

FOOD 4 THE SOUL.

"I will show my faith by what I do" – James 2,18

"Slavery was as accepted as birth and marriage and death, was so woven into the tapestry of human history that you could barely see its threads, much less pull them out. Everywhere on the globe, for 5,000 years, the idea of human civilization without slavery was unimaginable" – writes author Eric Metaxas in his biographical work on William Wilberforce. It took decades of fight against the odds for Wilberforce and his colleagues, the so called "Clapham Circle", until their "faith based initiative" finally ended the slave trade.

They called on the Brits to live up to their professed faith. But how can society get rid of an ill that is so deeply ingrained and, at the same time, harms only the most powerless? How impractical abolition seemed for England's economy "where profits from West Indian plantations gave a large boost to the economy, where customs' duties on slave-grown sugar were an important source of government revenue, and where ... the trade itself had increased to almost unparalleled levels, bringing prosperity to key ports, including London itself?"

The success of the Abolition Movement is a lesson on the proper role of faith in public life. There is power in the Gospel to correct the greatest social ills. When committed Christians bring their convictions to "the market place", Gospel principles win.

Tomorrow we celebrate the 200th Anniversary of a decision (the final vote was actually cast on February 24, 1807, at 4 in the morning) by the British Parliament that ended the legal practice of slave-trade. Eleven years earlier they lost by four votes only. Preachers entered the battle. Writers, poets, politicians and academia joined them to inform the public. Their persistent work and righteous resolve not only helped the British to put an end to slave-trade, but inspired by their success, a number of faith based movements were born even on this side of the Atlantic. Just three days before the death of Wilberforce, in 1833, slavery ended in Britain and her colonies.

Pastor Novak

Did Jesus Claim to Be God?

By Hank Hanegraaff

"I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever!" -Revelation 1:17-18

When Jesus came to Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples the mother of all questions, "Who do you say I am?" (Matthew 16:15; Mark 8:29; Luke 9:20). Mormons answer this question by saying that Jesus is the spirit brother of Lucifer; Jehovah's Witnesses answer by saying that Jesus is the archangel Michael; New Agers say Jesus is an avatar or enlightened messenger. Jesus, however, answered by claiming that He was God.

First, Jesus claimed to be the unique Son of God. As a result, the Jewish leaders tried to kill Him because in "calling God his own Father, [Jesus was] making himself equal with God" (John 5:18 NIV). In John 8:58 Jesus went so far as to use the very words by which God revealed Himself to Moses from the burning bush (Exodus 3:14). To the Jews this was the epitome of blasphemy, for they knew that in doing so Jesus was clearly claiming to be God. On yet another occasion, Jesus explicitly told the Jews: "I and the Father are one."

Again the Jews picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus said to them, 'I have shown you many great miracles from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?' 'We are not stoning you for any of these,' replied the Jews, 'but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God'" (John 10:30-33).

Furthermore, Jesus made an unmistakable claim to deity before the Chief Priests and the whole Sanhedrin. Caiaphas the High Priest asked him: "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" 'I am,' said Jesus. 'And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven'" (Mark 14:61-62 NIV). A biblically illiterate person might well have missed the import of Jesus' words. Caiaphas and the Council, however, did not. They knew that in saying he was "the Son of Man" who would come "on the clouds of heaven" he was making an overt reference to the Son of Man in Daniel's prophecy (Daniel 7:13-14).

In doing so, He was not only claiming to be the preexistent Sovereign of the Universe but also prophesying that He would vindicate His claim by judging the very court that was now condemning Him. Moreover, by combining Daniel's prophecy with David's proclamation in Psalm 110, Jesus was claiming that He would sit upon the throne of Israel's God

and share God's very glory. To students of the Old Testament this was the height of "blasphemy," thus "they all condemned him as worthy of death" (Mark 14:64-65).

Finally, Jesus claimed to possess the very attributes of God. For example, He claimed omniscience by telling Peter, "This very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times" (Matthew 26:34); declared omnipotence by not only resurrecting Lazarus (John 11:43) but by raising Himself from the dead (see John 2:19); and professed omnipresence by promising He would be with His disciples "to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). Not only so, but Jesus said to the paralytic in Luke 5:20, "Friend, your sins are forgiven". In doing so, He claimed a prerogative reserved for God alone. In addition, when Thomas worshiped Jesus saying "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28), Jesus responded with commendation rather than condemnation.

What Credentials Back Up Jesus' Claim to Deity?

"When John heard in prison what Christ was doing, he sent his disciples to ask him, 'Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?' Jesus replied, 'Go back and report to John what you hear and see; The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.'" - Matthew 11:2-5

Jesus not only claimed to be God but also provided many convincing proofs that he indeed was divine.

First, Jesus demonstrated that he was God in human flesh by manifesting the credential of sinlessness. While the Qur'an exhorts Muhammad to seek forgiveness for his sins, the Bible exonerates Messiah saying Jesus "had no sin" (2 Corinthians 5:21). And this is not a singular statement. John declares, "and in him is no sin" (1 John 3:5), and Peter says Jesus "committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth" (1 Peter 2:22). Jesus himself went so far as to challenge his antagonists asking, "Can any of you prove me guilty of sin?" (John 8:46)

Furthermore, Jesus demonstrated supernatural authority over sickness, the forces of nature, fallen angels, and even death itself. Matthew 4 records that Jesus went throughout Galilee teaching, preaching "and healing every disease and sickness among the people" (v.23). Mark 4 documents Jesus rebuking the wind and the waves saying, "Quiet! Be still!" (v.39). In Luke 4 Jesus encounters a man possessed by an evil spirit and commands the demon to "Come out of him!" (v.35). And in John 4, Jesus tells a royal official whose son was close to death, "Your son

will live" (v.50). In fact, the four Gospels record how Jesus demonstrated ultimate power over death through the immutable fact of his resurrection.

