

THE GOOD NEWS

- A. Introduction: Jesus' second coming draws nearer with each passing day. Before Jesus went back to Heaven, He warned His followers that prior to His return, false prophets and false messiahs will deceive many. Matt 24:4-5; 11; 23-24
1. The Bible gives us much information about what world conditions will be like when the Lord returns. It describes a worldwide system of government, economy, and religion presided over by a world ruler who is handpicked and empowered by Satan—his Anti (or in place of) Christ. Rev 13; II Thess 2:3-10
 - a. In order for these conditions to develop, among other things, people must be willing to accept a false Christ. A false Christianity must develop—one that will welcome the Anti or in place of Christ.
 - b. This means that the genuine Christ—Jesus, Who is revealed in and through the Bible—must be undermined. That process is already well underway.
 1. Jesus' Person (who He is) and His work (why He came) is being misrepresented like never before—not just among unbelievers, but among many who profess to be Christians.
 2. Therefore, we are taking time to look at who Jesus is and why He came—according to the Bible. Accurate knowledge from the Bible is our protection against deception. Ps 91:4
 - c. Rom 1:18-32 describes the downward spiral of human behavior when they reject Almighty God—including His righteous anger at their sin (lessons for another day). Notice one point for now. Their rejection of Him begins with the rejection of truth.
 1. “But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who push the truth away from themselves (or prevent the truth from being known)...Instead of believing what they knew was truth about God, they deliberately chose to believe lies” (v18; v25, NLT)
 2. As the world increasingly abandons God, they are discarding truth because God is the Truth. He is the standard by which everything else is to be judged. Jesus—Who is God Incarnate—is the Truth. John 14:6
 2. Absolute truth as a concept has largely been discarded in our culture. An absolute truth is something to which there are no exceptions or qualifications. Two plus two equals four is an absolute truth. No matter how you arrange the numbers or what color ink you use when you write the formula, two plus two always equals four.
 - a. We now live in a culture that gets its information about reality (truth) from what people feel. Objective truth is irrelevant: Objective evidence is irrelevant. The issue is: How do I feel about it? Things are true if I feel they're true: I just feel that two plus two is five. Truth, for that person, has become subjective (and therefore no longer absolute).
 1. Objective means it exists outside of and independent of the mind. (Something is true because it is absolute—independent of me.) Subjective means that it comes out of one's self or mind.
 2. We've produced several generations of youth to whom objective facts don't matter, who believe that there are no absolutes. Everything is relative (not absolute or independent). It's not unusual to hear people say: That's your truth, not my truth.
 - A. Every year the *Oxford Dictionary* selects an international word of the year. They do this to show ways in which our language is changing in response to current events. The word “post-truth” was 2016's international word of the year
 - B. Post-truth is defined as: relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.
 - C. Think of the polls that you see in the news that ask people: Do you think this person is guilty or innocent. They ask people to make this determination, not based on the facts in the case, but based on how they feel about it.
 - b. Such thinking has infiltrated Christian circles. It's becoming more common to hear people who

profess to be Christians make statements like these: I just feel that a loving God would never send anyone to hell. I know the Bible says I shouldn't do this, but it makes me happy. I prayed about it, and I feel that God wants me to be happy, so I'm going to do it anyway, with His blessing.

1. These are examples of abandoning the truth in favor of a lie. These are examples of people who are open to receiving a false Christ and a false gospel. We tend think of people who would fall for a false Christ as “crazy people”. But they are people who have abandoned the truth of God's Word, either ignorantly (through lack of or incorrect information) or willfully.
2. When you take these “smaller steps” away from God's Word (rejection of what you don't like or feel good about), it makes it much easier to take the final “big step” to a false messiah.
3. With these thoughts in mind, we're going to continue to look at what the Bible reveals about who Jesus is, why He came to earth, and why He is coming back soon.

