

Fake News, Good News

Commentary for January 15, 2017 — False Gospel or True Evangel?

“Fake news” is a new and trending phrase in the English lexicon. You will not find a precise dictionary definition of the phrase yet, but a general description is that (1) fake news involves lies rather than truth, and (2) the lies claim to be fresh information or “news.”¹

Fake news is not limited to political news stories on the internet. It is the ideal example of the commandment’s warning to the people of Israel, **“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor”** (Exodus 20:16).

Fake News in Christian Teaching

In Christian thought, there is also fake news. In fact, most of evangelical and orthodox Christian “Gospel” teaching fits the description of “fake news” or more specifically “fake good news.” Gospel means “good news” but it is better translated as *Evangel*, “well-message.”

In 1 Corinthians chapter 15, the apostle Paul gives a concise presentation of the true *Evangel* as opposed to a false Gospel. The true *Evangel* involving the resurrection is described as:

1. The resurrection of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1–11).
2. The resurrection of the dead — not the living, but the dead (1 Corinthians 15:12–34).
3. The resurrection body; what we shall be like after our resurrection from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:35–58).

Dr. Ernest Martin’s article, [“The Folly of Modern Preaching,”](#) gives further explicit information:

“The ‘folly’ comes down to this: Modern preachers are normally in the business of trying to tell people what they themselves must do to be saved rather than teaching them that THEY ARE SAVED ALREADY.”²

They have the cart in front of the horse! Christ actually obtained a salvation for us before the foundation of the world. What we ought to do now is to tell those in the world what Christ has done for them so that they might love Him and respond to His ways.

There are no works to gain salvation, but one should always perform good works to please God and man ... because salvation is certain.”

Anything you do or think you can do for your salvation is by definition “salvation by works.” If you think you need to observe the Law of God to be saved, then you believe in a works salvation. Must you be baptized to be saved? Then you believe you somehow participate in affecting your salvation in addition to the work of Christ Jesus.

¹ For a “legitimate” example of “fake news,” see the satire and comedy website [“The Onion.”](#)

² This is the basic focus of two books by Dr. Ernest Martin: the short [The ABCs of the Gospel](#), and his fuller description [from the Bible](#) how you, I, and all of humanity were saved from before the foundation of the world, in his [The Essentials of New Testament Doctrine](#). Both books are free online.

Do you believe you must “accept Christ to be saved” and do an altar call? This also works because it is something that you do that is necessary for you to be saved.

Fake News Is Not Good News

Any works that you think may gain you salvation is a lie and fake news. It is a false Gospel. It is not the good news of the *Evangel*. This simple biblical understanding is surprisingly difficult to convey even to those who believe in the biblical teaching of universal salvation. Many of those believers still believe in a false salvation of works.

Life and Death

Another false news story is about the true nature of life and the situation at death. Most all Christians (and most people generally) believe that something, some part of consciousness continues after the death of every human being. This thinking gives comfort to people that their loved ones are at peace in a different existence, and those who were evil are enduring a punishment in a mythical hell. Both are false news because only the living are alive, and the dead are not alive — they have ceased to exist.

Most often, this idea of immediate continuity of consciousness is labeled the doctrine of the immortal soul. It is not in the Bible at all. It too is fake news.

Oh, there is life after death, but God decides when that will occur for every human being since and including Adam and Eve. All will be brought back to life for judgment (“... **it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment,**” Hebrews 9:27). Again, Dr. Martin’s two books explain the simple biblical teaching on this subject.

The Nature of God

Who is God, what is God, what does God look like? The fake news is that God is an amorphous blob of pulsating energy somehow rotating from 1 to 3 parts (yet not really) or personalities, or essences, or some non-biblical explanation using a non-biblical terminology. This is called a “trinity.” You are supposed to accept it. You cannot understand it. Yet the idea that God is a trinity is fake news.

The truth is given simply by the apostle Paul to recent pagan, but now Christian believers, in the ancient Greek city of Corinth:

“For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.”

Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge.”

• 1 Corinthians 8:5–7

The lies of fake news, in any subject: political, religious, or secular, usually can be uncovered with brief inspection. **“The truth shall set you free”** (John 8:32).

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