

What you believe is essential for Salvation

Let's begin with a simple scenario: A person walks into a church, accepts Christ as his/her personal savior. The preacher tells this person that he is now saved. Is this person truly saved? This is a very important question and it will be shown in this article that there is so much more that is needed.

By way of introduction, let's begin by looking at Leviticus chapter 4. In this chapter, God deals with "sins of ignorance." **Notice that a person can commit a sin in ignorance and it is still considered a sin.** and the person still has to atone for this sin. So God does provide a way for this sin to be forgiven; however, the sin still convicts the person until the sacrifice of forgiveness is offered.

This is a very important principle that needs to be emphasized. God has declared that sin is a sin, regardless of a person's awareness. Upon consideration, this is wise and just. If God did not convict sins of ignorance, due to Man's nature, he can just claim ignorance and strive to remain ignorant of every responsibility toward God. He can then claim to be innocent.

The prophet Hosea writes about this principle:

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: Because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: Seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children." (Hosea 4:6, KJV)

"For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; And the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." (Hosea 6:6, KJV)

Hosea describes the Israelites' relation to God. Job states the attempt of the wicked:

"Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; For we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." (Job 21:14, KJV)

Solomon states it this way:

"How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? And the scorers delight in their scorning, And fools hate knowledge?" (Proverbs 1:22, KJV)

In the New Testament, Christ tells the Samaritan woman at the well:

"Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews." (John 4:22, KJV)

This principle is very important so let's supply more verses related to the idea of what ignorance means to the relationship between a person and God:

*“And **this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.**” (John 17:3, KJV)*

*“And Jesus answering said unto them, **Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?**” (Mark 12:24, KJV)*

*“They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that **whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.**” (John 16:2, KJV)*

*“Then said Jesus, Father, **forgive them; for they know not what they do.** And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.” (Luke 23:34, KJV)*

So our objective in this article is this:

1. Prove that a minor change in the knowledge of God's plan destroys its power.
2. That even in apostolic times, there were some who were already perverting or changing the knowledge of the gospel.
3. That the apostle Paul and other inspired writers were zealous to keep the knowledge of the Truth in its purity.
4. That this Truth is the gospel of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16)

Our focus is NOT on the actual plan. All we can do in this article is to show that if the WHOLE truth of the Gospel is not known and believed, eternal life is not possible.

First then we have Christ saying this in John 8:32:

“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (KJV)

What does the truth free a person from? Well, he answers in verse 34

“Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.” (KJV)

Now considering what Paul says in Romans 6:23 that the "*wages of sin is death*," we can understand the importance of the "freeing" that Christ is speaking about. It is not just from sin but also from death. Hence, to know the truth and to follow it, frees you from death, and if freed from death, eternal life is the result because Christ conquered death for everyone that believes. (John 3:15)

Now to understand what "truth" means, it would be good to look at the meaning of the original Greek word. The word is "*aletheia*" and means "the reality lying at the basis of an appearance" or "the manifested veritable essence of a thing".

Now while we look at the following passages keep in mind the words of Christ, that only if the truth is known can it make you free. We turn to Ephesians 4:18 and there speaking of the unenlightened

gentiles, Paul says this:

*“Having the understanding darkened, **being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them**, because of the blindness of their heart:”* (Ephesians 4:18, KJV)

Notice that ignorance of the gospel was the alienation from the life of God.

Now let us look at passages that show that even though one becomes enlightened to the truth, if he changes his mind (or stops believing the Truth) he will also forfeit his opportunity to eternal life.

Notice Paul’s concern at the perversion of the Truth. If it was not that important, surely he would not have dealt with it as severely as he did. Notice his language:

“O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?”
(Galatians 3:1, KJV)

And again:

“Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?” (Gal. 5:7 KJV)

Writing to Timothy, he tells him in 1 Timothy 6:5:

*“Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and **destitute of the truth**, supposing that gain is godliness: **from such withdraw thyself.**”* (1 Timothy 6:5, KJV)

In his second letter to timothy Paul writes about two men who had corrupted the truth by preaching something that was not true. He says in 2 Timothy 2:18:

“Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.” (2 Timothy 2:18, KJV)

Now if some believe that the resurrection was past and Paul says that by believing this doctrine the faith of some was overthrown. Does it matter whether we believe in a resurrection or not? Does it matter if we know of a resurrection?

