

Testimony

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My Personal Discovery of the Truth

I was leading a good life: I didn't smoke; I didn't drink; I didn't swear; and I went to church every Sunday. As well, I never committed any big sin like murder or theft. In my opinion, I could not see any reason why the Lord would not accept me into heaven... some day. Certainly, he would have no reason to send me to hell: this place is only reserved for people who commit big crimes. At least, this is what I believed. Apparently, God's word says otherwise: "But we are ALL as an unclean thing, and ALL our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." (Isaiah 64:6) "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Proverbs 16:25) "For the wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23) "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not." (Ecclesiastes 7:20)

However, for many years, I did not know God's word, at least not these words. I was taught that if I did my best to do good in this world, I had nothing to worry about. The Lord could surely not ignore my good works, especially if they outnumbered my sins. Besides, the Lord is full of grace, and he is always ready to forgive.

True, but God is a just God, and he cannot ignore my sins. They will have to be dealt with some day. "Fear before him, ALL the earth." (Psalm 96:9) "Prepare to meet thy God." (Amos 4:12)

How can I escape this? I could ask for forgiveness by a priest for my sins. This may give me some peace of mind. However, no matter how often I asked for forgiveness for my sins in the past, I felt that I needed something more because I knew that in no time I would sin again. Therefore, in order to appease God's wrath, I decided to do what I could to please him. Not only was I going to live a righteous life and do good in this world like I was taught to do, I was going to become more involved with my church. By participating in all of the church rituals, and by becoming an active member of the church choir, I truly felt that God would be pleased with me. However, no matter how much I tried to please the Lord, I felt empty, and I knew I was NOT any closer to God than before. I was only living a lie, a life of hypocrisy. Often I would go to church unwillingly. However, I would not dare do otherwise: I would not do anything to displease the Lord if this is what he required of me.

But I was wrong. The Lord tells us clearly in His Word that "a man is not justified by the works of the law,... for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." (Galatians 2:16) Unfortunately, I did not know this. Instead, I was doing my best to obey all ordinances I was instructed to follow. What I DID know, however, was that this obedience did not bring me any more peace within because I could never be sure if my righteous acts were sufficient, if they outnumbered my sins.

A few years ago, the clergy of our church decided to make some changes in the Sunday celebration, changes which troubled me greatly because I did not believe that the order of the celebration could be changed. If the Lord instituted a certain order to be followed, should it not be respected? God's word tells us that "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you." (Deuteronomy 4:2) Feeling terribly disillusioned by these changes, I decided to abandon the rituals and the life of hypocrisy I was leading. I was no longer interested in living a lie; only "the truth" interested me.

For two years I searched. During my search, I approached several members of the clergy to better understand the origin and basis of my religion and of the rituals we practiced. To my surprise, each person I spoke with had differing views concerning the rituals and the things of God, and each person only practiced what he or she believed was important. Needless to say, these differences of opinion simply caused me to question further the origin of these religious rituals practiced. If the Lord instituted them, why does man allow himself to change them? However, if these rituals were originally established by man, by what authority did he institute them?

Personally, I was only interested in what came from God. But how could I know what came from God and what did not? Where do I look? It is at this point that I decided to seek out the answers for myself. Luckily, the people of the clergy had an abundance of books at my disposal. I chose a few and began to read. What confusion! The language used was so complicated and the messages so ambiguous that I was reading in vain. Nothing seemed clear to me. I ended up being more confused after my reading than beforehand, and I was beginning to feel rather frustrated with the whole situation.

Finally, feeling like I had nowhere else to turn, I began to pray for help from God. I wanted to get closer to God, but I did not know how. Every day I prayed, and I hoped that the Lord would reveal this "truth" that seemed to be kept well hidden from me.

A few months later, my prayers were answered. My brother-in-law, a Christian, presented to me the good news of salvation by faith in our Lord Jesus-Christ, the ONLY way to God: "Jesus said..., 'I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.'" (John 14:6) I quickly learned that any observances to religious rites would not get me any closer to God. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9) The price of my redemption was already paid in full by Jesus Christ on the cross. "It is finished." (John 19:30) On my part, there was nothing more to do than to believe on the son of God "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness." (1 Peter 2:24) "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) That same evening, finally understanding that Jesus was the ONLY way to God, I accepted him as my personal Saviour. Now, I have an internal and eternal peace, for I know that my sins are all forgiven. "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts 10:43) As well, I also know that, one day, I will be with the Lord forever. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God: that ye may KNOW that ye have eternal life." (1 John 5:13)

*"Repent ye therefore, and be converted,
that your sins may be blotted out." (Acts 3:19)
"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."
(Acts 16:31)*

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