

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Knowing the truth is not enough

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Until we take the step to obey what we know to be the truth, we do not receive God's blessings of salvation. Peter stresses this point when he viewed what his readers had done: “Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently” (I Peter 1:22). Their souls had been purified from sin by the blood of Christ when they obeyed the truth of the Gospel (cf. I Peter 1:18-19, Revelation 1:5, Eph. 1:13). Jesus is the author of salvation to them who “obey Him” (Hebrews 5:9). Many know the truth, but for various reasons do not obey what God reveals.

Some know the truth, but are unwilling to submit to its requirements because they care more about the consequences connected with what their peers will think of them, than what God clearly commands them to do. It is clear that we must confess Jesus to be the Son of God in order to be saved (Romans 10:9-10, Matthew 10:32-33). Having clear evidence that Jesus is the Son of God is not the problem (John 20:31-32). The parents of the man miraculously healed by Jesus refused to ac-

knowledge Jesus' identity because “they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man should confess him to be the Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him” (John 9:22-23). The rulers of the Jews “believed” on Jesus, but they did not “confess” it “because of the Pharisees...lest they should be put out of the synagogue” (John 12:42). Why? “For they loved the glory that is of men more than the glory that is of God” (John 12:43).

Some know the truth, but think they can substitute something of value unto God in place of simple and complete obedience. Saul was clearly commanded to completely destroy Agag and the Amalekites, sparing nothing belonging to them (I Samuel 15:3). When confronted with his disobedience, Saul says, “the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice unto Jehovah thy God and the rest we have utterly destroyed” (I Samuel 15:16).

Saul learned that what God wants more than sacrifice is simple obedience. “Behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams” (I Samuel 15:23).

How many know that they need to repent and be baptized into the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), but think that they will be OK if they substitute being a good moral person instead? Being a loving husband, submissive wife, and an obedient child please God, but not in the place of the initial obedience to the gospel message.

Some know the truth that the purpose of baptism is the same as Jesus' purpose for shedding his blood: unto the remission of sins (Matthew 26:28, Acts 2:38). Yet, they do not obey God's commands for the same clearly revealed purpose. It is not enough to know that we are to be hospitable, but we are to be hospitable without murmuring (I Peter 4:9). It is not enough to eat the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine, but we must partake of it, discerning the body of Christ (I Corinthians 11: 23-29). Obeying for the right reason is essential before God. If we pervert the purpose, we forfeit the blessings connected with the command.

Knowing truth is not enough. Let us obey completely!