

**THE FOOL HATH SAID IN HIS HEART, THERE IS
NO GOD ... Psalm 53:1**

How does a person degenerate into this condition of heart? After all the word of God tells us that no person is born to be ignorant of God, *“that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen... they are without excuse”* (Romans 1:19-20). So if mankind has that innate understanding that some higher power must have created everything how does one stray to such a degree that he denies the very existence of God? The Apostle Paul explains it in this manner, *“because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools”* (Romans 1:21-22). Clearly, fools are people who reject God even though they cannot disprove His existence; they follow the wild imaginations of their own darkened hearts thinking themselves to be wise when they are not. These individuals are quite unaware that they are at variance with God.

Then there are those who fool themselves: thinking that they serve God when in fact they do not, *“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven”* (Matthew 7:21). There are countless many in this world who want to serve God. The Apostle John relates of such people who went out of their way to find Jesus and then asked Him, *“What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent”* (John 6:28-29). It is in our nature to want to do something to be approved of God but it is not by our works—no matter how good and charitable they may be—that we merit heaven, it is only by faith in Jesus Christ, *“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law”* (Romans 3:28). Jesus tells us of Judgment Day when the self-deceived will protest that they did many good works but Jesus will send them away to eternal destruction, *“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have 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”* (Matthew 7:22-23). Those who fool themselves into believing that they have “faith” are, like the fools mentioned above, also unaware that they are at variance with God.

What about the rest of us? God tells us that no one is acceptable on his own merit, *“God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God. Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one”* (Ps 53: 2-3). Paul confirms this, *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”* (Romans 3:23). The consequence of sin is eternal separation from God in the lake of fire, *“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”* (Romans 6:23). Thus, all people are unaware that they have transgressed the law of God unless He convicts us of sin through the word, *“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith”* (Galatians 3:24). The only hope of attaining heaven is through the forgiveness of sins provided by Jesus.

Therefore, God provided a way of escape from the sin that so naturally makes fools out of all of us; He sent Jesus to be sacrificed for our sin. The Old Testament Levitical worship provides notice of the soul-cleansing power of the blood of Christ to come where a penitent soul voluntarily and publicly brought an animal to the door of the tabernacle, killed it in front of a priest who then sprinkled the blood upon the altar where the animal was burned for the atonement of sin. In the New Testament Jesus teaches us to humbly seek the remission of our sins by willingly confessing them to a servant of God who proclaims reconciliation, *“To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation”* (2 Corinthians 5:19). He that God grants the grace to gladly receive this message receives the gift of God: the Holy Ghost. As on the day of Pentecost, not everyone in Jerusalem who heard this proclamation from Peter could spiritually receive it, *“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls”* (Acts 2:41). Jesus tells us that unless we have a receptive heart we cannot receive the word of reconciliation proclaimed to us, *Behold, ye despisers, and wonder; and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work in which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it onto you”* (Acts 13:41). The indwelling spirit is truly a gift of God as proclaimed by His church on earth, *“...whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven”* (Matt 16:19).

God's Peace,

Charles Korhonen

TELECONFERENCE Local: 334-6338 Long Distance: 1-906-334-6338 After "greeting", enter Conference I.D. No. 44444

Worship Schedule

Feb 2	Ken Storm	11:00	Holy Communion
Feb 9	Jim Johnson	11:00	Medical Care 2pm
Feb 16	Chad Kuivanen	11:00	
Feb 23	Nathan Ruonavaara/Chuck Korhonen	11:00	Potluck Meal

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