

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expository Study of **The Gospel According to Luke**
Chapter 16- Luke 16:14-18

272- That Which is Highly Esteemed Among Men is
Detestable in the Sight of God- Part 1

March 29, 2015

Luke 16:14-18

14 Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and were scoffing at Him.

15 And He said to them, "**You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.**

16 "**The Law and the Prophets** *were proclaimed* until John; since that time the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it.

17 "**But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the Law to fail.**

18 "**Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries one who is divorced from a husband commits adultery.**

To the Glory of God

The highest obligation, the ultimate duty, and the highest honor, and the fullest expression of joy for human beings is to know God, and to love God, and to enjoy God forever. All of humanity is commanded to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. We are called to worship the Owner and the Creator of the Universe, and we are instructed not to share that kind of love with anyone or anything else. We are told to willingly and humbly and joyfully give God our Savior the ultimate degree of respect, admiration, awe, and obedience. This is what God *demands* and this is what God *expects* and this is

what God is *entitled* to receive from every single person who is born of woman.

But there is a very serious problem that stops us from doing that. And that problem is Sin. Sin is the reason why we love *idols* and *not* God- Who is the Giver and Provider of everything that is Good. Sin is why we find our delight in *ourselves* and *not* in the most beautiful and glorious Being in the universe. Sin is why we set our affections on *things that are passing away* and *not* on the One Who is Eternal and Absolute. Sin is why we find pleasure in this life and *not* in the next life. Sin is why we enjoy rebelling *against* God and His Ways, and why we relish to find new and innovative ways to *extend* our rebellion to lower and lower depths. Sin is why we find satisfaction in committing Celestial High Treason with the only One Who is completely *deserving* of our loyalty and devotion. In other words- Sin stops and eliminates genuine Spirit and Truth Worship of the one true living God from happening.

You see, the barrier that was created between us and God from the Fall and from the ongoing manifestation of the Fall- which is our own continual personal sins- is so great and so extensive and so deep and so wide that in our lost and fallen condition- we *cannot* and we *do not* worship God. So lost people *cannot* and they *do not* "know" God. **1Corinthians 2:14** says:

But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

So the Bible teaches that lost people *do not* naturally or normally "worship" God because they do not "love" God. And lost people *do not* "love" God because they *cannot* know God or the things of God. So the Fall and our continuous sins makes it so that God is not worshipped.

But God is determined to be known and loved and enjoyed forever. God is determined to be worshipped. And so at great cost to Himself- God set His Love upon unworthy sinners- *before* He made the world, *before* they were ever born, and *before* they did anything good or bad- so that by setting His Love upon them- the Glory of His Grace might be magnified in their Salvation and *not* what they did for themselves.

And the Omnipotent Almighty *condescended* to fallen Humanity and took on human flesh and became Man. And the Incarnate God lived as a fully human Man for 33-1/2 years without ever sinning a single time. Jesus the Christ- the One and Only of the Father, then took upon Himself the sins of all of those whom God had set His Love upon and absorbed the entirety of the Just Wrath of God against those sins on Himself and died on the Cross and descended into the lower parts of the earth. **2Corinthians 5:21** says:

He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

And according to the Scriptures- on the third day- this same Jesus rose up from the dead by the Glory of the Father in the very same Body in which He died- without our sins- and bodily and physically and literally ascended into Heaven in the very same Body in which He died to sit at the Right Hand of the Father- where He makes continual intercession for us now. And at some undisclosed point in the future- this same Jesus will come again to this earth to Judge the world with Equity and Justice and at that moment- He will eliminate all sin from the earth by eliminating all unrepentant sinners.

And so today- God the Holy Spirit goes forth into the earth seeking to save the lost elected and chosen people upon whom God has set His Love. And God goes *inside* those elected sinners sovereignly, and He *forcefully* and *violently* and *purposefully* and *dramatically* and *supernaturally* and *miraculously* and *effectively* opens their blind eyes and unstops their deaf ears, and takes out of them a stony heart and gives them a heart of flesh, and these unholy transgressors are born again.

And with those eyes that now see and with those ears that now hear and with that new heart that can believe- these sinners see and hear and believe the Biblical Gospel as it is preached to them, and the veil that was upon their heart is lifted, and the satan induced blindness is removed and they see the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ.

