of God through Jesus Christ who paid the penalty for our sin. Saving faith issues from a heart that is convinced Christ is the *only* Lord and Saviour. Saving faith comes from a surrendered heart that *reaches out to Christ* in personal trust.

### **What does a person need to know to be saved?**

When we are born again we will understand that Jesus died, was buried and rose again so God could justify and release us from the penalty of our sin. The Father's broken law was satisfied and paid for in full by Jesus Christ. Being 'saved' is also having the 'witness' knowing who Jesus Christ is and what He has done for us by substitution, that His Spirit now secures our salvation.

Exactly how much detail of this understanding is evident will vary from person to person. *Salvation cannot be discerned solely by what is known or not known, or spoken or not spoken. Salvation is the result of a changed heart.* No person can look into the heart. Many might only be able to say ‘*Jesus has died for my sin...I received Him as Saviour and Lord...*’. I confess when I was saved I understood little more than this. I did not understand the depravity or gravity of sin that I do now. I did not understand the ‘imputed righteousness’ that God had given me to stand in the courts of Heaven as forgiven. But I was aware that something had taken place within my heart which gave me a *new mindset*. That mindset was now set on heavenly things instead of earthly (Col.3:2). I was seeking after God and desired to read God’s Word and follow Him. I understood Jesus was the substitutional sacrifice for my sin. *There must be this change of heart and a faith in Jesus as Saviour with repentance towards God* (Acts 20:21).

### How do we know if a person is ‘saved’?

One of the effects of this regeneration of the heart should be an immediate *hunger* for the Word of God and less interest in earthly things which were once important. There should be a *conviction of sin* since the Holy Spirit’s role is to separate us from sin. It is important to understand what we are saved *from*. We are saved from the ‘*wrath to come*’ (Lk.3:7; 1Thess.1:10). The ‘wrath to come’ is the necessary judgement upon sin. Heaven is a perfect place with a perfect sinless God who cannot be touched by evil or sin. To enter into the presence of the God of the universe one must be somehow made perfect. The only way this can be achieved is to receive a perfect righteousness from another - a substitute perfectness - that of the righteousness of God Himself in the person of Christ.

The real proof of whether a person is saved is in the *effects* of the born again experience. *It is the fruit of salvation that is proof of salvation.* However, as we will see later, this can be somewhat counterfeited. As well, the effects and the development of fruit is a gradual process (Sanctification) and this is worked out in different variations of time with different people. We do not know the heart of any person and that is the very place where regeneration occurs. In fact we do not even know our own hearts as well as we might think (Jer.17:9)!

Salvation is not based on what a person says and does. What a person says and does may not always fully confirm whether a person is saved or not saved, especially since there are counterfeits. The Bible clearly says that many who think they are saved are not (Matt.7:21-23).

I believe we must give people the benefit of the doubt if they profess to be saved. Paul appeared to do this with the carnal Corinthians (1Cor.3:1-3). It is also evident that some Christians have a very basic knowledge of the Gospel at salvation, and how they express that understanding may not fit all the theological

grids of our own certainties. It is primarily not our business to purposely challenge individuals as to their professed salvation. Better it is to preach truth and let the Spirit convict.

This does not mean we do not address open sin and immorality in the church or any sin that affects other believers in the fellowship. The scriptures give clear commands as to how to address such sin (Matt.18:15-17; 1Cor.5:1-13)

We can only be sure a person is ‘saved’ by the *effects* of the regeneration of their heart. A sailor can tell the strength of the wind by the effect the wind has on the surface of the water - by the shades and texture of the surface, the size of the waves, the sound in the rigging, etc. So it is that by the effects of the New Birth can one discern that a person has been saved. The proofs of being ‘born again’ are laid out in many scriptures.

The following are some of these effects of the New Birth...

#### *Christ is first and foremost*

Christ demands the supreme place in our heart *and affections*. If we love anything more than or equal to Christ, we are not a child of God. Jesus said one cannot be His disciple unless by comparison he ‘*hate his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also*’ (Luke 14:26,27). The New Birth ‘*counts all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus...and counts them but dung*’ (Phil.3:8).

#### *The New Birth makes dead men alive*

We were ‘*dead in sins*’ but now ‘*made alive*’ (Eph.2:5; Col.2:13). ‘*You, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has he quickened [made alive] together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses*’. This new ‘*life*’ comes through the Word of God (1Pet.1:23). People who are saved were people whose sins once had lordship over them, but now are people who are ‘alive’ to the things of God, having Christ as their Lord and Saviour and who are being transformed by the word of God - the words of the Bible. *Thus the New Birth breaks the power of sin yet does not eradicate it completely.* Saved people will *not* continue under the *power* of sin (1Jn.3:9,10; 5:18). The born again Christian *no longer has a heart to sin*. Although he might groan under the nature of sin in his flesh, he will increasingly hate it and fight it.

#### *The New Birth produces holiness*

The saved person strives to be separate *from* the world and separated *to* God (1Jn.5:4). This is one of the constant works of the indwelling *Holy Spirit*.

#### *The New Birth causes a person to love His brethren*

The saved person has a distinctive love for the brethren. He loves to be with them in fellowship (1Jn.3:14; 4:7). A true convert does not harbour hate



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