



be ready always to give an answer
I Peter 3:15

earnestly contend for the faith
Jude 3

Fishers of Men

December 2008

S.D. Zoo, Horton Plaza, Carlsbad Street Fair, Balboa Park, Mother Goose Parade

What do animals, the park, the mall, a craft fair, and a parade have in common? We were there in November! Somewhere near 3,000 tracts and enough sharing- the gospel to make your vocal cords sore (a happy sore that is).

This was our second time to the Zoo which followed an intimate meeting with the head of the zoo legal department and the zoo security. Although we had a permit for the two outreaches I was told the freedom we experienced (miraculously I think), the previous time would now be limited to a small area far from any exiting people.

Long story short, I met with the legal department and the zoo security and was given permission to distribute literature in the most heavily traveled area but was asked not to hinder movement which I heartily agreed. The head of the legal department has a son who is a "Calvary Chapel Minister". He himself I'd say was religious but I don't know if he is a true believer. I shared the gospel with him for 20 minutes while on the zoo sidewalk and answered and discussed his questions at length. No doubt, once again, even given the frustrating circumstances this was a God ordained meeting.

The following Saturday, the "Amazing Ricky" and I handed out over 1,000 tracts in 3 hours as tourist from all over the world exited the zoo. We spoke with several Mormons, a JW, a pastor, several missionaries, and a host of lost people about the gospel. To God be the glory.

I had a similar struggle with management at Horton Plaza. They finally permitted 5 of us a prime location inside the mall on the south side entrance along with a nice banquet table, cloth, and chairs. We had many great witnessing encounters and handed out hundreds of tracts. I had a lively discussion with a group of about 7 or 8 "punks" dressed in black. Only God knows the outcome.

Dianna and I went to the Carlsbad street fair. This is the first time we didn't work there in nearly 20 years. We decided to see the event and of course pause in intersections and hand out literature. We gave out several hundred tracts along with some personal witnessing. I spoke with a JW, who after she realized I knew about their doctrine quickly ended the conversation. Error will almost run from truth.

John and I went in the evening to Balboa Park just before sunset again. Although not as many people they aren't in a hurry and mostly will talk to you. John spoke with a gentleman who seemed quite troubled. He asked if John would pray for him. Almost immediately the man's wife put an end to the conversation. Even a brief encounter God can use for His Glory.

Our last outreach was the Mother Goose Parade in El Cajon. Other than the Rose Parade, I believe it is the largest one day parade west of the Mississippi. They claim 200,000 plus in attendance. No permits required. I'm so glad! Bible John and I went early before the start of the parade and talked to people for almost an hour and a half. Then we tracted only. 90 percent of the people took the tracts which numbered over 1,000. Amazing!

November was a busy month as, Lord willing will be December. We've purchased over 5,000 tracts in the last couple of weeks.

The state of the economy has had a devastating effect on giving to this ministry. Please consider financially helping with the many expenses associated with these outreaches. May God bless you and your family this Christmas Season as you diligently strive to serve Him.



Carlsbad, California. How many of the 110,000 people do you think are lost? If we don't tell them how to be saved, "Who will?"



San Diego Zoo, our second visit. Ricky doing a Michael Jackson "Moon Walk" just before the stampede of people as the sun set.



Horton Plaza. The Westfield table with a bunch of tracts. Bible John, facing us, talking to a young Marine. Ricky (with his famous Red Sox hat) is talking with a black man about the gospel. He started the conversation by commenting on the guys hat (probably a Tampa Bay Rays hat).

Mormonism Challenged

Saved by Works?

Mormons believe that faith in Jesus is necessary to be saved which must be coupled with good works to find favor with God. The Christian likewise says that Jesus is necessary to be saved and works have a place in the Christians life. At first glance it seems that perhaps there is agreement in the salvation of Mormonism and the salvation of a Christian.

However, we need to take a close examination of how Mormonism defines these doctrines and others that directly illuminate what we mean by salvation and what is a Christian. The evidence is overwhelming that there are serious problems in the LDS salvation.

Actually, this careful examination will reveal that there is almost NO agreement between the LDS salvation and the salvation of the Bible.

Here's a partial list of the issues concerning salvation. The first is obviously, what do we MEAN by salvation? What is the character of God? What is man's character? Is anyone truly good? What is the penalty of breaking God's law? Is there a real hell for the unjust? Who is Jesus? What was accomplished on the cross? How can I be justified before a Holy God? What is a true Christian? What is saving faith? What is the place of works? And the list goes on.

The subject of works is a core issue and it's relationship with salvation or simply put, our right standing before a Holy God.

When I go on the "Fishers of Men" outreaches, I'm now asking those that claim to be Christian or religious, "What church do you attend?" I'm meeting many Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses who's main disagreement with the gospel we present is the issue of works.

Therefore, I'm going to attempt to distill the LDS belief to just a few paragraphs in comparison to the Bible.

Although we were created in the "image of God" we are NOT literally the children of God by nature as Mormon believe. They say falsely, we are gods in embryo just progressing to higher and higher levels according to their prophets.