And as they behold their God- these chosen sinners are *granted* the gift of repentance and they enter into a broken and convicted and devastated condition over their sins and their rebellion and their arrogance against God. And they are mercifully endowed with the gift

of deeply agonizing over their separation from God as they are sovereignly *drawn* or *dragged* to the Feet of Jesus.

And there- broken and humbled- stripped of all arrogance and any hope of earning Favor with God by what they can do for themselves- these elected sinners are empowered to see Jesus- exalted as Lord and Savior- and they see Him as their only Hope for Forgiveness and Rescue from the horrendous Wrath of God. And these souls are graciously enabled to be able and willing to trust in Jesus and in the finished Work of the Darling of the Trinity.

And God the Father looks at the *propitiated* Death of God the Son and by the Power of God the Holy Spirit- He sovereignly forgives these chosen vessels of every sin- past, present and future. And God the Father then takes the spotless Righteousness that Jesus earned by never sinning and He *imputes* that pristine Righteousness to these forgiven sinners by the agency of Faith alone- and God sovereignly "declares" them fit for Heaven.

But He's not finished. And so God the Father then sovereignly *adopts* these unworthy "sinners made righteous" into His very Own Family and He sets them on the life-long process of Sanctification or edification or discipleship- which will allow these unworthy transgressors to partake of Christ's Holiness in their eventual Glorification in Heaven through their "ongoing and *diligent* use" of the five "Means of Grace".

1. Prayer
2. Bible Study
3. Participation in the two Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper
4. Godly Fellowship
5. Service

And at that moment- these "sinners saved by Grace" are given the greatest privilege and the highest honor and the most thrilling and enjoyable exercise that human beings can experience- and that is they now can begin to know God and love God and enjoy God forever! In other words- these forgiven and "holified" wretches may now worship the one true living God in the manner in which God is entitled to be worshipped!

And so Salvation by Grace and through Faith in Jesus and in His finished Work exists- so that unworthy and fallen sinners may worship God. So God did all of this- from the Creation of Man to the Fall to the Birth of Jesus to the Crucifixion to the Resurrection to the inspiration of the Scriptures to the establishment of the Church to the ongoing heralding of the Gospel around the world to the five Means of Grace- so that God may receive what He set His Heart to delight in from the very beginning- and that is- that God will be worshipped and known and loved and enjoyed by sinners who don't deserve the honor of carrying that worship out!

So that is why Jesus came and died and rose again. And that is why you were born. That is the only reason you exist. And that is why God gave the Bible. And that is why there is a Church on the earth. And that is why there are nations and languages and peoples. And that is the reason for everything- from food to houses to laws and antibiotics to bifocals and water to drink- so that 100% of all of those whom God set His Love upon will be saved so that they may know God and love God and enjoy God forever. In other words- all of life exists so that God will receive worship from all of those that He chose to save by Grace through Faith. And in doing that- we will find the fullness of Joy ourselves.

And, so, in order to get that accomplished- God had to do all that He has done. And, so, because we can see that God has done a lot- and because we can see the great cost that God has paid to receive Worship from us- we then understand the great Value that God places on being known and loved and enjoyed forever- the great Value that God places on being worshipped.

So, therefore- all of life is about Worship. Everything we say and do and think and carry out is to be done to God's Glory and to God's Glory alone. So whether we eat or drink- all is to be done so that God will be known and loved and enjoyed forever, and so that He will be worshipped. And everywhere there is Worship- God is Glorified. And everywhere where God is *not* known or loved or enjoyed- worship does *not* exist. And so Evangelism exists everywhere that Worship does *not* exist.

But we must understand that Evangelism is *not* an end to itself. There was a beginning of Evangelism and there will be an end to it. There was a beginning of Preaching the Gospel and there will be an end

to it. There was a beginning of Prayer and the two Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper and there will be an end to them. There was a beginning of godly Fellowship and Service and there will be an end to them. All that we do and all that we enjoy as believers- all five of the "Means of Grace" that God uses to sanctify and edify and disciple us- had a beginning and they will all have an end. Everything that is- except Worship.

You see, Worship *always* existed, and Worship will extend out into the untold eons of Eternity. God has *always* been known and loved and enjoyed and He *always* will be. In the Beginning- in Eternity past- before Creation- God was worshipped and known and loved and enjoyed only within the inter-Trinitarian Fellowship between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. And then God *extended* the privilege of that Worship to created beings – the Angels, the Cherubim, and the Seraphim- who never cease to fly through the Heavens crying,

Isaiah 6:3

Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory.