B. Jesus did not come to make this world a better place and give you a happy life. He came to root out our core problem: sin which has resulted in death. He came to abolish sin and death. Heb 9:26; II Tim 1:10

1. The word sin is used many ways in the Bible. It is both an action and an inward element in fallen humanity. The Greek word translated sin means to miss the mark; to swerve from the way.
 - a. All human beings have a moral obligation to obey their Creator. Eccl 12:13—The end of the matter is, Fear God (know that He is, revere and worship Him—and keep his commandments: for this is the whole (duty) of man, [the full original purpose of his creation, the object of God's providence, the root of character, the foundation of all happiness] (Amp)
 1. Not only is God is the standard of truth, He is the standard of what is right. I Pet 1:16—Be ye holy for I am holy. Holy is defined as morally clean, upright, blameless in heart and life.
 2. We're meant to live holy lives. That's where true happiness is found (lessons for another day).
 - b. Our point for now is this: All have failed in their moral obligation to obey their creator. Even though we consider ourselves and/or others to be good people, the standard is not ours to set. Rom 3:23 —For all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious standard (NLT). This is the truth.
2. Rom 6:23—The wages of sin is death. Death is more than physical death. Death of the body is a consequence or outflow of another category of death—separation from God Who is Life.
 - a. Gen 2:17—God warned Adam and Eve that if they disobeyed Him they would die. The Hebrew reads: In dying thou shalt die. When Adam and Eve sinned, their bodies did not immediately die.
 1. Here's what happened. Gen 3:7—At that moment, their eyes were opened and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness (NLT). The first affects of sin and death were shame and fear, leading them to hide from God (Gen 3:8-10).
 2. Gen 3:22-24—Then they were cut off from access to God's life. The tree of life was a real tree, but it was also symbolic of the eternal life in God Himself. It was God's intention that man freely choose to be united to the life in Him. The ultimate expression of death is eternal separation from God, sometimes referred to as spiritual death. (many lessons for another day)
 3. As the head of the human race, Adam's actions affected the race resident in him. Rom 5:12—When Adam sinned, sin entered the entire human race. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone for everyone sinned (NLT).
 - b. Jesus came to remedy this condition by dealing with the thing that gave death dominion over humanity (our sin) and make it possible for us to be united to eternal life, the life in God.
 1. II Tim 1:10—[It is that purpose and grace] which He now has made known and has fully disclosed and made real [to us] through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus Who annulled death and made it of no effect, and brought life and immortality—that is, immunity from eternal death—to light through the Gospel. (Amp)
 - A. Rom 3:24—Yet now God in his gracious kindness declares us not guilty. He has done this

through Christ Jesus, who has freed us by taking away our sins. (NLT)

- B. Rom 3:25—For God sent Jesus to take the punishment for our sins and to satisfy God’s anger against us. We are made right with God when we believe that Jesus shed his blood, sacrificing his life for us. (NLT)
2. John 3:16—God, in love, gave His only begotten (unique) Son (the God-man) to be sacrificed for sin (v14-15) so that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.
 - A. Perish comes from a word that means to destroy fully, to perish or to lose (as opposed to annihilation). It is used of physical death, but also of eternal death which is eternal exclusion from the kingdom of God (also known as the second death, Rev 20:6; 10).
 - B. Jesus came to save men and women, first and foremost from eternal death. John 3:17-18—For God did not send the Son into the world in order to judge—to reject, to condemn, to pass sentence on—the world; but that the world might find salvation and be made safe and sound through Him. He who believes on Him...is not judged...never comes up for judgment, for there is no rejection, no condemnation, (he incurs no damnation). (Amp)
3. Luke 19:10—Jesus came to seek and save the lost. Lost is the same word translated as perish in John 3:16. Through our sin we have been lost to our created purpose which is to become holy, righteous sons and daughters of God through faith in Christ. Eph 1:4-5; Rom 8:29
3. Much of the Christianity that is popular right now has been influenced by 20th century American culture and is very different from that which is presented in the New Testament. (That’s why I beg you to become regular, systematic readers of the New Testament—read daily, and read all the way through).
 - a. Consequently, verses such as John 10:10 have been misinterpreted to mean that Jesus came to give us an abundant life—meaning a wonderful, prosperous life in this life. I’m not saying that God is opposed to us having a great life in this life, but that’s not why Jesus died for us.
 1. When we read John 10:10 in the context of everything He said up until He made that statement, we find that Jesus was referring to providing us with an abundance of eternal life.
 2. We can trace the context from here in John 3 as it progresses through the following chapters (John 4:13-14; 5:24; 6:35,40,47; 7:37-38; etc.) up to John 10:10. Every time Jesus referred to the life He came to bring, it’s clear that He meant eternal life—including in John 10:28.
 - b. I am certain that many of the people who teach that Jesus came to give us a great life are sincere. But a lot of what they say is imprecise and therefore inaccurate. Inaccurate is another word for erroneous. Because of the times we are living in, error can and does become heresy. Because of growing deception in the world, this is no time to be imprecise with the Scriptures.
4. I John 4:9-10—God demonstrated His love for us by meeting our greatest need through Jesus. Jesus came to earth to die for us. At the Cross He joined us in death to take us through death bring us out of death. He was punished in our place for our sins. Heb 2:14-15; Isa 53:3-5
 - a. Jesus is the propitiation for our sins. A propitiation is a sacrifice that appeases anger and brings reconciliation with someone who has reason to be angry.
 1. Before we were saved, not only were we dead in our sins or cut off from God (Eph 2:1), our sin made us enemies of God (Rom 5:10). We were “by nature children of [God’s] wrath and heirs of [His] indignation, like the rest of mankind” (Eph 2:3, Amp).
 2. Jesus’ substitutionary death satisfied divine justice against us for our sins and opened the way for us to become holy, righteous sons and daughters of God. Rom 8:30
 3. Rom 8:1-2—Therefore [there is] now no condemnation—no adjudging guilty of wrong—for those who are in Christ Jesus...For the law of the Spirit of life [which is] is in Christ Jesus [the law of our new being], has freed me from the law of sin and death. (Amp)
 - b. Almighty God showed us His love, not by telling us to do whatever makes us happy, but by sending His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to remedy our greatest need by dying for our sins.

