



## The “Greater” Delusion

**Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith.  
Prove your own selves.  
(2Corinthians 13:5)**

“It’s easier to fool people than to convince them that they have been fooled.” Although this famous saying is often attributed to Mark Twain, what he actually said was, “How easy it is to make people believe a lie, and how hard it is to undo that work again!”<sup>1</sup> This statement describes the sad state of Christendom today. For while it is truly a delusion for Christians to believe they the Elect of God—when they are not; it is an even greater delusion for a soul to believe it is saved—when it is not. It’s easy to deceive people into believing they are Christians; but much harder (if not impossible) to convince them they are not true Christians at all. For the greater deceiver is not the one who told the lie, but rather the one who believed the lie. For that soul has deceived his own heart.

The previous study presented *The Great Delusion* and Mark of the Beast as a state of the heart and mind, and how Christians may be susceptible to its reception. This second part will address the even *Greater Delusion* that has fallen upon the entire realm of Christianity. For the past several decades this deception has been present in nearly every Christian pulpit, every Christian program, and every evangelistic crusade. It’s no great secret, and the promoters make no effort to hide it. This *Greater Delusion* is *The Modern Gospel*.

### Lie #1: The Modern Gospel

Seekers of Jesus Christ are led to believe that they have—what they have not. They are told their sins are forgiven—when they are not. They are persuaded they have received the Holy Spirit—when they did not. They are told that they are washed in the Blood of the Lamb and have received the New Birth—when in reality they still wear the wretched sin-stained garment of fallen Adam. These souls may have made a "decision" for Christ. But that does not mean that Christ made a decision for them. They may have invited Jesus into the heart; but it does not mean that Jesus has responded!<sup>2</sup>

### Lie #2: The Sinner’s Prayer

Inviting Jesus to come into the heart is not the magic key that opens the door to Heaven. Neither is it Biblical. No passage in Scripture promotes this prayer or idea.<sup>3</sup> In 2,000 years of Church history the *Sinner’s Prayer*<sup>4</sup> was never used as a means to salvation. It was only made popular with the evangelistic crusades that gained momentum in the 1950’s.<sup>5</sup>

## 2 The “Greater” Delusion

If at some point in your life you said the *Sinner’s Prayer*,<sup>6</sup> you have done nothing wrong. But if you believe you are saved *because* you said that prayer you are greatly mistaken: For true conversion begins even before those words are ever uttered. Repeating the *Sinner’s Prayer* is not the reason God saves.<sup>7</sup> True conversion is a state of the heart and the mind;<sup>8</sup> and the evidence is true brokenness over your sins, true remorse over those sins, and true humility before God.<sup>9</sup>

### Lie #3: “Come as You Are,” aka, Faith without Repentance

Brokenness, humility, and contriteness must precede true repentance.<sup>10</sup> These are not relative terms. Their meanings are not determined by the individual. *For the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.*<sup>11</sup> The sinner’s heart can fool itself. Since it is God who demands repentance, He alone must define what it is, and then accept the seeking soul based on His own established criteria. If God determines the soul is not penitent, if He determines the soul is not repentant—HE WILL NOT SAVE!<sup>12</sup> Evangelists have no knowledge of the true state of the souls they call forward to “receive Christ.” Therefore they *cannot—and should not—*declare anyone as saved!<sup>13</sup>

### Repentance and Remission

To *repent* is to turn back to God. You acknowledge that you have lived your life far from God, without seeking His counsel, consent, or direction.<sup>14</sup> It means you have changed your mind about Him, that you believe in Him,<sup>15</sup> and that you will now follow<sup>16</sup> the Lord Jesus Christ. Only after true penitence and repentance is the soul granted *remission of sins*.<sup>17</sup> Remission of sins simply means “you are forgiven.”<sup>18</sup> Your slate is wiped clean. Every evil, sinful thing you did to that point is now forgiven and therefore forgotten by God.<sup>19</sup> But faith without this kind of repentance is not saving faith. Therefore true repentance must come first.<sup>20</sup> Only then is remission of sins granted.