They believe that we all will be resurrected (which by the way is true). They call this "general salvation" which term is not found in the Bible. They say this general salvation comes to all even to those that do not believe (see LDS Mormon Doctrine, pg 669).

Then they say there is an "individual salvation" which man must earn to be truly saved. Of course you must accept Joseph Smith, be baptized by someone holding a special priesthood, do good works, obey the commandments, pay your tithe, do temple work for yourself and behalf of the dead, and the list continues.

"Without atonement, the gospel, the priesthood, and the sealing

power, there would be no salvation...If it had not been for Joseph Smith and the restoration, there would be no salvation. There is no salvation outside The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." (*Doctrine of Salvation*, vol 1, 134 and *Mormon Doctrine*, pg 670)

LDS scriptures demonstrates the polluted Mormon gospel:

"... for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all that we can do." (Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 25:23).

"We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel." (*Pearl of Great Price*: 3rd Article of Faith).

So, what is the place, if any, is works? Unfortunately, some Christians say there is absolutely no place for works as evidence for true saving faith and belief in Jesus does not mean that one will produce good works. The struggle between legalism (too much emphasis on the law) and antinomianism (no law) exists.

If we carefully and honestly examine ALL that scripture has to say on salvation and works I believe we can come to an accurate conclusion of the place of works.

Ephesians 2:8-9 states that we are saved by the grace of God alone through faith which is a gift from God and NOT of works. This saving faith comes by the transforming power of the Holy spirit in regeneration and produces a new heart and a growing desire to love and obey Christ.

Continuing on in verse 10 we read of the God ordained place of works in the life of a Christian:

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

Salvation is by God's grace and kindness through Faith alone which God freely gives through the power of the Holy Ghost. By this great work focused in the cross we are justified by His blood. We must NEVER add to this saving work of God. This new birth results in a new heart and new affections which desire (imperfectly of course) to please God by obedience and good works.

Sad to say that there is a modern gospel that removes any association of works with evidence of salvation. They justify this by removing much of the clear teaching of the New Testament, the gospels and the words of Christ as being irrelevant to the Christian life. This at best produces a shallow Christianity and at worst counterfeit Christians.

May we seek truth above the popular opinions of men and passionately desire to follow Jesus with all our heart. What a privilege to boast of His marvelous gospel of grace as revealed in the glorious cross of our Lord.

The CROSSLESS Gospel!

It seems the greatest threat to the gospel is coming "within the visible church". Compromise, tolerance, lukewarmness, apathy. God is being marketed so as not to offend the so called seeker and even the heart of the gospel is being adjusted to make it as easy as possible to become a Christian without too much inconvenience to our usual way of life. A. W. Tozer saw this a generation ago when he said, **"I wonder what has happened to our Christian theology which no longer contains any hint of what it should mean to be completely and utterly abandoned to Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour."** (The Quotable Tozer I, p. 22)

A snowballing American "easy believism" is gaining momentum and is infecting more and more churches. This gospel removes the necessity of repentance (turning from sin) and the Lordship of Jesus as evidences of true saving Faith. Nearly all the leading advocates of the no-lordship gospel were associated with Dallas Theological Seminary. The late 37 year Dallas theological professor, Zane Hodges, being the most influential.

I stumbled upon an article written by Tom Stegall, a believer in the error of easy believism, who says some of the prime promoters of this doctrine have taken it a step further insisting that belief in Jesus is ALL that is required to be saved. In other words, the deity of Jesus is NOT essential to saving faith, nor is the CROSS or the RESURRECTION! He quotes Hodges and others that reasoning with a lost sinner that he must believe in the cross and resurrection is "adding to the gospel". The old gospel is "flawed". Stegall states that the gospel message even within the non-lordship camp has taken "a radical change for the worse."

Although some prominent leaders, living and dead, have or had a personal dislike for a cross-centered approach to evangelism, the apostle Paul had no such antipathy. To Corinth he said "the message of the cross" was "to those who are perishing". (1 Cor. 1:18)

Sadly, we MUST always be on the lookout for a eroding gospel even within the visible church.

If you would like to read the entire 11 page article you may view it at: <http://www.middletonbiblechurch.org/doctrine/crossless.htm>

Jehovah's Witnesses Challenged

The Only Begotten Son of God!

Lately, I've run across several witnesses that defended the Watch Tower doctrines by stating that Jesus is NOT God but rather the only begotten son of God. He was created.

They have been told "only begotten" means only created and they believe it. From the Watch Tower web site available to all the world, they reason that "the only-begotten Son" cannot be equal to God because it doesn't make sense.

The following are the first two paragraphs from the JW web site under the heading, 'How the "Only-Begotten Son"?:

THE Bible calls Jesus the "only-begotten Son" of God. (John 1:14; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9) Trinitarians say that since God is eternal, so the Son of God is eternal. But how can a person be a son and at the same time be as old as his father?

