

## Chapter 1: Today's popular, truncated gospel and who is behind it.

In a gospel of John booklet that is used in evangelism outreach, the following words appear in notes after the completion of the gospel:

*In John 5:24 Jesus pledged, "...whoever hears my word and believes the One who sent me has eternal life, and will not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life." This verse contains one condition and three results. If I trust in God's promise concerning Jesus, then (1) I have eternal life, (2) I will not come into judgment, and (3) I have passed from **death to life**.<sup>1</sup>*

To many Christians, the explanation above (that follows Jesus' pledge), accurately conveys the gospel promise. But there is another condition that most Christians know about, but choose to ignore. If you are one of them, you might not even be able to name that other condition unless someone like me comes along and reminds you about it. Let me remind you of this condition of the gospel. As I do, please do not brush it off because it is one of the means of God's grace necessary for your spiritual wellbeing. This book will demonstrate that this aspect of the gospel is meant by God to play a role in keeping your faith and service to Jesus Christ vibrant.

*"Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, **IF you hold fast to the word I preached to you- unless you believed in vain**" (1 Corinthians 15:1-2 ESV)*

To receive the eternal benefits promised by the gospel, you must CONTINUE believing into Jesus, confessing Him before men or you will not be saved from the wrath of God that is coming.

*"Do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: "For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith; **But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him**" (Hebrews 10:35-38).*

*"If anyone does not remain in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered, and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and **he is burned**"<sup>2</sup> (John 15:6).*

*"If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. **If we deny Him, He also will deny us**" (2 Timothy 2:12).*

*"Whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But **whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven**" (Matthew 10:32-33).*

The explanation in that gospel booklet makes no mention of this condition that requires continuance. Here is that explanation again: *"This verse (John 5:24) contains one condition and three results. If I trust in God's promise concerning Jesus, then (1) I have eternal life, (2) I will not come into judgment, and (3) I have passed from death to life."* Most Christians are fully content to hold fast to this truncated gospel explanation. Some even get angry when someone like me confronts them with the other gospel

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<sup>1</sup> Gospel of John booklet, page 70, produced by The Living Water Project, a ministry of Absolutely Free, Inc.

<sup>2</sup> This last phrase "and he is burned," may sound clumsy, but it is nevertheless a more literal translation of the Greek words that John wrote. Just prior to this phrase, John wrote, "They gather them and throw them into the fire." But then he wrote, "And he (singular) is burned. I suspect that John was trying to instill fear by using the singular "and he is burned."

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condition that demands continuance. They are happy sticking their heads in the sand like an ostrich. Because of this phenomenon, let me ask you a direct question just to get the point across.

*If you ( imagine your name here ), were to turn away from Jesus and stay turned away until you die, where would you spend eternity? (according to the New Testament)*

Assuming you have read the New Testament and understood what you read, you would answer as follows: *If I were to turn away from Jesus and stay turned away until I die, I would spend eternity in hell.* (If you disagree, review the small sampling of New Testament warnings provided above and reread the many warnings Jesus spoke about this in the gospels.)

You might ask, but doesn't that explanation in the gospel of John booklet accurately convey the gospel promise? How can anyone argue against the logic presented in it? Let me suggest that their explanation fails to accurately represent Jesus' pledge in John 5:24. Here is the pledge they quote in English:

*"whoever hears my word and believes the One who sent me has eternal life, and will not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life."* Now I don't know every contributor to the translation work, but I do know that the Apostle John made careful use of the Greek present tense to depict the idea of continuation in **soteriological**<sup>3</sup> passages throughout his gospel. (The contributors of the translation of John in this booklet will probably admit to this if you confront them about it.)

When you consider John's use of the Greek present tense, this pledge of Jesus suddenly contains this condition of continuation.

*"Whoever listens to (and continues to) listen to my word, and whoever believes (and continues to believe) the One who sent me, has eternal life and will not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life."* (This translation of John 5:24 brings out the aspect of the Greek present tense participles used by John.)

