

Question of the Week

An Apocryphal Bible Web Site Dialog

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by Ted Wise (twise@mediacity.com)

Sometimes I ask the questions and the folks out in cyber land supply the answers. This email correspondence began with an invitation to visit a web site called "Good News". In spite of that name they have a kind of grumpy point of view that seems to be in need of the fruit of the Spirit. (Gal 5:22) "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness..." Good News also insists on including apocryphal texts or books of doubtful origin in their Bible. None of these books are new and they never were part of what eventually became the Bible we have.

It can't possibly feel good to have such a grumpy outlook on the subject of the joy of our salvation. The first thing I needed to know was where this (or these) people stood with Jesus. People can believe an astounding amount of error and still have a relationship with Christ.

A lot of us believe in the active use of our Spiritual gifts. That means like an evangelist goes out into the world uninvited, so those of us with other gifts go forth to use them as well. With this great electronic door open before us we can't neglect to utilize it for the glory of God. What follows is part of what "Good News" believes about the universality of God's forgiveness. They believe Jesus canceled the Law and thus all of mankind is saved. This is not a new idea, it actually was first propagated during the first century of the Church. I guess it's new to "Good News".

From the Good News page:

"These are references God gave to certain writers which have been shunned by theologians and church groups. But this is "shewbread" lawful only for the use of a real God-ordained priest and those he feeds. "Hireling" wolves cannot eat it!"

THE BOOKS OF ADAM AND EVE

EPISTLE OF BARNABAS

2 BARUCH

3 BARUCH

BOOK OF ENOCH

2 ESDRAS

GOSPEL OF THOMAS

ODES OF SOLOMON

PSALMS OF SOLOMON

SECRETS OF ENOCH

SHEPHERD OF HERMAS

SIRACH

TESTIMONY OF THE 12 PATRIARCHS

WISDOM OF SOLOMON

"The "GOOD NEWS" is not a church organization or denomination. I am a recording secretary and editor of a news sharing organ called the "GOOD NEWS". I am here to deliver the fullness of the light first delivered by Jesus in greater depth and detail. We do not present a "wimp" Jesus in our doctrine who was too anemic to "save the world" by his birth like God and the angels said he would do. Our doctrine does not make a lie out of the fact that "he took away the sins of the world" by his death like God sent him to do so that now man must find a way to save himself by his effort. We present a SUCCESSFUL and extremely POWERFUL Christ who accomplished all that he was born to do and all that he died to do. We announce true joy to the world and peace and God's good will toward humanity which is for ALL PEOPLE both the bad and the good..."

There is a tone of voice, if you please, in the above statement that sounds so angry, I could identify with it at once. I felt the same way the first time I read the New Testament. I was outraged. I wondered why no one had told me how wonderful Jesus was. Why didn't someone tell me Christianity wasn't just a bunch of rules that I was as sure to fail at obeying as I was at trying to wrest some sort of satisfaction out of life?

I understand this kind of anger, but "Good News" also carries around a lot of extra unnecessary un-easy yoked dogma. I thought, "Maybe I can enlighten somebody's load". So I wrote to them.

Dear Good News,

Please bear with me. You seem to know a great deal more than I do about whatever point it is you are trying to make. I don't need to know anything about who you are against right now. Perhaps if you would be so kind as to just answer one question for me then I will know what to ask next.

Would you please tell me who Jesus is to you, personally? I don't need another doctrinal statement. I'm still reading the one you posted. I came across your site and I have read a lot of it but there are so many scripture references that it is kind of slow going. I believe I'm correct in assuming that you would like people to read the passages you have noted in your articles. Anyway, what I'm confused about is what part the historical Jesus plays in your personal life. Maybe I'll come to it some where in your writings but for now, just a short note on who Jesus is to you today would help me understand you.

