

Back to Bible Basics

Issue 13

DO WE NEED TO CHANGE THE GOSPEL TO MEET THE DEMANDS OF A NEW AGE?

Brett Rutherford

The world is constantly undergoing change. Language is changing. Styles are changing. Technology is changing. Views on what is culturally acceptable are changing. Because the world is changing so fast it is difficult to know how to speak, behave, and dress sometimes.

Even though many aspects of our society are constantly undergoing a transformation, it is important to remember that some things will always remain constant. It will always be wrong to lie and steal. There will never come a time when it will be acceptable to take another's life. A man will always be respected who gives assistance to a neighbor in need. No matter how much society changes the gospel of Jesus Christ will never change. Though men may mistranslate, mutilate and twist the Scriptures to suit their present lifestyle, God will hold firm to the standard of righteousness that was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3).

Those who suggest that the gospel that we preach should always reflect society's standard of righteousness, make the mistake of assuming that man has somehow managed to transcend the need for following God's original plan. Technology and

culture may have changed since the Bible was written, but the needs of man have not changed since the days that Peter preached on the necessity of repentance and baptism (Acts 2:38).

Man is still in need of social interaction and love. He still desires peace and happiness. He still has problems controlling his greed, hatred and pride. Man is still guilty of hurting his fellow man and offending His God. The only true guide to overcoming the self-destructive behaviours that still afflict man is the untainted word of God.

Do we need a new gospel for a new age? Absolutely not! If anything, humanity is now in more need of the timeless teachings of the New Testament than we have ever been in the course of our history. The Bible is still perfectly suited for man no matter where he may live or how he may live.

The pure gospel of Christ is the only thing that offers us the key to true happiness, true liberty and eternal salvation. Throw the gospel away that the Holy Spirit delivered to the apostles and you throw away your soul. Remember the warning of John in Revelation 22:19, *"...if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the book of life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."*

Paul told the Galatian Christians that by changing the gospel to suit their cultural demands, they stood condemned before God (Galatians 1:6-9; 5:4).

Cultural norms or political correctness is not going to be the standard by which we will be judged by the Lord. Jesus Christ will judge us by His word which the Holy Spirit delivered to the apostles and prophets in the first century (John 12:48; Ephesians 2:19-22). Brethren, do not be tempted to change the worship, doctrine or practice to suit the demands of this world.

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SPIRITUAL DEATH: ITS REALITY, CONSEQUENCES AND CURE

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Generally when we think of death, we think of physical death, the time when our life on this earth finishes and our bodies return to the dust. However the Bible also speaks of spiritual death. This is far more subtle because it happens **while we are still living on this earth.**

THE DEFINING OF SPIRITUAL DEATH. In his "Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words", W.E. Vine defines spiritual death as, "The **separation of man from God.**" He then explains, "As spiritual life is conscious existence in **communion with God, spiritual death is conscious existence in separation of God.**" In physical death, our soul is separated from our body (Ecclesiastes 12:7, Genesis 35:18; James 2:26). In spiritual death, however, **our soul is separated from God** through sin (Isaiah 59:2, Ephesians 2:1). When we sin, therefore, we die spiritually. Ezekiel 18:4. says: "*Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: **the soul that sinneth, it shall die.***"

THE WAGES OF SPIRITUAL DEATH. "*For the **wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.***" (Romans 6:23). Spiritual death is what we deserve in payment for sin. Unless we receive the gift of eternal life, we will die in our sins and be lost in hell for eternity (John 8:24, Luke 16:23, Revelation 20:15, Matthew 25:30, 41, 46).

However, Jesus paid the price of spiritual death on the cross and is therefore able to give us the gift of eternal life. "*For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*" (2 Corinthians 5:21). The sending of His Son to die for our sins is the greatest act of love ever seen (John 3:16). Sadly, most people live their life out without giving God a thought and go to their grave in a lost condition.

THE GRANTING OF ETERNAL LIFE "*And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins*" (Ephesians 2:1). This is what happens at conversion. We praise God that dead souls can be made alive when we accept the gospel. Jesus said, "*He that*

*heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall **not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.***" (John 5:24). He also promised "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keeps my saying, **he shall never see death.***" (John 8:51). Obviously this does not mean that we will not go to the grave. It means that those who are converted to Christ in this life have nothing to fear because we will never have to experience the terror of being separated in eternity from God.

THE BEGINNING OF ETERNAL LIFE. "*Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*" (Romans 6:3-4) This makes it clear we **pass from death to life when we are baptised.** Baptism is the time when a believing repentant sinner has his sins washed away by the blood of Christ (Acts 22:16; Acts 2:38; Matthew 26:28). When we are baptised the Lord adds us to the church (Acts 2:38-47). If we remain faithful to the Lord we will spend eternity with God in heaven. (Revelation 2:10)

Sadly many people believe that new life begins at repentance and therefore place little significance on baptism. However, although repentance may produce a new life style, it is not until our old man of sin is buried in the waters of baptism that our new man rises from the dead. If we die without being baptized we can never escape the eternal consequence of our sin.

10th Annual
**Mersey Bluff Church of Christ
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Ladies' Retreat**

August 24 – 25, 2012

**Guest Speaker:
Venna Fowell (New Zealand)**

Theme: "Spiritual Blessings"

**Held at Camp Banksia, Port Sorell
(approximatey 15 minutes from Devonport)**

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