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THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

Colossians 1:21-23
Lesson #6
Abiding faith
03/1/2026

1

Most ancient empires were formed from military conquest but not Christianity.

2

Most ancient empires were formed from military conquest but not Christianity.

How a forbidden religion swept the world.

- **Eccentric Teaching**
- **Evangelistic Toughness**
- **Experiential Transformation**

3

Colossians 1

“21 And although you were **formerly alienated** and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, 22 yet He has **now reconciled** you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach— 23 if indeed you **continue in the faith** firmly established and steadfast, and **not moved away** from the hope of the gospel that you have **heard**, which was **proclaimed** in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.”

(interrative paraphrase)

“**In the past** you were aliens to God’s kingdom but **in the present** you have become heirs to that kingdom through the reconciliation of your soul by the substitutional sacrifice of Jesus whereby you are declared holy, free from fear of condemnation. **In the future** you must continue to embrace the Gospel message you were taught.”

4

- **Eccentric Teaching**

“23 ...that you have **heard**, which was **proclaimed** in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.”

- It **celebrated** the death of its founder and called its disciples to follow his example.
- It **imputes** virtue apart from personal works.
- It was **insulted** both religious and secular culture.
- It **unified** all classes of society.
- It spread without worldly **power**.

5

Paul’s Gospel was a *mystery* before the death, resurrection, and gift of the Spirit at Pentecost.

Colossians 1:26

“the **mystery** which has been **hidden from the past** ages and generations; but has now been manifested to His saints,”

Ephesians 3:3-5

“that by revelation there was made known to me the **mystery**,...which **in other generations was not made known** to the sons of men,”

The nation Israel **+** The Body of Christ

Old Covenant I II III IV V VI VII VIII IX X New Covenant

Old Testament - Gospels Acts - Epistles

6

1 Corinthians 1

“22 For indeed Jews ask for signs, and Greeks search for wisdom; 23 but we **preach** Christ crucified, **to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness**, 24 but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

Paul's Gospel message was controversial then as it is today.

- Its message of the **Word of the Cross** insulted the Jewish view of messianic deliverance.
- Its message of the **Way of the Cross** insulted the Gentiles view of Greek philosophy.
- Both were expecting a **worldly hope**.

7

2 Peter 3

“15 and regard the patience of our Lord *as* salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, 16 as also in all *his* letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are **some things hard to understand**, which the untaught and unstable distort, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.”

Paul's Gospel message was controversial then as it is today.

- The relationship of the N.C. to the O.C.
- The relationship of grace / faith & obedience
- The relationship of hope in this life & the next.

8

What we feed our souls on will shape our lives.

We can sow to the Spirit Galatians 6:8-10 We can sow to the flesh



The one we feed is the one that grows.
The one we starve is the one that dies.

9

• Experiential Transformation

“21 And although you were **formerly alienated** and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, 22 yet He has **now reconciled** you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach”

- If our our faith does not **alter our behavior**, something is “out of sync”.
- Normally, we should have a sense of: **serenity, security, and significance**.
- Our **anxiety & anger** will give us clues to our values, priorities, & commitments.

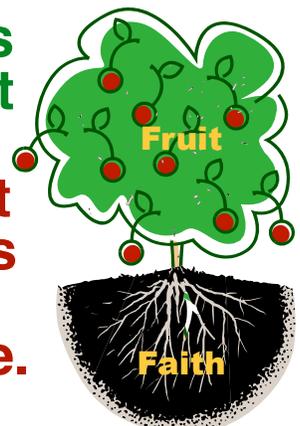
10



UNC students can cheer for Duke **without losing their student status at UNC** but that would be unnatural.

11

A tree with green leaves may tell us it is alive, but it needs fruit to tell us it is healthy and reproductive.



12

Paul turned mourning into dancing

Difficult circumstances are not inconsistent with God's love and will.

Our character is **shaped & showcased** in our response to life's highs & lows.

