

# LENEXA EDIFIER

**“and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:32)**

**November 24, 2024**

## IRRATIONAL OPPOSITION

*Then a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute was brought to Jesus, and He healed him, so that the mute man spoke and saw. All the crowds were amazed, and were saying, “This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?” But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, “This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons.” (Matthew 12:22–24)*

Jesus dealt with the irrational minds of His opponents until the day of His death at the hands of godless men. The question we must ask ourselves is whether we are capable, yes, even guilty of this in certain situations.

Why do not all men *...call on the name of the Lord...* in order to be saved? Well admittedly there are a plurality of reasons. It could be deep seated hatred based on the disappointment of God and Christ not planning to deliver me from eternal condemnation in the way I prefer. That was the case with the leaders of the Jews as identified in the opening passage.

It could be we value the things we have in this life above the blessing of an eternal inheritance to be received by those faithful to the Lord. That was the case of the rich young ruler, *But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. (Matthew 19:22)*

It could be the influence of friends or relatives who would not be pleased if we committed to a life led by the word of God given by the Holy Spirit. This seems to have been the case of the Hebrew Christians in the letter to them. They obviously were still acquainted with neighbors and friends who continued to live according to the first covenant. Their ancestors were men of great faith and they followed that covenant. The writer of the letter reminds them of those gone before who were faithful to God and blessed accordingly. He then reminds them one of their most notable prophets, Jeremiah prophesied of a new, a second covenant which would bring the forgiveness of sins. Following the list of their faithful ancestors, he says this to them,

*Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:1–2)* He tells them of a life they need to live which avoids the *unbelieving heart* of their ancestors who died in the wilderness because they fell away from God. He then encourages them to remember who they are: *For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end, (Hebrews 3:14)* He was calling on them to rationally consider the plight of their unfaithful ancestors and use that wisdom to faithfully follow the One Who died for their sins.

It matters not what it is in our lives that leads us to depart from the calling of the gospel. The result is the same. We can use any reason that comes to mind in this life, but it will be temporal in its origin and will lead us to depart the faith or reject the gospel and such rejection will lead to our eternal destination in a devil's hell. *“Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; (Matthew 25:41) and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, (2 Thessalonians 1:7–9)*

It is in your and my best interest to maintain a rational approach to the truth of the gospel in order to receive the benefit of the promises of God.

## The Gospel, Inclusive or Exclusive?

When it comes to the good news concerning Jesus Christ, too often this gospel message is evolving into not so good news. The reason for this change has to do with people developing a tolerance for slight variations to the doctrine of Christ. This is accomplished by being more inclusive and less exclusive.

So, what do I mean when I use the terms inclusive and exclusive? Turning to Webster, the definition of inclusive is to not exclude any parties or groups. Whereas the definition of exclusive, is to not admit other things, being restrictive and putting limits. Clearly the one is more favorable to the majority. The obvious reason is that there would be less conflict, and in turn, creating more “unity.”

To help us with this study, we shall take a close look at what the apostle Paul told the brethren at Galatia. In **Galatians 1:6-7**, Paul stated, *“I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel., which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.”*

In this text we see the problem with following a different gospel. By following a perverted gospel, one has turned away from Christ. This teaches us a very important lesson, that being, we must not try to separate Christ from His teachings. Too often I hear that there needs to be less focus on what we are to obey, and focus more on Jesus, our Savior. Truth be known, to truly focus on our Lord should mean that we will focus on His teachings (**II Jn. 9**). Our fellowship with our Redeemer is based upon us walking in the light as He is in the light (**I Jn. 1:3-7**).

Going back to the Galatians text, just how can the gospel be perverted? First and foremost, it doesn't mean one has abandoned all that the gospel teaches. However, these brethren were guilty of not obeying the truth (**Gal. 3:1**). But what were they guilty of doing? Did they stop believing in Jesus? Did they stop worshipping? What was their transgression? One such sin that was identified is found in the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of Galatians. False teachers came in and demanded that circumcision be taught as the Old Testament taught (**Gal. 5:2-3**). No, these brethren were not being told to keep the whole law of Moses, but Paul pointed out that if they went back in one point, then they must keep it all (**Gal. 5:3**). Yet, if they went back under the

Old Law, they will have separated themselves from Christ.

When it comes to the pure gospel, nothing should be left unsaid. When you read the second half of **Galatians chapter 5**, you read about the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit (**5:19-26**). When you read this passage, you will see the proper way Christians are to behave, and the improper ways they are to avoid. For those who want to gloss over the works of the flesh, they are perverting the gospel. There is no room in Christ's doctrine to be inclusive when it comes to bad behavior.