And then God *expanded* the privilege of this Worship to include all that He made- from the Trees in the field that clap their hands, to the stars of the Heavens that distinguish time and seasons, to the waves of the seas that roar, to the Mountains that smoke- everything that God made- worships God- from the elephant to the one celled amoeba, from the immense galaxies to the subatomic particles- all of Creation exists to display and exalt the Glory of God. 3,000 years ago- David wrote:

Psalms 19:1

The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.

And now God has chosen to expand the privilege of this Worship even further to include the wretched, fallen, and unworthy sinners- who have been saved by Grace alone through Faith alone in the finished Work of Christ alone. We now have the privilege and honor to join in with the three Persons of the Trinity and with the angels and with all of Creation in the eternal Worship of the one true living God!

So the enemy of Worship is Sin. Sin fights against our love for God. Sin causes any delight that we have in God to dry up. Sin causes the satisfaction we have in God to vanish. Sin wars against knowing and loving and enjoying God. So Sin is the enemy. Sin is the problem. Sin is the culprit.

And even though it is true that Sin affects *us* negatively- and it is true that Sin will cost you more than you are willing to pay, and Sin will take you where you never thought you would go, and Sin will keep you there longer than you want to stay- even though all of that is true- *none* of that is what ultimately makes Sin to be "wrong".

Sin is "wrong", Sin is "bad", or Sin is "sinful" in the words of the Puritan, John Owen- because Sin *offends* God. Sin *dishonors* God. Sin *stops* Worship. Sin *robs* God of the love that is due only to Him. Sin *insults* God's Holiness. And since God has placed the highest degree of Value on His Own Glorious Character and Nature- Sin offends God because Sin takes the love and devotion and admiration and enjoyment that should belong only to Him and it places that delight on created things. So God mercifully saves us to transform us into being true worshippers- who will enjoy Him in Heaven forever.

So it is true to say that "God saved us because He loved us". That statement is absolutely true. And we thank God for His Love. But that statement is also absolutely incomplete. God loved us and so He saved us. But we *cannot* stop there- we *dare not* stop there. Because to stop there makes *us* to be the Center and the Purpose of all that God did and all that God desires. To stop with that statement makes *us* to be the single most valuable commodity in the Universe because God was willing to pay the great Price of the Death of His Own Son to have us.

And I suggest to you that- even though that statement might make us feel good in our fallen need to always be the center of attention- that statement is the height of arrogance, it is the very epitome of self-righteousness, and it is the perfect example of what it means to be fallen. In short- for us to have, as our entire understanding of Salvation, that God loved me and so He saved me, is pure self-centered blasphemy. For it is saying that God the Father was willing to pay the ultimate price of the agonizing Death of His Own Son simply because God placed the highest Value on me.

So, my dear friends- we should rather go on *further* and say that God loved us and so He saved us- so that by saving us- the barrier of

Sin is removed. And by the barrier of Sin being removed by our Salvation- we may now know God and love God and enjoy God forever. So we must say that God loved us and so He saved us so that by saving us- we may now worship Him. So God loved us- so that we may now love Him; God saved us for God's Glory.

And by saying *that*- we place the highest Value and the ultimate Purpose on *God*. Because we say that God the Father was willing to set His Love upon wicked transgressors and allow the Death of His Own Treasured Son, so that by eliminating the barrier of Sin- God may now be glorified and Worshipped. So we see that Salvation exists so that Worship may exist.

So as great as Forgiveness is- and I don't want in any way to ever *diminish* our blessed Forgiveness- but our Forgiveness is *not* the ultimate Goal in our Salvation. And as great a Heaven itself is- and I don't ever want to *diminish* the Beauty and Glory of Heaven- but Heaven is *not* the ultimate Goal of God in our Salvation. The ultimate Goal of God in our Salvation is not us, nor is it our pleasure in walking through Gates of Pearl, nor is it our delight in walking on streets of gold, nor is it our pleasure in being re-united with saved loved ones who have gone on before us- even though all of that will happen and all of that is wonderful.

No, the ultimate Goal of God in our Salvation is that God may be known and loved and enjoyed forever, and that we will be so utterly changed in our Salvation that we will find the deepest expression of our own joy- in that. The ultimate Goal of God in our Salvation, the reason why God went to such great lengths and paid the great Price to rescue us from His Own Wrath is *Himself*, and so that by being saved and having the barrier of Sin removed- we may be so changed- that we now find the fullness of our own Joy in worshipping this great and glorious God!