13

1 Cor. 13:4-7 **Love is** a response to

patient trials
kind insults
not jealous success of others
does not brag success of self
is not arrogant power & authority
not unbecoming freedom
not self seeking competition
is not provoked confrontation
holds no grudges injustice
does not rejoice failure of others
rejoices in the truth gossip & slander
bears all things losses
believes / hopes all thing discouragement
endures all things delayed hopes

An inner response to people and problems is the heart of a witness to a healthy faith as a disciple of Jesus.

14

• Evangelistic Toughness

“23 if indeed you **continue in the faith** firmly established and steadfast, and **not moved away** from the hope of the gospel”

- This is the **gift of God** that will never leave us, unless we **discard the Gospel message** with its hope “in Christ”.
- God has forgiven us of our sins (**past, present, & future**) but the sin that cannot be forgiven is the **rejection of the the cross**, that bore our sin.

15

Why were Jesus & Paul harder on religious Jews who did not believe than on immoral Gentiles who did not behave?

The Word of the Cross made provision for misbehavior but not for disbelief.

16

Is there an unforgivable sin?

YES!

It is the rejection of the Gospel of grace & hope in Christ.

17

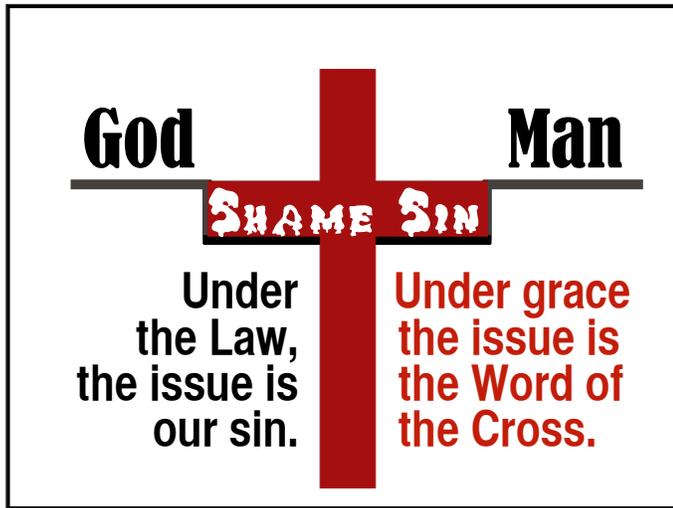
God **Man**

GIFT **FAITH**

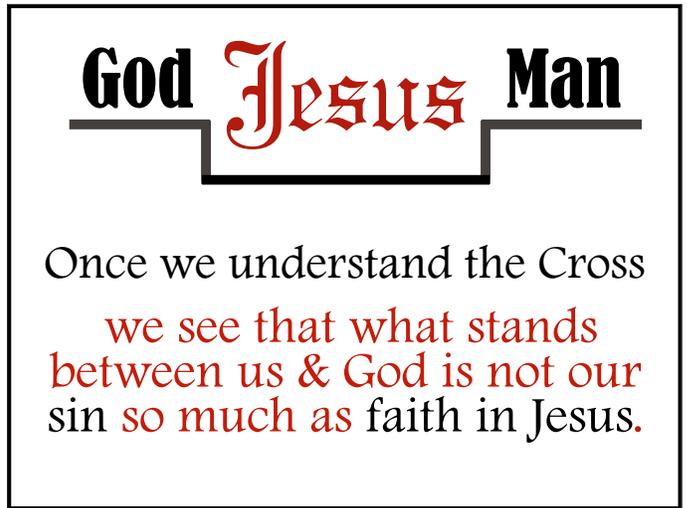
Christ's sacrifice frees us from sin. **God's Image in us gives us a choice.**

“16 For God so loved the only begotten Son, that should not perish, but God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. 18 He who **believes** in Him is not judged; he who does not **believe** has been judged already, because he has not **believed** in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” *John 3*