Trinitarians claim that in the case of Jesus, "only-begotten" is not the same as the dictionary definition of "begetting," which is "to procreate as the father." (Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary) They say that in Jesus' case it means "the sense of unoriginated relationship," a sort of only son relationship without the begetting. (Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words) Does that sound logical to you? Can a man father a son without begetting him?

Their initial arguments appeals to human reason. If it doesn't seem reasonable therefore it can't be true. Since humans beget humans that aren't as old as themselves therefore God must do the same.

To begin with, what father has ever beget anything other than another of the same nature and character as himself? Would it not likewise seem reasonable of Jesus that He is of the same nature and character as the Father?

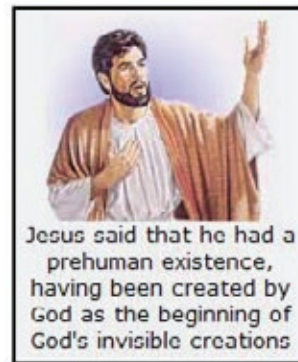
Actually, what father has ever beget a son without a mother? Must God have a wife as the Mormons say is reasonable?

We MUST realize that when we speak of God and His nature and character we speak as a finite creature trying to understand the infinite Creator.

The Greek word for "only begotten" is monogenes and does NOT mean only created.

C.S. Lewis in his book Mere Christianity gives some good insight into the word begotten. Lewis says:

"To beget is to become the father of something; to create is to make something. When you beget something you beget something that is the same kind as yourself. A man begets human babies, and beaver begets beavers, and a bird begets eggs that become baby birds. But when you make, you make of a kind different from yourself. Birds make nests, beavers make dams, a man makes a wireless set. . . What God begets is God; just as what man begets is man. What God creates is not God; just as what man creates is not man."



A screen capture from the Jehovah's Witnesses web site under the heading of, How the "Only-Begotten Son"?:

Lewis is saying that if God "beget" Jesus, then Jesus was God. If John did not mean equality in terms of essence, mind, nature, and heart, he would have said God created Jesus. Nowhere in the Holy Bible do we find that God created Jesus, or that He is Michael the archangel as witnesses are taught.

The late Dr. Henry Morris comments on John 1:14 where Jesus is referred to as "the only begotten of the Father":

"This is the key verse of the Incarnation, assuring us that the man Jesus, who dwelt among us for a time, was also the eternal Word who was "in the beginning with God" and that He "was God" and that "all things were made by Him" (John 1:1-3). He was God the Creator manifest in the flesh."

Amen.

What's Coming!

By far, 2008 has been our most active year in ministry. Dozens of outreaches with hundreds of personal witnessing encounters. 15,000 plus tracts distributed, several speaking engagements, along with discipling and many bible studies made up an active year.

Although we cannot determine the will of God for a new year we desire and pursue a number of God honoring plans.

To begin with, perhaps our greatest outreach (as far as numbers is concerned) will have happened by the time you read this. Our third annual Parkway Plaza outreach in El Cajon. 10 people are committed to partake on December 6 with thousands of pieces of literature already purchased and ready to go.

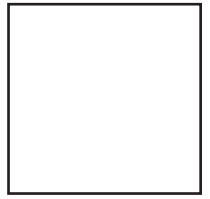
The month of February we plan on focusing on Balboa Park because of the much touted 200th birthday of Charles Darwin, father of modern evolution.

April we hope to make a larger splash in the famous San Diego Earth Day celebrated with 60,000 plus at Balboa Park.

Mid June will be a heavy emphasis on the Jehovah's Witness convention here at the San Diego Qualcomm stadium. Although we missed it last year due to being unable to recruit any help, we now have some interested in helping at this important outreach.

Just a few weeks ago we sent out a full color 11x17 brochure to every church in San Diego. Over 200! This brochure offered our services to help the churches in the area of apologetics and witnessing. We speak free of charge on defending the faith on the errors of the Mormons and the Jehovah's Witnesses as well as Evolution. We offer an excellent series on how to share the faith effectively. We are in the process of arranging some free engagements.

We do desire your prayers and petition you to help financially in these many God honoring endeavors.



“...and all the families of the earth will be blessed in you.” Genesis 12:3

“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.” Matthew 1:21

The promise given to Abraham was fulfilled in the long awaited Messiah, Jesus Christ. This Savior would rescue His people from the helpless and hopeless condition that our sins leave us. Such mercy, grace and love is too wonderful, it is HIGH, I cannot attain unto it (an exclamation used by the Psalmist is Psalm 139:6).

We thank God daily for his long suffering and patience as we a fallen people desire to honor and glorify Him.

May God grant us another year to boast in Him and to proclaim His Gospel that saves our souls.

We thank God daily for you our praying and supporting friends in this ministry and wish God’s blessings on your life and that of your family.



In His service,

Jerry & Dianna

NEWSLETTER

Challenge Ministries is a non-profit Christian ministry dedicated to the defense and proclamation of the Gospel and Biblical truth.

Founded by Jerry & Dianna Benson
E-mail: challenge.min@cox.net
web site: www.challengemin.org

Challenge Ministries
P.O. Box 20195
El Cajon, California 92021

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