

July 24, 2022

Viewpoint from the Valley Grove Church Of Christ

What Is The Work Of An Evangelist?

By Joe R. Price

But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. (2 Timothy 4:5)

What is the work of an evangelist? When brethren do not know the work of the evangelist, unscriptural and unrealistic expectations and demands will be placed upon him. When the evangelist does not know his work, he is tempted to please men instead of God (2 Tim. 4:3-4; Gal. 1:10).

It ought not be so. There is work he must do and for which he is accountable. An evangelist is a herald, a “bringer of good tidings” (Thayer, 257). He is a gospel preacher. Paul explained, “*I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word!*” (2 Tim. 4:1-2).

The evangelist’s work is not to entertain an audience with comedy and storytelling. It is to “*Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching*” (2 Tim. 4:2).

The evangelist’s work is not defined by rhetorical eloquence (1 Cor. 1:17; 2:1, 4, 13; 2 Cor. 10:10). Neither is his work to be the church’s social coordinator. Preaching the gospel is about feeding souls the gospel, not feeding stomachs goulash (Jn. 6:26-27).

To fulfill his work, the evangelist must devote himself to “*reading, to exhortation, to doctrine*” (1 Tim. 4:13). He cannot preach what he does not know. Do not demand he have a D.D. or some other academic credential initialed behind his name in order to preach. We appreciate educational accomplishments, but they do not qualify the evangelist for his work, nor do they recommend him to others as a preacher of truth (1 Cor. 1:26-29; 2:1-2). (We have seen an uptick in brethren advertising preachers’ academic credentials, and we are made to wonder, why?)

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The evangelist must go into the pulpit (and Bible class) prepared to proclaim the word of God. A seasoned preacher use to tell young men wanting to preach, “Get brim full and running over with the word of God.” That will equip you to preach (2 Tim. 2:15). The work of gospel preaching is not about filling time, it is about filling the time you have with the word of God. Planting God’s seed (His word) into hearts is the work God gave evangelists (Lk. 8:11-15; Rom. 10:13-17).

Preachers and brethren must remember the work God gave evangelists to do (Eph. 4:11-12). So evangelist, fulfill your service without being deterred and distracted by false definitions and faulty expectations of your work (2 Tim. 4:5). And brethren, help the evangelist do his God-given work. Our charge is before God, who will judge us all (2 Tim. 4:1).

What Does Legalism Mean?

By Warren E. Berkley

Currently, “legalism” is a popular subject. But just exactly what is meant by “legalism”? We often are made to wonder if all those who firmly preach anti-legalism are agreed as to the meaning of legalism?

Let us consider three possible meanings of the term in question. By so doing, we can determine the scripturalness or unscripturalness of each legalism:

(1) Does legalism mean strict adherence to God’s law? If this is the meaning of the term, it represents a scriptural principle. Jesus told His disciples: “*What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven . . .*” (Matt. 16:19 and 18:18). To this end the “Spirit of truth” came to guide them unto all the truth (John 16:13). In this sense Jesus and His ambassadors were legalists. But where does this place the anti-legalists? It puts them in direct opposition to the authority of Christ. Furthermore, this meaning of legalism renders the anti-legalist a double minded man. He refuses to accept the idea that anything is bound in religion — with one major exception, anti-legalism! He reminds us of the skeptic who says that the only possible truth is the truth that there can be no possible truth! (?) So if the doctrine of legalism is defined as “strict adherence to God’s law,” it is scripturally sound. Let modern thinkers (?) say what they will, it is still God’s will that, “*This is the end of the matter: all hath been heard: fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man*” (Eccl. 12:13).

(2) If legalism is the disposition to make laws where God has made none, it is unscriptural. Consistent with the statement of Jesus cited above (Matt. 16:19 and 18:18), it is unscriptural to bind law when such has not been bound in heaven (and thus recorded in the New Testament). In this case, all who

believe in and submit to the supreme authority of God's word are anti-legalists! That is to say, we are opposed to making and binding laws not bound in heaven. This type of legalism is a form of unbelief in that it assumes that God's laws do not go far enough.

(3) If legalism is depending on works of merit in order to be saved, legalism is unscriptural. This meaning of legalism is closely connected to the second, but not entirely the same. One might depend on added law for salvation (as with circumcision in Acts 15 and the Galatian letter), or one might regard the New Testament as a book of rules which one must keep perfectly in order to earn salvation. In both cases this type of legalism is firmly denied in the New Testament. *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast"* (Eph. 2:8, 9). See also Acts 15; Gal. 2:16 and 3:21; and Rom. 8:3.

At this point many become confused. Realizing that we are saved by *"the free gift of God"* (Rom. 6:23), it is assumed that any conditions would nullify grace. Thus the assumed principle: any free gift is received apart from any effort. This is both unreasonable and unscriptural. Think about it the next time you submit an application or agree to a 'trial offer' in order to receive a 'free' gift. You have not earned that gift but have merely availed yourself of a favor. So it is when we obey the gospel.

Again, those who believe what God's word sets forth on the matter of grace, are anti-legalist in this third sense. We object to the idea that man can earn his salvation. Such a doctrine makes void the cross of our Lord. However, at the same time we must affirm that God's grace is received by man's obedience. Thus Peter wrote: *"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth . . ."* (1 Pet. 1:22).

The subject of 'legalism' needs our careful investigation. We need to be as precise as possible when we employ terms that might have varied meanings. As in all things, tell us exactly what you mean, then we can search the Scriptures to see if these things are so. Will the real antilegalists please stand up-and tell us what you mean?

America, Take Heed!

By Leonard White

In his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, written in 1788, Edward Gibbon specified five basic reasons why that civilization withered and died. One wonders whether historians centuries from now will find a deadly parallel between the United States and Imperial Rome. Here are the flaws that Gibbon detected:

1. An undermining of the dignity and sanctity of the home, which is the basis for human society.

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2. Higher and higher taxes, and spending public money for free bread and circuses for the populace.

3. A mad craze for pleasure, with pastimes becoming every year more exciting, brutal, and immoral.

4. Building great armaments, although the real enemy was within — the decay of individual responsibility.

5. Decay of religion — faith fading into mere form, losing touch with life and losing power to guide the people.

Can any thinking person fail to see in these a frightening likeness to the society in which we are now living? Whether we are beyond the point of no return or not, I do not know. I do know that God has told us that, “Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.” (Prov 14:34)

It is our responsibility as God’s people to continue to, “. . . be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.” (Phil 2:15)

Visitors — We pray that you benefit spiritually from our worship together and hope to see you again.

July Birthdays: The 9th Ruth Davis; The 10th John Randolph; The 29th Opal Yarbrough.

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Valley Grove Church Of Christ
2110 East Stateline Road
P. O. Box 461
Southaven, MS 38671

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Sunday
Bible Study . . . 9:30 A.M.
Worship 10:30 A.M.
Worship 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday
Bible Study . . . 7:00 P.M.

Phone: 662-342-1132
www.valleygrovechurchofchrist.com