And the point that I am trying to make here this morning by saying all of this is that Sin stops that from happening. Salvation exists to give unworthy sinners the indescribable privilege of worshipping this magnificent God and Sin eliminates that. Sin takes that privilege away. So Sin- in all of its forms- in all of its manifestations- is the enemy of Worship because only saved people may worship God. So whatever keeps people in darkness- whatever enables

them to remain lost- also allows God to be robbed of the Worship that He is entitled to receive.

And so we preach and we pray and we labor and we work and we struggle and we trust and we hope- so that Worship will win out over Sin, and so that lost people will be saved- so they, too, may enjoy worshipping God. And the devil labors so that Sin will win out over Worship by keeping lost people- blind and lost. And that is what this Passage here in **Luke 16** that Brother Andy just read to you is about. And the key to understanding this Passage lies at the end of verse 15 where Jesus says:

... that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.

*Now most of the time when people consider "Sin" and "Lostness" and "Human Depravity"- they have pictures of mass murders and child molesters, and vicious tyrants like an Adolf Hitler or a Sadaam Hussein pop into their minds. And today when "Evil" is considered- there are pictures of masked members of Isis cutting the heads off of scared journalists or raping women or persecuting Christians.

But the Holy Bible reveals that all throughout time- God's Grace has been at work and vicious tyrants and murderers and sexually impure people have been saved. And those saved tyrants and those saved murderers and those saved people- who one time persecuted Christians- were used by God to magnify the Glory of His Grace as they were miraculously and supernaturally transformed. And the barrier of Sin was removed, and those- who one time hated God- were given the privilege of knowing and loving and enjoying and worshipping the one true living God.

And yet, here- in this Passage- we see something more deadly than murder, more insidious than molesting children, and more evil than vicious men with long knives. Here we see false religion- enslaving the minds and hearts of men who are already lost and keeping them lost.

But what makes false religion so bad is that it keeps lost people lost- while all the while causing them to feel saved and believing that they are knowing and loving and worshipping God.

Now we have to understand that in Israel back in the 1st Century- no group was more honored and admired and esteemed than the

Pharisees. When a Pharisee walked into the room- all conversation stopped. A frightened hush came over the room because the representative of the Almighty had just walked in. And since everybody in the room knew they were sinners- deserving of God's Wrath- they all acted very sheepish in the presence of these religious leaders. And so people backed out of their way, fathers pulled their children in close to them, and people got up from their place at the table and gave it to the Pharisee. People always defer to the more important person, and the Pharisees represented the highest degree of importance in a nation that was dominated by religion. And the last thing that any thinking person wanted was to be at odds with the group that controlled their eternal destiny. So the Pharisees represented God and His Ways to the people.

And yet we read this in verse 14:

Luke 16:14

Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and were scoffing at Him.

So when we think about Sin- we now need to include any religion that invites its adherents to scoff at the Incarnate God. When we think about Evil- we now need to include any Teaching that allows those who follow it to love money. So we see here a picture of how destructive false and man-made religion really is, and how detestable it is to God. And yet we also see how esteemed these Pharisees were to the average person around them.

But don't be under any illusions about first century Judaism being acceptable to God. It wasn't then and it isn't now- because we see that the leaders of the demonic religion of the Pharisees- the very architects of the existing religious belief system that dominated the populace of 1st Century Israel- were God *mockers*- not God *worshippers*. The Bible says they scoffed at Jesus.

But this is really not anything new. Repeatedly all through the Old Testament- the true worshippers of God were hated by the very people who supposedly knew God the best. These worshippers were tortured and killed by the very people they came to preach deliverance to.

And this brings out a very important Principle about this- that disdain for the Message of God is a disdain for God Himself- Who is the

Source of that Message. So rejection of the Words of Jesus- of the Message of Jesus- is a rejection of Jesus Himself. And a rejection of Jesus by rejecting the Message and the Words of Jesus- *eliminates* any possibility of that person being saved and being a true worshipper of God. You see, there is no such thing as anyone being "right" with God and being "wrong" with Jesus. Ever since the Incarnation- *nobody* knows God outside of knowing Jesus, *nobody* loves God outside of loving Jesus, and *nobody* worships God outside of worshipping Jesus.