1. If He loved you and helped you with your greatest need when you were His enemy, why would He not help you now? Rom 8:32
 2. This is objective fact. This is absolute truth. It isn't dependent on how you feel or what you think. It is dependent on a historically verifiable truth—Jesus Christ rose from the dead, breaking the power of sin and death over us. I Cor 15:55-57
- c. It's increasingly common today to hear even people who profess to be Christians say that there are many paths to God, and as long as you are sincere it doesn't really matter what you believe. That's not true or truth!! Jesus Himself said: I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No man comes to the Father but by (through) Me. John 14:6
1. When you understand what Jesus did through the Cross, His statement makes perfect sense. All men are guilty of sin and no one can come to God without an atoning sacrifice or a sacrifice that brings reconciliation between God and man.
 2. Jesus is the only one qualified to make that that sacrifice—and He has made it, but you must accept it (lessons for another day).
- C. Conclusion: We have a lot more to say, but consider these thoughts as we close this lesson.
1. Mark 1:14-15—Jesus declared that He came preaching (proclaiming) the gospel (good news) of the kingdom (reign) of God. To appreciate the good news you must understand the bad news.
 - a. All men are guilty of sin before a holy God and deserving of judgment and wrath (later lessons). We're under the dominion of sin, Satan, and death with no way out. This earth is not as it should be because of man's sin. It is infused with corrupt and death. Gen 3:17-19; Rom 5:12-19; etc.
 - b. Jesus came into this world two thousand years ago to deal with sin at the Cross and open the way for restoration between God and man to begin.
 1. His sacrifice made it possible for men to be cleansed of sin and the reign of God to be established in the hearts of men through the new birth. The new birth is a supernatural transformation that turns sinners into holy, righteous sons and daughters of God. John 3:3-5; Luke 17:20-21
 2. The restoration of the reign of God will be completed in connection with the second coming of Jesus, when He sets up God's visible, eternal kingdom on this earth, made new. Rev 11:15; Acts 3:21; II Pet 3:13; etc.
 - c. Jesus proclaimed that the time is fulfilled and the kingdom is at hand. He urged men to repent and believe the gospel. When you understand the true gospel—Jesus died for our sins and was raised from the dead, proving that they are paid for (I Cor 15:1-4)—you can see why it is good news.
 2. Because of what Jesus did, we have peace with God—relationship has been restored and we have access to God. Rom 5:1-2
 - a. God can now indwell us by His Spirit and life—we have become a dwelling place of God (I Cor 6:19-20). A process of supernatural transformation has begun that will ultimately conform us fully to the image of Christ—make us like Jesus in character and power (Rom 8:29; Phil 1:6).
 - b. That's all good news. But it is also many lessons for another day. More next week!