



The Voice of Truth

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Because of These Abominations By Jimmy Pettigrew

People buy daily newspapers just to read their horoscope. Many plan their day's activities and conduct their business by the predictions and suggestions of the daily horoscope. Astrology is a religion of superstition that makes gods out of the sun and the heavenly bodies.

God has always denounced and condemned those who practice spiritualism, sorcery, witchcraft, astrology, and all other forms of divination. Such curious arts are an abomination to God because they transgress His will, violate His authority, and dishonor both Him and His creation. Moses warned the Israelites as they were about to enter Canaan: "When you come into the land which the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the Lord, and because of these abominations the Lord your God drives them out from before you. You shall be blameless before the Lord your God. For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the Lord your God has not appointed such for you" (**Deuteronomy 18:9-14 NKJV**). They were not to be guided by the false practices of the Canaanite people; instead they were to follow in the way in which the Lord would guide them, by His word!

Sorcery and astrology was practiced among the Babylonians: "Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast labored from thy youth; if so be thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail. Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels: let now the astrologers, the star-gazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from the things that shall come upon thee. Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: it shall not be a coal to warm at, nor a fire to sit before. Thus shall the things be unto thee wherein thou hast labored: they that have trafficked with thee from thy youth shall wander every one to his quarter; there shall be none to save thee" (**Isaiah 47:12-15 ASV**). Isaiah declared that all of Babylon's sorceries and astrologers would be unable to turn away the punishment that God would inflict against her, and that the people would actually become weary of the false counsel of the astrologers, star-gazers, and monthly prognosticators, because of their many failures. Astrologers were those who pretended to foretell events by the appearance of the heavens. Star-gazers were those who claimed to make predictions by looking at the stars. Monthly prognosticators were men who professed to give predictions based on the beginning dates of the months, and that was because of the new moon was observed at the beginning of the month. Many today rely on astrology to guide their lives. They do this to their own spiritual destruction.

Such evil practices were practiced by the Jews in their degenerate days. Notice: "And

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they forsook all the commandments of Jehovah their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made an Asherah, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, to provoke him to anger" (**2 Kings 17:16-17 ASV**). Did you notice God's stance on such evil practices? "Which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, to provoke him to anger." Of such men, the Bible reveals: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness, that their bodies should be dishonored among themselves: for that they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen" (**Romans 1:22-25 ASV**).

The Bible repeatedly portrays those who claim such powers as fakes and counterfeits (e.g., **Genesis 41:8; Exodus 7:10-12; Daniel 2:2-11**). Even the action of the so-called "witch of Endor," who actually is identified in the text as having "familiar spirit" (**1 Samuel 28:3ff.**), must be deemed fake for several reasons: (1) she was **surprised** that the spirit actually appeared (vs. 12); (2) she thought the spirit was elohim- the Hebrew word for God or gods (vs. 13); and (3) she did not recognize Samuel, but had to describe him to Saul who in turn recognized him (vs. 14). The belief in spirits, sorcery and astrology was in the New Testament age. There was a certain man, called Simon, (**Acts 8**) and Elymas in (**Acts 13**). All were phony and fakers! All these sorcerers and astrologers were fakes who had no real power – though they fooled a lot of people into thinking they did.

Those who wish to be Christians, those who wish to be pleasing to God, will give no credence to such claims today. Millions of people today have come to believe that their destiny is in the stars, rather than in the God who made the stars. "Power belongeth unto God" (**Psalms 62:11**). Greatness, power, glory, victory, and majesty are God's (**1 Chronicle 19:11**). God is eternal (**Psalms 90:2**); God is everywhere (**Psalms 139:8-9**); God knows everything (**Hebrews 4:13**). The Bible tells us God is able ... "Is there anything too hard for God?" (**Jeremiah 32:27**). The answer: "With God, nothing is impossible" (**Luke 1:37**).

The only reliable guide is God's Word. It is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (**Psalms 119:105**). We need only to be guided by the Word of God, the wonderful words of life! The moment a person puts trust in something else other than God, and thinks that the future is determined by such practices, he is trusting in something other than God, and is sinning! "Trust in Jehovah with all thy heart, And lean not upon thine own understanding: In all thy ways acknowledge him, And he will direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes; Fear Jehovah, and depart from evil" (**Proverb 3:5-7 ASV**).

My New Year's Resolution

By Jonathan L. Perz

Of all the resolutions an individual can make, no greater resolution can be made than the one that follows:

I am resolved to begin the year 2009 as a Christian by obeying the Gospel of Jesus Christ today!

Indeed, many of you who read this will say, "I am already a Christian" or "I have already obeyed the Gospel." In response, this article challenges you to "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves..." (**2 Corinthians 13:5**). Furthermore, many of you know your need to obey the Gospel, but have procrastinated your obedience for one reason or another. In response, this article challenges you to quit procrastinating, before it is too late!

Many who profess Christianity believe that they have “obeyed the gospel.” However, when they look at what they have done “to be saved” in light of the truth of God’s word (cf. **John 8:32; John 17:17**), they may realize they have fallen far short of the Lord’s expectation.