But we must go even further and say that there is no such thing as anybody being "right" with Jesus and walking in unrepentant rebellion to the Words and being in unrepentant rebellion to the Message of Jesus. There is no such thing as somebody loving Jesus but not loving what Jesus said, and there is no such thing as anybody worshipping Jesus without honoring and treasuring and valuing what Jesus said.

Mocking God, scoffing at God, scoffing at the Words of God, and scoffing at the Son of God while at the same time portraying yourself as the servant of God, is the most vile kind of hypocrisy that exists. And while that might make them esteemed by other unsaved people- they are detestable in the sight of God.

Nothing is worse than this. But that's what *all* false and man-made religion does- it denounces and rejects and changes and ignores the Message and the Words of God; it warps Truth and perverts the only means by which God gives "Saving Faith"- hearing the Word of Christ.

False religion so twists the Message of God that lost people have no hope of being saved. And the result is that God is not known, loved, or enjoyed, and, therefore- He is not worshipped at all. And never was this God-mocking attitude of religionists more evident than right here- in the attitude and the actions and the scoffing of these Jewish religious leaders.

Now you simply cannot study the Gospels and the Life of Jesus Christ without coming across this ongoing collision between the Pharisees, the leaders of apostate God-mocking Judaism, and the Truth of God personified and proclaimed by Jesus Christ. Every single Gospel writer wrote about it clearly and repeatedly. And some of you may be at the point where you're saying, *"Okay Brother Blair- we got it- the Pharisees and Jesus were at odds with one another! Let's move on to*

something else." But, dear friends- I'm not the one who portrayed this scenario over and over again. God the Holy Spirit moved upon four different men- Levi- who was also named Matthew, John Mark, Dr. Luke, and the Apostle John to pen down these events of the Life and earthly Ministry of Jesus Christ, and that makes them to be inspired and inerrant and infallible. So because this hostility between the Jewish religious leaders and Jesus is repeated over and over again in different scenes throughout the four Gospel Accounts- does not mean that we can just skip over them and get on to something more juicy. It means that we should take heed and pay close attention to these accounts- since God chose to emphasize them so much.

Now for a long time, people who have been deceived by false religion, have mocked God's Message. The Pharisees were just the latest manifestation of the very same hatred for Truth and ultimately for God Himself- that all those who are deceived by false and man-made religion have- both then and now.

And even though this may shock some of our modern sensibilities- we must be clear about this- those who are deceived by false religion do *not* worship God, they do *not* love God, and they do *not* know God. The "god" that these people worship and follow and admire and seek to obey is the devil- who is the originator of all false teaching. We must understand that there can be no worship without love. And there is no love where there is no true knowledge. Having warm feelings about somebody is not the same thing as loving them. Thinking good thoughts about somebody is not the same thing as worshipping them. Adopting some moral code and living by some standard of learned behavior is not the same thing as being saved.

And that is why it is so disheartening to me to hear such esteem being heaped upon those who have been utterly deceived by the false teaching of Joseph Smith. Smith was a demon possessed liar, and his words cannot produce genuine Salvation in *anyone*. There is absolutely *nothing* within the theology of Mormonism that has the power to forgive a single sin or save a single soul. Every single human being who understands what Mormon theology teaches about Forgiveness and Salvation and Righteousness and believes it- are doomed. There is not a single person who understands and trusts in what Mormonism teaches that knows or that loves or that worships the God of the Bible. Mormonism is a doctrine of demons and was invented by satan to keep

lost people lost so that God is robbed of true Worship. And so even though the theology of Mormonism is routinely esteemed by unsaved or lukewarm people- it is detestable in the Sight of God.

And it is axiomatic to the lackadaisical attitude of so many within the modern Church that they esteem the supposed "morality" of the people who are enslaved by the modern manifestation of the ancient heresy of Gnosticism called Mormonism. There is not a single issue of Biblical Morality that a true born again bond-slave of Jesus Christ should ever come in second to a deceived Mormon. There is no issue of fidelity in marriage or money matters or business dealings that a lost Mormon should ever outshine a true Christian. So if you think that lost devil worshippers behave better than you do or are more clean cut than you are or treat their wives better than you do or handle their money better than you do- rather than heap praise and esteem upon them- perhaps we should just understand that God is using the devil to bring conviction into your heart for you to be more Biblical in the way you live your life.

