

The Gospel According To J.D.

An Example Of A Subtle False Works Gospel

“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.” [1John 2:19]

An acquaintance of mine, whom I will refer to as J.D., has made an astounding transition for someone who seemed to possess true salvation for many years... After many years in reformed protestant churches he is no longer content with their doctrinal stands on many important issues and is now checking out churches that he should know - if he is a true twice-born believer - are apostate. He seems convinced that he will be happy if only he can find a visible ecclesiastical “institution” that he feels God has entrusted the truth to for the past two millenia. I guess J.D. never read Luke 17:21:

“Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.”

My point being that the true Church (with a capital C) is a collection of Spirit-born believers. No major sect or denomination can rightly claim that it is the one true Church. Oh sure, they can lie and boast about anything they wish, but their pronouncements do not create truth.

After “investigating” the Eastern Orthodox church, this poor soul (J.D.) is now looking at the Lutheran church to see if they just might be that one “true” preserved Church that is alluded to in Matthew 16:18. After J.D. expressed his belief to me in the unbiblical doctrine of transubstantiation (with its implications that a piece of bread can become Christ, the eternal god-man), he is now looking to make himself at home in a church that believes in an equally unbiblical doctrine - consubstantiation. Of course belief in these manmade dogmas (heresies no less) is a prerequisite to even considering any one of the associated institutions to be that elusive preserved ecclesiastical body.

But let us get back to the subtle false works gospel we wish to investigate here. If you examine something about the doctrine of salvation that J.D. wrote, you can see some terminology that points to a very subtle works gospel that I have seen elsewhere online and offline. Here is that terminology summed up by someone else (not J.D.) who wrote their own erroneous article about salvation which I am referring to first, to show that others use this same terminology and have the same incorrect understanding of biblical faith:

“When someone trusts in their own deeds or a ceremony, such as baptism, they will not be saved because they have not used the conduit that God has given.” (<http://www.letusreason.org/OCC4.htm>) -

anonymous author at "Let Us Reason Ministries", a ministry that believes in "decisional regeneration" as deduced from their description of how to receive the free gift of salvation at this web page:
<http://www.letusreason.org/saving%20grace.htm>.

This false doctrine brings in special terminology (like the word "conduit" used above) to give itself credibility based on the use of words that are either ambiguous, yet reasonable sounding, or words that can have multiple meanings. Here is J.D.'s blog posting on this "conduit" idea with my emphasis added:

There is only one means of atoning for sin, and that is the blood of Christ. **Faith is like** a hand that receives that blood and all its benefits, but the hand itself does not do any saving. Faith cannot appease God's wrath for sin. Only the blood of Christ can do that. It's the difference between a cause and **an agent**. To use an analogy, if you are underwater and breathe air through a straw, what is the thing your body needs to remain alive—the air or the straw? It needs the air. It needs the straw, too, but only as **an agent** through which the air is breathed in. The straw, in and of itself, cannot directly keep your body alive because the straw does not keep your lungs going. It is the air coming through the straw that does that. If you were in outer space and you had a hose to connect you to an oxygen tank, but the tank were floating out of reach of the hose, trying to breathe through the hose would do you no good at all. It's similar when we talk of faith and the blood of Christ. **Faith**—like the straw and the hose—**is the conduit** through which the **benefits** of Christ's saving blood come to us, but that precious blood—like the air—is what actually saves." - J.D.

This as you know may know, is where the cults and the blind leaders have some true believers scratching their heads.... because those wolves in sheep's clothing mean one thing with their words and we think they are inferring something else entirely. The **buzz words** in the above problematic paragraph are **faith, agent and conduit and perhaps even the word "benefits"**. What do they mean to the writer and what do they mean to the reader? Often they mean two different things.

And so here is that crack I mentioned above:

Faith is not some "conduit" as inferred by its use above. You can say it is a conduit but it is not. It does not mean that, not in the dictionary and not in the Bible, and no, not in the original Greek either. The word for faith, as used in Ephesians 2:8 for example is the Greek word *pistis*, which does not mean conduit nor does its usage in Ephesians 2:8 and elsewhere in any way imply that we are saved through our ability to utilize something be it our faith or our ability to utilize some spiritual conduit, etc. Faith does mean to trust, and to trust in the completed work of Christ - which is what this verse is referring to. And that ability to trust Christ is something that only regenerated souls can do, and they do it through the Holy Spirit, not through their own strength or

through their own ability to grab onto something...

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" [Romans 8:16]

In the realm of the Bible and true Christianity, faith is a trait or characteristic of a believer, not a mechanism (like a stretched out hand or like a straw) for acquiring something. Faith is the "ability" to trust Christ and to believe and understand the Gospel - an ability that the spiritually dead do not and cannot possess. This faith - this ability to trust/believe/understand Christ and His gospel - is a gift of God granted - by God - at salvation. That faith - which we possess upon regeneration - is not "like a hand that receives the blood and all its benefits".

Many unbelievers don't get this. They look at Ephesians 2:8 which states that "we are saved by grace through faith" and think "Oh, I just need to have enough faith, and my faith, is the "conduit" God will then use to save me. I just need to believe the gospel." - whatever "believing the gospel" means to a spiritually dead sinner... like "believe whatever that evangelist just said even if I believe one thing and he meant quite another thing." Sadly, what this means in many instances is that a person thinks he is saved because he believed something, not because God truly regenerated him.

The word "conduit" when defined in its normal sense... is a device or mechanism like a pipe, by which something is transferred from point A to point B. The mechanism (or "conduit" if you will) by which a sinner knows and trusts God (by which he is able to possess "faith" - this attribute of a truly converted believer) **is the Holy Spirit not some sinner's ability to do something or hold onto something or reach out for something. It is Christ in you.** Those who do not possess the Spirit often see themselves (or "their" faith) as the conduit (or as the "agent") and not the Holy Spirit.

People who think that they need to participate in their salvation will confuse faith for some kind of mechanism employed by a sinner. We who are genuine Christians need to question the salvation of those who hold to this belief. As I read someone else's description of the gospel written up here: <http://www.abideinchrist.com/selah/dec4.html> I got the impression that that is the gospel that J.D. subscribes to. I saw some of the same buzzwords and same ideology.

Dear reader, I hope and pray that if you subscribe to the kind of salvation that depends in any way on something that you, the sinner do, did or or will do, then I urge you to set aside your works, your filthy rags as the Bible describes them, and trust solely in the completed work of Christ at the cross.

"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."