To say that the Lord just looks at the heart, is sort of true. For out of the heart comes all kinds of evils or godliness (**Matt. 6:21; 15:19**). Our hearts need to be right. How is that achieved? It starts with the gospel. We have come full circle. There needs to be genuine love for the truth. If that exists, then we need to have a genuine distaste for error (**Psa. 119:104**). The reason this sounds so exclusive, is because it is.! You are not helping people get to heaven by embracing false teaching of any sort. It might be viewed as not being loving and kind, but our Father in heaven doesn't see it that way.

Before I close, let's make sure we understand there can be a positive aspect to inclusiveness. The gospel is for everyone (**Mk. 16:15**). Jesus died for everyone (**Jn. 3:16**). There is room in heaven for everyone (**Jn. 14:2**). On the other hand, heaven will be exclusively for those who obey the gospel (**II Thess. 1:8**).

**Chuck Bartlett**

## Be Vigilant

*Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour* (1 Peter 5:8)

Traveling down the road of life will not always be a smooth and easy passage. There will be those times when we will encounter cares and burdens that will trouble our hearts and some of those burdens will become a great test of our faith in God. And then there is our adversary, the devil, who is around every turn in the road ravenously seeking to devour us. He is our enemy! The devil is always looking for any little

foothold we will give him. Never forget that any area of our life that we fail to constantly guard, he will seize upon it. This warning from **1 Peter 5:8** should be taken seriously by each one of us.

The devil is a liar and deceiver (**John 8:44, Revelation 12:9**). The first lie ever told was by the devil when he deceived Eve into disobeying God's word (**Genesis 3**), and he has continued to lie and deceive men ever since that day. **2 Corinthians 11:14** tells us that he will disguise himself as an angel of light. He is the world's greatest illusionist. He has the power to become whatever he wants to become in his effort to deceive and entrap us. We had best heed the advice of Peter to be sober of spirit and be on the alert. If we are not serious and ever watchful, it will open the door for the devil with his craftiness to lead us astray.

The devil knows how to masterfully twist the word of God. Since he cannot abolish that word, he spares no effort in convincing men that the Bible is nothing more than a good book in a long line of good books and it doesn't make any difference whether you obey its commands or not. After all, God doesn't really mean what he says. Isn't this exactly what he did with Eve (**Genesis 3**)!? The devil knows that by destroying our faith in God's word, he destroys our faith in God.

If we are going to successfully contend against this mighty foe, we must arm ourselves with the spiritual weapons that will enable us to overcome temptations and snares of the devil. **Ephesians 6:11** tells us to put on the whole armour of God that we may be able to withstand the devil. If we diligently follow the instructions of **Ephesians 6:11-18**, I have no doubt in my mind as to whether or not we will be able to successfully stand against the devil and ultimately lay hold on eternal life (**1 Timothy 6:12**).

We must not for one moment let up in our fight against the evil one. We must conquer or be conquered! The battle against the devil will not be an easy one but as a faithful child of God we can go boldly to the throne of grace and receive mercy and find the help we need to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one (**Hebrews 4:16, James 4:7-10, 1 Peter 5:6-11**).

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## Jesus Derangement Syndrome

"Derangement syndrome" is a political term coined about twenty years ago that describes a blind prejudice that closes its eyes to the evidence and leaves a man incapable of judging fairly or rationally. Worse, it is a cold-blooded hatred that resorts to any means—up to and including murder (**1 Jn. 3:15**)—to destroy an opponent.

No man was more victimized by this syndrome than Jesus Christ.

For being congenial and enjoying the company of others, He was slandered as a glutton, a boozier, and a friend of misfits (**Matt. 11:19**).

For casting demons out of poor, tortured creatures, the Jewish swamp said He was only able to do so because he was in collusion with the devil (**Matt. 12:24**).

He gave sight to a man blind from birth and the nicest thing the Jews could say was that He was a sinner because He performed the cure on the Sabbath (**Jn. 9:16**).

He wept with those who wept over the death of Lazarus, and His tears were twisted into a taunt that implied He was partially to blame for Lazarus's death (**Jn. 11:37**).

When slander didn't stop Him, they tried to arrest Him. Then they tried to kill Him and they kept at it until they succeeded. Derangement syndrome—there's nothing new under the sun.

**Kenny Chumbley**

## Teachers

There are many people today who will teach a handful of children but they have spent hours in preparation for the class. They have read the Bible text over and over and thought of the best ways to communicate it. In spite of all their preparation, if you ask them if they are ready, they may be very reluctant to say yes. It is often not a lack of preparation that leads them to doubt how well they will do, but it is the humble recognition of how great the word of God is and their inability to glean from it every gem that is there.

*Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.*  
**(James 3:1)**

Psa. 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

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Sunday A.M. 10:00 Assembled Worship  
Sunday A.M. 10:50 Assembled Worship  
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LONG RANGE DAMAGE

What Must I Do To Be Saved?  
  
**Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17**  
  
**Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6**  
  
**Repent of sins - Acts 17:30**  
  
**Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10**  
  
**Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38**  
  
**Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10**