So it is true that a human being *cannot* love a "god" that he does not "know". And He *cannot* truly "worship" what he does not "love". So the absence of the Truth about God *automatically* means that the person does not "know" the one true living God. And without knowing God- that person is not saved and God is not being loved or worshipped.

Now it is true that the knowledge of God can be fairly primitive at first. But, nevertheless- if there is Salvation at all- if there is genuine love for God present through the new birth- if the Love of the Father is in a person and has caused that person to now love God- if that person has experienced the miracle of the new birth and has received within himself the new divine nature- then even though his understanding of Divine Truth may be somewhat vague and confusing- nevertheless- true Salvation *always* and in *all cases* produces a certain level of godly fruit, and it produces an insatiable hunger for God and the things of God, and his ignorance of the Word of God will quickly diminish.

And these things are automatic. They are a sovereign Work of the Spirit. Where true Salvation exists- hunger for God and His Righteousness exists. And where hunger for God and His Righteousness exists- there will be a relentless pursuit of God and His Word and His Presence. And where there is an ongoing pursuit of God and His Presence- there is spiritual growth. And so where there is no

spiritual growth- we know that there is no pursuit- and so the problem is there is no diligent use of the five Means of Grace. But when that pursuit doesn't exist at all, or where that pursuit is absent for any length of time without conviction and a *return* to that pursuit- there is no reason to believe that the miracle of the new birth has taken place.

But false teaching cannot ever produce spiritual growth because false teaching cannot induce the pursuit of God or the things of God. And false teaching cannot produce any pursuit of God because it cannot produce a godly hunger for God. And that is true because false and man-made teaching has no ability to transform the human nature. And the result is that the deceived followers of a false religion will scoff not only at Jesus and His Word- but they will scoff at the messengers of Jesus, and they will despise them, and if they can- they will persecute them, and where it is allowed- they will kill them- all while enjoying some degree of esteem from the lost world.

So here we meet the God-scoffers who were highly esteemed by men. And Dr. Luke is faithful to tell us here that one of the tangible outward manifestations of their deceived and unsaved heart is that they love money. And these particular God scoffers are a part of the man-made and false religion called Pharisaical Judaism- which was a twisted perversion of the true faith of the Old Testament. And from that day until now- what we see and know and understand about Judaism has absolutely nothing to do with God or Forgiveness or Salvation or Righteousness. But Judaism- as with all false religions- keeps lost people lost and robs God of worship.

So during the 1st Century- this twisted perversion of the true faith of the Old Testament was in the hands of hypocrites- which is where Satan always wants to be. And to see what the Apostle Paul said about them- please turn with me to **2Corinthians 11:13-15:**

13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.

14 No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

15 Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

Now we have to understand, beloved that there is a concerted effort these days within mainstream Evangelicalism to try to place

great esteem upon unsaved Jews. Many within the modern Church seek to convince us that the Jews- as they exist *outside* of Jesus Christ- are still somehow within the framework of Salvation and are still inside the Will and Kingdom of God- simply by virtue of the ethnic Jewishness.

And this teaching came about by lukewarm or unsaved theologians using a romantic and very sloppy exegesis of Scripture. And this false teaching goes on to say that different things are required of Gentiles and the Church than of Jews- that somehow the Jew is exempt from having to repent and trust in Jesus to be saved. And so, in effect- this Teaching says that Jews have their *own way* to God, their *own plan*, and their *own covenant*- outside of Jesus and His finished Work. But that is exactly the opposite what Jesus said to the architects of the very same religion that we call Judaism today when Jesus said in **John 8:44-47:**

44 "You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

45 "But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me.

46 "Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?

47 "He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God."

So we have to understand that one of the places where the Kingdom of darkness was embedded- was in the false religion of Judaism. And so we need to put two things together:

Because it is true that we are saved by what we believe and what we trust in and *not* because of what we do- it is also true that what deceived people believe and what they trust in that causes them to *reject* Jesus Christ and remain lost.

And so because that is true- then what we believe and trust in- is paramount. And so the issue then becomes- where can we go to get the Truth about God and Forgiveness and Salvation and Righteousness? Where do we go to get inspired, inerrant, infallible absolute Truth?