We learn first century Christians heard the word of the gospel and believed it (cf. **John 5:24; Acts 4:4; Acts 15:7; Ephesians 1:13; Colossians 1:5, etc.**). They confessed Jesus Christ as the Son of God (cf. **Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37; Matthew 10:32; 1 John 4:2-3, 1 John 4:15, etc.**). They repented of their sins (cf. **Acts 2:38; Acts 3:19, Acts 3:26; Acts 11:18; Acts 17:30; Acts 26:20; 2 Corinthians 7:10, etc.**). They were baptized for the forgiveness of their sins (cf. **Acts 2:38; Acts 8:12-13, Acts 8:36-38; Acts 9:18; Acts 10:47-48; Acts 16:14-15, Acts 16:31-33; Acts 18:8; Acts 19:5; Romans 6:1-6; 1 Corinthians 3:13-17; Galatians 3:26-27; Colossians 2:11-14; 1 Peter 3:21, etc.**). Finally, those who became Christians through obedience to the Gospel continued in the faith and were commanded to remain faithful unto death to receive the crown of life (cf. **Acts 2:42 ff; Revelation 2:10**).

The previous paragraphs summarize the things that the apostles taught the first century Christians to do in order to render obedience to the Gospel. These things are consistent and true with the whole counsel of God’s word. However, there are many today who teach differently. There are many who teach salvation requires more, just as there are many who teach salvation requires less. Each one of us has to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling (**Philippians 2:12**).

Let us consider some of the most common errors taught today about salvation. Many honest people have been deceived by the false teaching of many honestly deceived teachers. Thus we must continually turn to God’s word to assure what we believe is truth. For it is only the truth that can set us free (**John 8:32**).

Some say that you need only to believe and you will be saved (i.e., confession, repentance, baptism and faithful living are not necessary). In response, I challenge this position with the words of James, who reminds us “even the demons believe – and tremble” (**James 2:19**). Are the demons saved? Demons believed in Jesus and even confessed Him as the Son of God (cf. **Luke 4:3; Luke 4:41**). Does this make them Christians? No! The thing that sets them apart from Christians is that Christians have fully obeyed the Gospel – all of it (confession, repentance, baptism, and faithful living – not just part of it (i.e. belief alone).

As an offshoot of the aforementioned belief, some say you are saved when you say a “sinner’s prayer” or “receive Jesus into your heart.” These positions are challenged by the simple fact that we have no such example in scripture proving such methods of salvation. Indeed, if prayer saved, certainly Saul (later to be called the apostle Paul) was saved by his three days of prayer and fasting (**Acts 9:9-11**). If prayer saved, why did Ananias command Paul to be baptized (**Acts 9:18**)? If all we have to do is receive Jesus in our hearts, why then is there no example of this—why is there no statement teaching this?

Some say that baptism is not necessary to salvation. I challenge this position with the words of our Lord, who said, “He who believes and is baptized shall be saved, he who does not believe shall be condemned” (**Mark 16:15-16**). The Lord’s words are clear and easy to understand! Baptism is a necessary element of Gospel salvation. Without baptism, one is still in his sins (cf. **Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16; Colossians 2:11-14; Romans 6:1-6**). Peter tells us clearly that baptism saves (**1 Peter 3:21**).

Some say that one must be baptized in the Holy Spirit to be saved. I challenge this with the example of Cornelius and his household. If they were saved by Holy Spirit baptism, why did Peter command them to be baptized in water (**Acts 10:44-48**)? Paul wrote that there is “one baptism” (**Ephesians 4:5**). Is it water or Holy Spirit baptism that saves? In light of the examples of conversion found in the book of Acts, this one baptism can only be water

baptism.

Some say that infant baptism saves. Such a position is challenged on the basis that first century Christians were commanded to hear the word, believe, confess with their mouths, repent, and live faithfully. Is an infant capable of hearing the word and choosing to believe? Can an infant comprehend Christ's sacrifice, much less confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God with his mouth (Romans 10:9-10)? What sin has a baby committed that he must repent of (cf. **Romans 9:11**)? His father's sin? Adam's sin? Read Ezekiel 18 and consider how God answers this question. An infant is not the proper candidate for baptism.

Some were sprinkled with water or had some water poured upon them when they were told they were saved. This is not Bible baptism. The Greek word for baptism means immersion. The Bible likens baptism unto a burial (**Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:4**). In **Acts 8:38-39**, note how Phillip and the eunuch both went down into the water, and both came up out of the water. The eunuch was immersed in water.

Evidently, there are many erroneous teachings about salvation and obedience to the gospel. This is why we must be diligent to show ourselves approved unto God (**2 Timothy 2:15**). This is why we must prove all things, hold fast to that which is good (**1 Thessalonians 5:21**). Most certainly, there is a day coming when we will not have the opportunity to obey the Gospel! There is a day coming when it will be too late! "For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? Now if the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (**1 Peter 4:17-18**).

Indeed, Jesus will return, "In flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed" (**2 Thessalonians 1:8-10**).

Therefore, friend, make it your resolution to obey the Gospel of Jesus Christ today—before it is everlastingly too late!

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3

Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24

Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30

Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21

Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27

Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17