

Slip-Sliding Away!

by Wayne Goff

It came to my attention this past week that pope Francis of the Catholic Church made an aggressive appeal to atheists by declaring that you don't have to believe in God to go to heaven! You just need to follow your conscience (Michael Day, *The Independent*, 9/11/13).

My reaction to hearing that was **not** surprise. Catholic and Protestant denominations that claim to be under the umbrella called "Christianity" (?) have been sacrificing truth and principles for decades now. Let me give some examples:

- 1. One church is as good as another.** This position contradicts the Lord's teaching that He would build His church (Matt. 16:18), that He gave His life for it (Acts 20:28), and that He adds all the saved to it (Acts 2:47).
- 2. Baptism is not essential to salvation.** This doctrine says that you need only to accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, and that faith alone will save you. Once again this denies the biblical truth that baptism is necessary to salvation (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16).
- 3. Doctrine is not essential to salvation.** Another compromise designed to extend the realm of fellowship to those in religious error. Denominations have for decades placed "doctrinal matters" in Romans 14, declaring that we can agree to disagree and be okay with the Lord. The Scriptures plainly teach that those who do not abide in the "*doctrine of Christ*" do **not** have God (2 Jn. 9-11)!
- 4. Belief in Jesus may be optional.** Most recently I have come across those in so-called "Christendom" who have been greatly troubled by new-found friends in world religions -- Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, etc. -- who do **not** believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God and Savior of the world, but who *seem* to be morally good, hard-working, respectable people. They have begun to ask, "What about them? Will they be lost?" The simple answer was given to us by Jesus and His apostles at the beginning of Christianity: "*Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins*" (Jesus, Jn. 8:24). "*Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved*" (Peter, Acts 4:12). Eternal life is not offered to men on the basis of their "goodness," for all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory (Rom. 3:23).
- 5. Belief in the Bible is not required.** Among many denominational seminaries are professors who deny, malign, attack and destroy faith in the Bible as the infallible, inspired Word of God. It is viewed as the product of fallible men, though there *may* be some parts of it which are still considered God's Word. However, Jesus said that "*the Scripture cannot be broken*" (Jn. 10:35), and Paul wrote that "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God*" (2 Tim. 3:16) and *perfects* the man of God (2 Tim. 3:17).
- 6. Now, belief in God is not essential to salvation.** You can see why I was not surprised. Catholicism was built on *compromise* with the world, and the only thing that shocks people, especially Catholics, is seeing it in their times. But Protestants are just as bad. Once again, the truth of the matter is seen in Hebrews 11:6 - "*But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*" So not only does God require faith in Him to be saved, but also a believer must *diligently* seek Him!
- 7. What compromise is next?!** Who knows, but let me assure you that mankind does not determine what is truth! Jesus said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me*" (Jn. 14:6). God's Word is truth (Jn. 17:17). Reject God's Word, and you're left to the feeble, ever-changing whims of man to determine what is right and wrong (see Eph. 4:14). Let me urge you to put your hope and trust in the unchanging God of heaven (Heb. 13:8).