Even if you object to my more accurate translation of John 5:24 immediately above, you certainly cannot disagree that continuation is a condition of the gospel. John's careful use of the Greek present tense participles in passages like this accommodates this continuation nature of true faith demanded by the gospel. For more details about the use of Greek present tense to express the aspect of continuance, see **Appendix O: [New Testament Greek present tense verbs](#)**.

I have reminded you about the undeniable truth that the gospel demands continuation on your part in order to be saved from the coming wrath of God. Please take a moment and consider how you should respond. Do you sense a strong inclination to put this thought out of your mind so you can get back to more tranquil thoughts? Let me suggest that Satan has been working hard in your life to keep you from thinking about this. Even now, your phone may be starting to ring. Maybe your eyelids are suddenly getting heavy. Then there are those long-held-to doctrines taught as gospel that have now become conventional thinking in most churches. Such teachings are so engrained in most Christians that they are simply not able to even consider any Bible verses that seem to contradict them.

***Getting the church to embrace a truncated gospel is one of Satan's most notable accomplishments.***

It should not surprise you that Satan does not want you to consider these matters. Remember Paul's warning about what will happen near the end. Paul said to Timothy, *"The Spirit expressly says that in the later times, some [people] 'of the faith' will apostatize."* (See 1 Timothy 4:1) When writing to the

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<sup>3</sup> Soteriological means having to do with the knowledge or study of salvation.

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Thessalonians about the second coming of the Lord, Paul said, “*Let nobody deceive you by any means because [it won’t happen] unless THE Apostasy [the great falling away] comes first.*” (See II Thessalonians 2:3.) And don’t forget that when talking about the coming judgment, Jesus asked that provocative question, “*When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?*” (Luke 18:8).

How will these things **happen?**<sup>4</sup> Just connect the dots. You can know for certain that Satan not only wants them to happen, he also has been working hard behind the scenes to make them happen. What better way to accomplish this than to get the church to embrace a truncated gospel designed to lull people into a spiritual sleep? He has seduced millions of Christians into thinking that there is no need to listen to the [multitudes of New Testament warnings](#)<sup>5</sup> to take heed lest they fall away and perish. These many warnings are intended by God to keep His people strong and vibrant. Due to the truncated gospel embraced these days, it is no wonder that people are growing increasingly sleepy. The Bible warns them repeatedly to remain on high alert, but pastors and other leaders are telling them that there is nothing to be concerned about because their place in heaven was sealed the moment they prayed a sinner’s prayer, walked down a church aisle, or made a commitment to Christ. As a result, multitudes of people are growing increasingly stagnant and spiritually sleepy. They are increasingly vulnerable to apostasy. Satan is licking his chops.

Before concluding this chapter, I would like to point out that the end times apostasy seems to coincide with the widespread acceptance of the modern, truncated gospel. Though the early church had its share of Satan-induced distortions, they were not plagued with this truncated gospel. This is a more recent distortion. To see the contrast in thinking between the early church and the modern church, see

[\*\*\*Appendix D: This was the common teaching of the early church fathers.\*\*\*](#)

If you rarely or never think about these matters, you can know for certain that Satan has successfully planted his distorted, truncated gospel into your thinking, and he is trying to distract you away from the gospel warnings intended by God to keep you spiritually vibrant. If you rarely or never ask God to keep you from falling away, you have bought into Satan’s lies and are most vulnerable to falling away. I wrote this book hoping to help people like you perceive Satan’s intentions and alert you so that you do not become one of his casualties. If you don’t wake up and start asking God to help you, you may one day find that you are a castaway rather than one of God’s beloved children. So, please read further, asking God to give you His mind concerning these matters.

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<sup>4</sup> I personally think they are happening right now.

<sup>5</sup> Over 8% of the New Testament deals with this subject. To view several of the warnings and exhortations, see [\*\*\*Appendix B: Verses whose primary purpose is to help Christians persevere to the end.\*\*\*](#)