The Hindu and Buddhist say, *"We get Truth through Nirvana- that state of emotional bliss with God."* The Mormon says, *"We get Truth through the Book of Mormon and the Book of The Pearl of Great Price and The Book of Doctrine and Covenants"*. The Christian Scientist says, *"We get Truth through the Teachings of Mary Baker Eddy Patterson Glover Fry"*- (she ran through husbands like we run through socks). The Seventh day Adventist says, *"We get Truth through the Teachings of Ellen G White"*. The Jehovah's Witness says, *"We get Truth through the Watchtower Bible and Track Society"*. The Muslim says, *"We get Truth through the Koran as interpreted by the Hadith"*- that blesses and encourages young men to kill in the name of Allah. And the Jew says *"We get Truth through the collective Teachings of the Rabbis"*- who all believe and teach the very same thing as the Pharisees- that Jesus Himself said were lost and who did not know or love or worship God.

So we find that there are many today who scoff at Jesus- many who scoff at His Word and His messengers. And the unsaved Jew scoffs at Jesus today. They are the product of the same teaching that caused the Pharisees to love money and scoff at Jesus. What Judaism taught back then caused them to reject Jesus Christ and force Him to the Cross. And what Judaism has taught throughout history has caused its followers to reject the Truth about God and the Truth about the Messiah of God- the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is a false and satanic religion that is detestable to God- even though it is highly esteemed by Man.

But there are also many today who go by the name of "Christian" who scoff at Jesus as well. They do not know God either and they do not love Him and they do not worship God. They scoff at the Authority of Scripture. They scoff by denying the Deity of Jesus Christ. They scoff by denying Salvation by Grace through Faith alone. They scoff by adding to the Scripture false documents supposedly inspired that twist and pervert the message of the Bible. And they, too, are highly esteemed by the lost world.

So you see all of these thousands of man-made religions and human philosophies and the question comes up, *"Who speaks for God? Does everybody speak for God?"* Is the Catholic priest speaking for God when he says, *"My Jesus loves everybody and we're all one- heading toward the same God as long as we are all under the covering of the*

mother church." Is that right? Does that man speak for God? Is that the Word of God?

So who speaks for God? Does Mohammed speak for God? Does Joseph Smith speak for God? Does the blatantly unrepentant homosexual Anglican bishop Robinson speak for God? Who speaks for God? Does John Hagee speak for God when he says that the Jews don't need to be born again by Jesus to enter the Kingdom? Is that true? Does he speak for God? Does the Episcopal Church USA speak for God? Then why do they scoff at the Words of Jesus about human sexuality? Does the PCUSA speak for God? Then how can they ignore 500 years of history and the Holy Scriptures to celebrate what God has condemned? They may be highly esteemed by the pagan world- but they have become detestable in the Sight of God for being ashamed of the Biblical Gospel. So who speaks for God? Well, I'll tell you the answer to that is:

Whoever speaks a true and consistent interpretation of what
God has said in Holy Scripture

... *that's* who speaks for God. And everybody else scoffs at God. And that is the issue. And that is *always* the issue. It was the issue back then in Jesus' day and it's the issue today. What did God Almighty say? That is all that matters and that is the final answer. And so anyone who willfully and knowingly does not accurately *repeat* what God has said in Scripture and *affirms* what God has said in Scripture is the enemy of Truth. And while he may be highly esteemed by Man- he is detestable in the Sight of God. Because all that contradicts the Scriptures or alters the Scriptures or misinterprets the Scriptures or hides or confuses the Scriptures is a lie that should be instantly and completely rejected- because a lie cannot forgive a single sin, it cannot save a single soul, and a lie does not have the ability to bring forth worship of God at all.

And so it matters what you believe, and, therefore, it matters what you are being taught. And so the success of the Christian Church does *not* lie in becoming more and more "relevant with the culture" as the modern Church growth gurus teach. The success of the Church of the First Born lies in how accurately we teach the Holy Scriptures and how fervently we seek to obey them and how boldly we proclaim them

and how strongly we defend them and how we refuse to be ashamed of them.

I tell you that the Pharisees did not worship God and that is because they did not love God. And they did not love God because they did not know God. And they did not know God because they were deceived by a false religion. And even though they were highly esteemed by all the other lost people around them- they were detestable in the Sight of God.

So only those who hear the Truth can believe the Truth. And only those who believe the Truth can be saved. And only those who are saved know God. And only those who know God- love God. And only those who love God- worship God in the manner in which He deserves to be worshipped. So lets us press into the Truth so we may press on to know God and to love Him and to enjoy Him forever, and then we will worship God in Spirit and in Truth.

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.