I don't want to debate you or anything like that. It's just that I formerly raced sailboats in the ocean and I'm used to thinking in terms of navigation. When I'm in the middle of the ocean it's easy to look at a chart and point to where I want to go, but it's quite another thing to find out where I am so that corrections in course can be made to get to where I want to go. So, is Jesus your teacher, your leader, or what?

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Good News reply:

Hi! Thanks for visiting the "GOOD NEWS" sites. I know you are full of questions which

stem from your previous education about God! Please read the attachment. I am sure it will clear up what we are doing!

Thanks!

"GOOD NEWS"

Attachment from Good News:

"Judgment belongs to Jesus! Recognize his "waiving" authority. This enables him to "save all men" as he was born to do and to remit all men's sins as he died to do! Some of your judgment doctrines make him look like a failure. Jesus is not pleased with your errors nor flattered by them. In fact you dishonor his glory by preaching such trash and making devils seem successful against both Jesus and the Father's will! Honor Jesus NOW! Give him a wave offering! Just wave your hand and say, "Thank you Jesus for "waiving" the law and its penalties!" Your preaching of men burning in hell is useless, wrong-minded Dragon-dribble which denies Christ's SUCCESS and demeans and belittles his sacrifice! But you can bet your life that he saved the world of ALL HUMANITY exactly as Isaiah prophesied that he would do in chapter 53! Any preacher who says he did not do it and could not do it is a liar who tries to make God seem like a liar! You limit and deny God's power to save!"

Good News

Well, I felt I had to persist because Good News sent no new information about his/her/their personal relationship with Christ.

Dear "Good News",

Perhaps I didn't make myself clear. I have already read the portion of your web site that you sent me as an attachment. So in one sense, you are correct. My question does in fact come from my previous "education" about God, namely what you say in your attachment.

You have said that Jesus is your "Judge" and that by "waiving" the law and its penalties!" you are not guilty of all charges. If I were involved in a legal procedure and the judge "waived" all charges, I would indeed offer him a "wave offering" as I left the court room and never see him again. This is why I'm asking about Jesus and what he is to you now.

My question is, who is Jesus to you, personally? Leader? Teacher? Or what?

Do you understand my question?

Ted

Good News answered:

Hi! You want to know what Jesus is to me. He is my hero, brother, Savior, friend, judge, Redeemer, Teacher and measuring stick by which I assess the goodness, grace and truth in others. In short he is all I need for total victory. I hope that answers your question. Jesus loves me. I do not dishonor his SUCCESS nor his work by doubting him. He said God gave him a commandment that he should lose nothing. And furthermore it is God's will that not one human sheep shall perish. Because I believe these words from Jesus, many viewing our sight have a problem with it because of their doubt and unbelief. They believe in the devil's

success vs Jesus and God's will! I give God the glory. His hand is not short that he cannot save. His love and grace is limitless. Enough about me. I am not important. The WORD is important! Praise God!

"GOOD NEWS"

They still haven't made it personal enough, so I wrote:

Good News,

Well you kind of answered my question but fall a little short. Please be patient with me, asking you this question is not my idea. In fact you yourself on your web page make it clear that you have a profound distrust of churches and those who preach in them. I'm just doing what the Word says to do:

(1 John 4:1-2) "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God".

What does "...in the flesh..." mean?

Another scripture I read said something that you probably just over looked in your reply. However, because Paul makes such a big deal out of it, I guess I have to ask you once more. In the context of this passage, who is Jesus to you?

(1 Cor 12:3) "Therefore I make known to you, that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is accursed"; and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit."

Ted

PS Don't get discouraged, Peter flunked the question three times.

I'm awaiting their reply. Some folks have a hard time saying that they think Jesus is Lord and that He personally died for their sins. On the "Good News" page they portray Jesus as canceling the charges against us but His crucifixion is missing from the how and why of it all.

I can't ignore the fact that these folks also have a bunch of apocryphal writings and a few other oddball ideas about the Bible. Things like why are modern day translations of these old heresies done in King James English? Who knows, maybe I will get a nibble.

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"He must increase, but I must decrease..." John the Baptist

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