### Holiness: The Reason for Your Salvation

Once the soul truly repents and converts to faith in Jesus Christ, God sets out to make that soul holy.<sup>21</sup> This is the work of His Spirit. Therefore, after conversion, if the soul is not becoming increasingly obedient, increasingly holy, then the question must be asked: *Whether you were ever truly saved in the first place?* For the real evidence of true conversion is a changed life—a *holy life!*<sup>22</sup>

So if today you are asked about your salvation, will you confidently say, “Yes I am saved?” But perhaps a better question might be, “As evidence of your salvation, are you living faithfully and obediently to the Lord Jesus Christ in every aspect and every area of your life?” Then the next question: “If not—why not?” If you are not willing to be made holy, if you’re not willing to be like Jesus—*then why do you wish to be saved at all?* God will not force holiness on anyone; but neither will He allow the unholy into Heaven. For without holiness—NO ONE SHALL SEE GOD!<sup>23</sup>

### The True Gospel

God’s purpose in saving souls is to restore the life that was lost in Adam.<sup>24</sup> Satan cheated mankind out of that life; God intends to give it back.<sup>25</sup> Christ’s sinless life and atoning sacrifice makes it both a possibility and a reality.<sup>26</sup> For the ultimate purpose of saving faith is not simply to deliver the soul from the punishment of Hell; God’s design is to conform that soul into the image of Jesus Christ.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, if you are not on the path toward holiness and conformity to the Lord Jesus Christ, the question may not be whether you *believe*...

—but whether you have ever truly *repented*.<sup>28</sup>

Continued in *A Christian’s Prayer of Repentance* and *The Greatest Delusion*...

## NOTES & SCRIPTURES

### Scriptures are from the King James Bible

- 1 *Autobiography of Mark Twain, Vol. 2* (University of California Press, 2013)
- 2 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. ((Mat 7:22-23)
- 3 Rev. 3:20 is not an invitation for the sinner (non-believer) to come to Christ. Jesus is not addressing the non-believer. He is speaking to the Church (His followers). They had shut Him out of their lives and activities; Jesus is therefore asking that they again make Him the center of their lives.
- 4 The history of the *Sinner's Prayer*—and its ramifications—will be covered in another study.
- 5 Evangelistic crusades of Billy Graham, Campus Crusade for Christ, the Jesus Movement, etc.
- 6 Example of a widely-used *Sinner's Prayer*:  

Lord Jesus, I know that I'm a sinner, and I ask your forgiveness. I believe you died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from my sins and invite you to come into my heart and life. I want to trust and follow you as my Lord and Savior. (Billy Graham Ministries)
- 7 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. (Eph 5:6)  

But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen *do*: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. (Mat 6:7)
- 8 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. (Mat 22:37)  

And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. (Deu 6:5)
- 9 The LORD *is* nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. (Psa 34:18)

The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. (Psa 51:17)

And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. (Deu 6:5)

Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. (Luk 13:3)

- 10 Wherefore I abhor *myself*, and repent in dust and ashes. (Job 42:6)

The LORD *is* nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. (Psa 34:18)

- 11 Jer. 17:9.

- 12 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear *me*: (Psa 66:18)

And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. (Isa 1:15)

But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear. (Isa 59:2)

- 13 Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart. (Psa 44:21)

I the LORD search the heart, *I* try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, *and* according to the fruit of his doings. (Jer 17:10)

The LORD *is* nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. (Psa 34:18)

- 14 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. (Rom 3:10-12)

- 15 ...blessed *are* they that have not seen, and *yet* have believed. (Joh 20:29)

I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins. (Joh 8:24)

#### 4 The "Greater" Delusion

- 16** To "follow" Jesus Christ is not a relative term. We do not follow Him according to our own interpretation or desires. We must follow according to HIS expectations and commands: *Why call me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?* (Luk 6:46)
- 17** For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. (Mat 26:28)
- Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; (Rom 3:25)
- And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. (Heb 9:22)
- 18** Remission: forgiveness, deliverance, pardon. (Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionary, G859)
- 19** As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. (Psa 103:12)
- For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. (Heb 8:12)
- 20** And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel. (Mar 1:15)
- 21** Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God *am* holy. (Lev 19:2)
- 22** Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. (Rom 6:13)
- Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.* (2Pe 3:11)
- 23** Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: (Heb 12:14)
- 24** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (Rom 5:12)
- 25** That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. (Rom 5:21)

- 26** But not as the offence, so also *is* the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. (Rom 5:15)

For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. (Rom 5:19)

- 27** For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. (Rom 8:29)

- 28** Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. (Luk 13:3)

Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. (Act 3:19)

Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out...(Act 3:19)

And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent. (Act 17:30)