Finally, the credentials of Christ's deity are seen in the lives of countless men, women, and children. Each day, people of every tongue and tribe and nation experience the resurrected Christ by repenting of their sins and receiving Jesus as Lord and Savior of their lives. Thus, they not only come to know about Christ evidentially, but experientially Christ becomes more real to them than the very flesh upon their bones.

Crosswalk.com

It's time to believe God

By Henry Blackaby

Faith, or belief, can only operate in the present. It takes no faith to believe what has been — that's settled. Likewise, it takes no faith to believe what God can do, for with God all things are possible. Faith functions in what you believe God is going to do right now.

Jesus told His disciples, "[I]f you have faith ... nothing will be impossible for you" (Matthew 17:20). Then, Jesus demonstrated such faith as He healed the boy that His disciples had failed to heal. When He did this He said to the boy's father, "All things are possible to him who believes." Then, Scriptures says, "Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, 'Lord, I believe, help my unbelief!'" (Mark 9:23-24).

Our Lord is constantly assuring us as well of what can happen if we but have faith in Him. This is especially true in our work places, our homes and our churches. For us, it is time to believe God. God's people desperately need to experience God mightily at work in their lives. And a seeking, searching world must also see God working. So, all waits on our faith as children of God.

The writer of Hebrews in chapter 11 lists the "heroes of faith." But he doesn't stop there; he goes on to urge all believers to join the ranks with their walk of faith:

"Therefore, we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was

set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:1-2).

Today, it is now our turn. And from the Scriptures, what should we do? For Hebrews 11:6 claims that "without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." Therefore, in these urgent days let us:

1. Come to know Him.
2. Believe Him (as He has revealed Himself to us).
3. Seek Him.
4. Expect Him to respond.
5. Come to the full knowledge that nothing is impossible with God (Jeremiah 32:27, Luke 1:37, Luke 18:27, Matthew 19:26).
6. Be satisfied with nothing less than the mighty works of God through faith in Him (John 14:12-14).

Remember, now is our time to believe God — in our personal lives, our homes, our workplaces and in our churches.

Baptist Press

Afraid? Of What?

The bandit told a missionary (Jack Vinson, China, 1931), "I'm going to kill you. Aren't you afraid?"

He replied: "Kill me, if you wish. I will go straight to God."

Jack Vinson's courage inspired his friend E.H. Hamilton to write this poem:

Afraid? Of what?
 To feel the spirits glad release?
 To pass from pain to perfect peace,
 The strife and strain of life to cease?
 Afraid — of that?

Afraid? Of what?
 Afraid to see the Savior's face
 To hear His welcome, and to trace
 The glory gleam from wounds of grace?
 Afraid — of that?

Afraid? Of what?
 A flash, a crash, a pierced heart;
 Darkness, light, o Heaven's art!
 A wound of His a counterpart!
 Afraid — of that?

Afraid? Of what?
 To do by death what life could not —
 Baptize with blood a stony plot,
 Till souls shall blossom from that spot?
 Afraid of that?

Billy Sunday said: "Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than going to a garage makes you an automobile."

ÁHÍTATOS PERCEK

„Te azért, fiam, erősödjél meg a kegyelemben, amely a Krisztus Jézusban van. És amit tőlem hallottál sok tanú előtt, azokat add át megbízható embereknek, akik mások tanítására is alkalmasak lesznek.” (2Tim 2,1-2)

A II. Világháború után óriásit ugrott a teológiai hallgatók száma itt, Amerikában. A világi egyetemeken is alakultak teológiai tanszékek, és új szemináriumok tucatjai fogadták a tanulmányaikat állami segítségből finanszírozó fiatalok ezreit. Sokan lettek lelkipásztorok az un. "G.I. Bills" jóvoltából. Kelet-Európában a kommunizmus éveit alatti, természetesen, nem kaptak ilyen "segítséget" a hallgatók, és az oktatást sokféleképpen nehezítette az államhatalom. Mégis voltak fiatalok, akik a lelkipásztori szolgálatra elhívást érezték, és arra szorgalmasan tanulva készültek.

A gyülekezetben folyó munkákat, de főleg a lelkipásztori szolgálatot nem szabad hivatástudat nélkül vállalni és végezni. Az anyagi tényezőknél - akár a felkészülésben, akár a munkamezőn - sokkal fontosabb a szolgálattelévő meggyőződése arról, hogy egy helyi gyülekezet szolgálatára kapott megbízást Istentől, amire jól fel kell készülnie, és amit bármi áron el kell látnia - Megbízója segítségével.

Amíg élek, hálás leszek Istennek lelkipásztor-tanáraim példájáért. Hívó tudósokként a "szent tudomány" kincseit úgy kínálják, hogy a tanulás örömeibe és a tanítás titkaiba is bevezettek bennünket. Az Úr Jézus hűséges szolgálói voltak; az áldozatkészségük mély nyomot hagytott rajtunk.

"Amit tőlem hallottál... add át megbízható embereknek" - írta Pál apostol Timóteusnak. Vagyis, ügyelni kellett nem csak az átadásra, de arra is, hogy az evangélium meghirdetésének az ügye el ne akadjon megbízhatatlan emberek ügyeskedéseiben, vagy éppen ügyetlensége miatt. Egyszóval, a munkát olyanok viszik csak tovább, akiket Isten arra elhívott, felkészít és alkalmassá tesz.

Imádkozzunk a lelkipásztori szolgálatra készülő fiatalokért!

Novák József

Making a will? Don't forget about the Convention, our Hungarian mission.

Végrendeletet készít?

Ne feledkezzen el

Szövetségünkről, az amerikai magyar baptista misszióról.

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