Most preachers would say no to these questions. They say that as long as you accept Christ you are saved, no matter if you believe in any resurrection or not. But here we have believers who had already accepted Christ, and still Paul said that if they came to believe that the resurrection was past (or not going to happen), their faith would be overthrown or subverted.

Again, in 2 timothy 3:5 Paul says this concerning the last days:

*“Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: **from such turn away.**”*
(2 Timothy 3:5, KJV)

Then verse 7:

“Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (2 Timothy 3:7, KJV)

Now, does not this description sound familiar? There is this thing called theology today which is never really understood, yet it is taught as sound doctrine. Does it matter what we hear? Can we believe what we hear whether it is a truth or a lie and still have a chance at eternal life? If we believe Paul, the answer is no. According to him we are to withdraw ourselves from those who teach what is not written. Why? Because they will corrupt our faith. Again, in chapter 2 Tim. 4:4:

“And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”
(2 Timothy 4:4, KJV)

Is this not true today? We have preachers who preach going to heaven at death (truth or fable?). There are some who speak of the "immortal soul" of man (truth or fable?). There are some who speak of a supernatural devil that fell from heaven (truth or fable?)

Does it matter whether we think any one of these doctrines is truth? Have you confirmed it by studying the scriptures to the best of your ability? Does it matter what we believe and can our beliefs affect our salvation if we believe them?

The truth of God is also referred to as the gospel of God. Paul uses the terms interchangeably in Ephesians 1:13:

“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard **the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation**: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,” (Ephesians 1:13, KJV)

This gospel of our salvation is to be in its purity if it is to have any power. The power that Paul refers in rom. 1:16:

“For I am not ashamed of the **gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation** to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”
(Romans 1:16, KJV)

Paul is very emphatic concerning this gospel, because he knew that if it was perverted or changed it would lose the very thing that Christ came to accomplish, that is, the abolishment of death. In fact, Paul is so emphatic that he says this about preaching another gospel. Galatians 1:6-8:

“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would **pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven,**

preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” (Galatians 1:6–8, KJV)

Now, this is very strong language. However, it was necessary because there were those, who even in his day, were preaching things that were not originally part of the gospel. Defined in acts 8:12:

“But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.”
(Acts 8:12, KJV)

In the account of Matthew, Christ gives a parable in which he depicts the 3 types of human characters. One of those characters is the person who hears but does not understand:

*“When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and **understandeth it not**, then cometh the wicked one, and **catcheth away that which was sown in his heart**. This is he which received seed by the way side.”* (Matthew 13:19, KJV)

Now, can we say that we do not have to understand what the gospel is to enter the kingdom of God? Before answering, look at verse 23:

*“But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, **and understandeth it**; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”* (Matthew 13:23, KJV)

Remember Ephesians 4:18:

*“Having the **understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them**, because of the blindness of their heart.”*
(Ephesians 4:18, KJV)

Returning to Paul, because of the love and work that **he** did for the gospel, he called it "his gospel". He says in romans 2:16:

“In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.” (Romans 2:16, KJV)

Now if we are to be judged according to the gospel Paul preached, which is of course the true gospel of Christ, does it matter whether we have this gospel or not? If we are to be judged by it, does it not stand to reason that we should know it so that we can do what we have to do to save ourselves?

Again, the same apostle writing to the Corinthians tells them in 2 Cor. 11:3-4:

*“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, **so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.** For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.”* (2 Corinthians 11:3–4, KJV)

Now here are more scriptural references showing that belief in another gospel is very dangerous. Paul uses the analogy of eve and the serpent. Eve was seduced by the subtlety of the serpent's reasoning, and likewise, many people are deceived by the subtlety of preachers. Preachers who speak of good behavior and of doing good to others. Things that, on the surface, are very good and honest, but if the true doctrines of the truth are not there as the foundation, it is all in vain. Paul says "by faith ye are saved". Faith in what? Faith in the truth.

Again, 2 Thess. 1:8:

*“In flaming fire taking vengeance **on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:**”* (2 Thessalonians 1:8, KJV)

Now here it would be good to summarize that we have begun with the most general view of the plan of God, which is referred to as the "truth of god". Then we have touched upon the gospel which has more detail and is defined as "the kingdom of god and the name of Jesus Christ."

At this point, let us look with more detail into this gospel. Again, we cannot prove the specific doctrines at this time for each is an exposition by itself, but we can show that the doctrines (first principles or basic elements) are not flexible. They must be believed exactly as the scriptures teach them.

