

# A Wake-Up Call

Christianity that is totally based on the Word of God, the Christian Bible, is suffering decline in our day, it is so evident as to need no proof.

We must have a new reformation. There must be a violent break with the irresponsible, amusement-based worship, the paganised pseudo religion which passes today as the Church of Jesus Christ.

When the Roman Church apostatised, God brought about the reformation led by Luther.

When the reformation declined, God raised up the Moravians and the Wesleys.

When these movements began to die, God raised up fundamentalism and the “*deeper life*” groups.

Now that these have almost without exception sold out to the world, unspiritual men and women employing unscriptural methods to achieve their ends of numerical growth and personal wealth.

We need to return to the basic Gospel Message that Jesus Christ brought to this lost world from God the Father.

**Matthew 3:1-12** [NIV] *“In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea and saying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.’ This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: ‘A voice of one calling in the desert, “Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.”’ John’s clothes were made of camel’s hair, and he had a leather belt round his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. Confessing their sins, they were baptised by him in the Jordan River. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptising, he said to them: ‘You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, “We have Abraham as our father.” I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. I baptise you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing-floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.’”*

John the Baptist introduced the Gospel Message that Jesus Christ was bringing in person from God, with a call to repent.

How often is this part of the Gospel Message preached with power today by the leaders of the Christian Church?

As a result of this there is little fear of God among the congregations they are supposed to teach and serve.

**Matthew 10:28** [NIV] *“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”*

The direct words of Jesus Christ, and is reflected in the words of the apostle Peter. [**1 Peter 1:17; 1 Peter 2:17**]

**Luke 1:50** [NIV] *“His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.”*

This inspired statement was based on **Exodus 20:4**. [**Proverbs 1:7; Proverbs 9:10; Malachi 3:16**]

**Romans 3:23** [NIV] *“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”*

Paul reminded the Church that all have sinned and all their works of “righteousness” had earned was death. [**Romans 6:23**]

**1 John 3:4-8** [NIV] *“Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. No-one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No-one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him. Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work.”*

The apostle John defined what sin was and where we stand before God if we sin.

**Romans 7:7** [NIV] *“What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, ‘Do not covet.’”*

Paul confirmed what law was being referred to by the disciples of Jesus Christ.

**Romans 3:20** [NIV] *“Therefore no-one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.”*

Keeping the law will **not** make us right with God, only faith in Jesus Christ can do that. [**v22**]

**1 Timothy 1:8-10** [NIV] *“We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers, and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine”*

Law must be preached to bring those who sin to repentance, through the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. [**John 16:8**]

Until a person knows they have sinned and know what they face unless they repent, they will **not** see any need for a Saviour, the other part of the Gospel Message.

**Who is really behind this veil of ignorance and deception?**

**2 Corinthians 4:4** [King James] *“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”*

The god who is as yet still ruling this world is Satan.

**Matthew 4:8-9** [NIV] *“Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. ‘All this I will give you,’ he said, ‘if you will bow down and worship me.’”*

Jesus Christ did **not** tell Satan that the world was **not** his to give.

**1 John 5:19** [NIV] *“We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.”*

The evil one is Satan.

**Revelation 12:12** [NIV] *“Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.”*

This rule of Satan is limited and will end at the return of Jesus Christ. [**Revelation 20:1-3**]

**Revelation 12:11** [King James] *“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.”*

The “*they*” are Christians [v10] and “*him*” is Satan. [v9]

This is where the preaching of the other half of the Gospel Message comes in. Having first convicted people of their sins and brought them to the state of repentance we tell them of the glorious freedom from deserved death is found by accepting and having faith in the sacrifice of their Saviour Jesus Christ.

**Preaching this second half of the Gospel Message has little or no effect without the first half.**

Also note that the powerful preaching is accompanied with the personal example of the Christians preaching it, even if this brings with it persecution.

There is far more to becoming a Christian and living a Christian life than “*accepting Christ*” whatever that may mean!

There is one other message that needs to be preached that is also part of the Gospel Message.

**Matthew 24:3** [NIV] *“As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. ‘Tell us,’ they said, ‘when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?’”*

The disciples of Jesus Christ had this in mind even before they had received the gift of the Holy Spirit.

**Matthew 4:17, 23** [NIV] *“From that time on Jesus began to preach, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.’” ... “Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.”*

Jesus Christ had been preaching about the Kingdom [a family grown big] of God, which was linked to physical and spiritual healing.

**John 3:3** [NIV] *“In reply Jesus declared, ‘I tell you the truth, no-one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.’”*

To enter into this created family we have to be “*born again.*” Such an act involves our personal death.

**Romans 6:1-4** [NIV] *“What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning, so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”*

Paul understood what was meant by this death.

Our baptism, by complete immersion, in a watery grave and then living a new life, that is dedicated to serving our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ. [v13]

This Kingdom of God is being prepared in us [**Luke 17:20-21**] by the active indwelling of the Holy Spirit producing “*fruits*” that are the very characteristics of the Creator God.

The rule of that Kingdom on earth will begin at the return of Jesus Christ to this earth. [**Revelation 19:11-13, 16; Revelation 20:4-6**]

## **How often has this part of the gospel message been preached with power by the Christian Church?**

**1 Peter 4:12-19** [NIV] *“Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And, ‘If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?’ So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.”*

The Christian Church is about to be judged as to how well it is doing the job of work it was given to do by Jesus Christ just before His ascension back to His Father’s Throne. [**Matthew 28:16-20**]

When we read of all the signs that Jesus Christ told His disciples would happen just before His Second Coming [**Matthew 24:3-51**], we need to constantly be watching world events, [**Luke 21:36**] but also our own spiritual maturity, to be “*accounted worthy to escape*” all these events.

All that we have studied in this article show that each of us personally and the Christian Church as a whole needs a “*wake-up call*” to be prepared for the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.