18

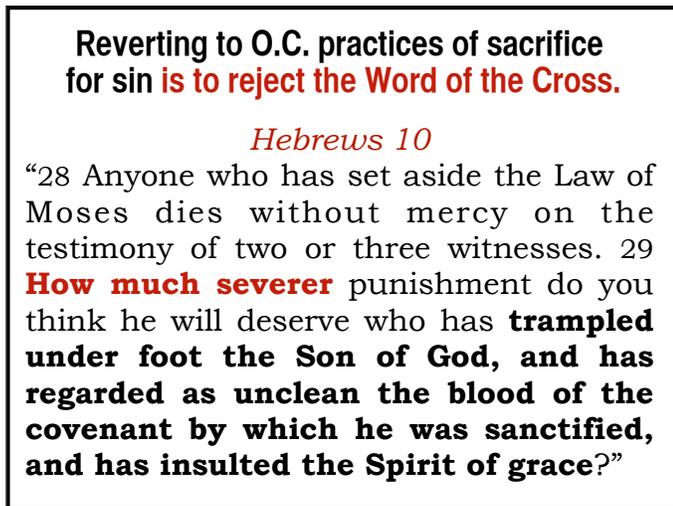


19



20

Once we understand the Cross
we see that what stands
between us & God is not our
sin so much as faith in Jesus.

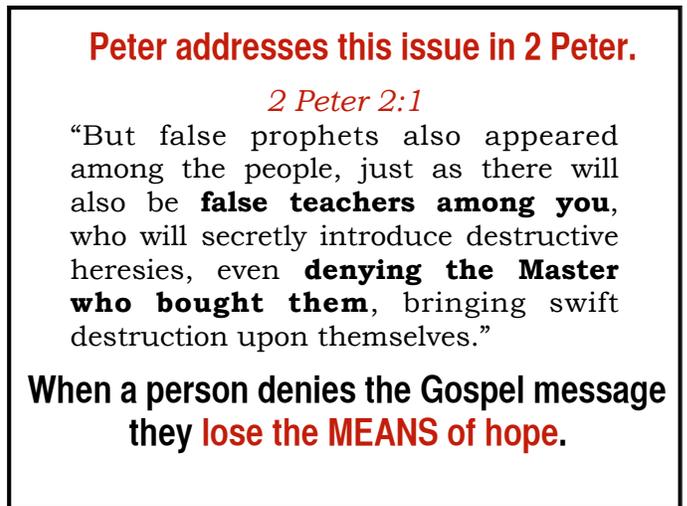


21

Reverting to O.C. practices of sacrifice for sin **is to reject the Word of the Cross.**

Hebrews 10

“28 Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 **How much severer** punishment do you think he will deserve who has **trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?**”



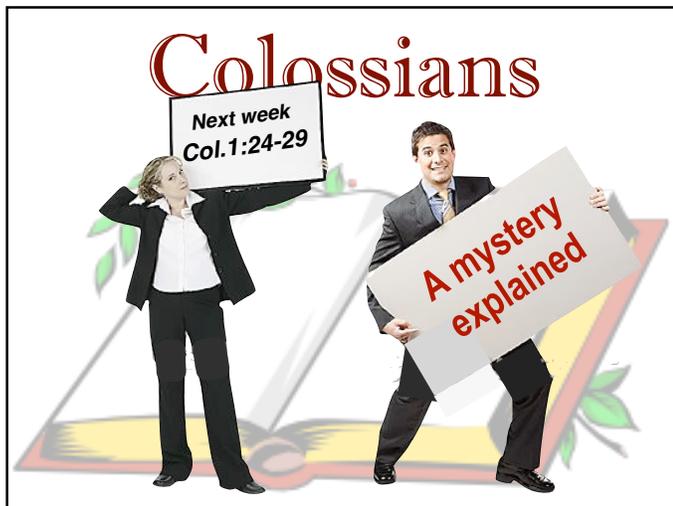
22

Peter addresses this issue in 2 Peter.

2 Peter 2:1

“But false prophets also appeared among the people, just as there will also be **false teachers among you**, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even **denying the Master who bought them**, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.”

When a person denies the Gospel message they **lose the MEANS of hope.**



23