A "doctrine" is a certain teaching of God. The doctrines of the gospel are the foundations of it. A foundation of a house has to be able to hold the house together. So, it is with the foundation of the truth. This is an analogy that the scriptures themselves use.

*“And (BELIEVERS) are built **upon the foundation** of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone;”* (Ephesians 2:20, KJV)

Everyone can understand and perceive the truth of this analogy. The first and foremost thing to be done when building a house is to have a good foundation. If not, it will not matter how beautiful or how carefully built the rest of the house is. If the foundation breaks up, the whole house goes down.

So with the truth. The foundation must be laid very carefully. If so laid, then the mind will be grounded to resist false ideas, because it will perceive the untruth of all false ideas.

Jesus said in John 7:16-17

*“Jesus answered them, and said, **My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.** If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or*

whether I speak of myself.” (John 7:16–17, KJV)

Now the doctrine that Christ spoke offended the Jews because they had their own. Yet Christ did not keep quiet. He contended that their doctrine was wrong. He told his disciples in matt. 16:12:

*“Then understood they how that he bade them not **beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.**” (Matthew 16:12, KJV)*

Why? Because it did not impart life as his did. Now the christian believers continued in the same doctrine as Christ and the apostles as acts 2:42 shows:

*“And they continued stedfastly in **the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship**, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” (Acts 2:42, KJV)*

If the apostles did not think that it was that important to believe certain doctrines, why did they persevere to preach the truth? Paul says in rom. 16:17:

*“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences **contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.**” (Romans 16:17, KJV)*

Again, the same tone of speech that Paul uses often is used in Ephesians 4:14:

*“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and **carried about with every wind of doctrine**, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;” (Ephesians 4:14, KJV)*

Remember we talked about a solid foundation? This is the reason. Most people who do not know the truth are carried with a new thing that they think makes sense. This is the reason for so many cults. They don't have sufficient stability to remain steady in the true doctrines.

Just to drive the point home, let us simply just quote more verses:

*“As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some **that they teach no other doctrine**,” (1 Timothy 1:3, KJV)*

*“Till I come, **give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.**” (1 Timothy 4:13, KJV)*

*“If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and **to the doctrine which is according to godliness**; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof*

cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,” (1 Timothy 6:3–4, KJV)

*“**For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;**”* (2 Timothy 4:3, KJV)

*“**But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:**”* (Titus 2:1, KJV)

*“**Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.**”* (Titus 2:10, KJV)

Is this not enough proof of the importance of sound doctrine? Would it be covered so thoroughly by Paul if it was not important? Doctrines are essential to one's faith. Paul says of faith in Hebrews 11:1 that:

*“**Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.**”* (Hebrews 11:1, KJV)

Now if faith is a conviction in proof, does it not stand to reason to commit ourselves only to what can be scripturally proven without a doubt?

Would we please God by believing in something that He has not promised or taught?

The answer is no, because as we read the rest of the chapter of Hebrews, we see that God was glorified by those who believed what he said and not what he did not say.

If we were to be judged on faith alone and not whether we believed the true doctrines, then the false prophet Mohammed, and all the zealous men and women who lived (but not according to knowledge) would be saved as well. However, Paul speaks of just one faith when **he** says in Ephesians 4:4-5:

*“**There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism,**”* (Ephesians 4:4–5, KJV)

The scriptures speak contrary to all other faiths. They say that the way is narrow and only by believing the true faith can we be saved.

In conclusion, let us look at the record of acts chapter 8. Here

We have the case of an Ethiopian eunuch who was a student of the Hebrew

Scriptures. He undoubtedly was familiar with the scriptures because "he had come to Jerusalem to worship." We read at acts 8:30:

*“**And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said,***

Understandest thou what thou readest?" (Acts 8:30, KJV)

And so we ask this as well.

- Understandest what thou readest?
- Do questions come up when you read **the** bible that just cannot be answered in harmony with the doctrines you hold?
- Do the scriptures seem to be a sealed book?

If so, we hope you will answer with the same question the eunuch asks: verse 31:

“And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.” (Acts 8:31, KJV)

Now there are many denominations that can make some parts of the bible to harmonize, and the parts they can't harmonize, they ignore. We remark that unless the whole truth is found (harmonization of all scripture) the bible cannot impart unto anyone eternal life.

If this exposition has stirred up your desire to ask questions. If it has gotten you curious to find out if what you believe is true. If it will give you the incentive to try to prove this exposition wrong, then this exposition has accomplished its purpose.