

# called

Christ Is Our Example  
21 For <sup>a</sup>you have been called for  
this purpose, <sup>b</sup>since Christ also  
suffered for you, leaving you  
an example for you to follow  
in His steps, <sup>22</sup>WHO <sup>a</sup>COMMITTED

Lads to Leaders/Leaderettes  
Pearls Study Series



# Called

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# Called to Recognize False Doctrine

2 Peter 2:1

By Dr. Brad Harrub

He stood out. Maybe it was the white doctor's coat he was wearing. Or maybe it was the long list of initials after his name. Or it could have been the glossy polish on his shoes or razor sharp crease in his pants. But the bottom line was the man in front of the group was impressive.

Over 250 young people were crowded together in a small auditorium to hear this man's lecture. But none of them were prepared for what they were hearing. The man in the white coat was talking to them about the **dangers** of brushing their teeth. That's right—the dangers. He talked at length about how toothbrushes could actually scrape pits into the enamel of your teeth, providing a better place for bacteria to live. He mentioned that toothpaste actually changed the acidity level (pH) of the mouth to a level that was great for bacterial growth. He mentioned that toothpaste actually killed the good bacteria that were needed for healthy gums. These kids had never really thought about the possibility that brushing their teeth could actually harm them; instead, each morning they simply followed a brushing routine because that's what their parents told them. But much of what this man was telling them made sense and sounded logical. And as a result, many of these young people made the conscious decision to stop brushing their teeth.

The above scenario really did happen at a college in California. Many of the students literally threw away their toothbrushes. So what about the impressive man? He was actually an actor, asked to con the students. A professor who was studying how hard it is to get people to change their convictions paid the actor. The actor's so-called "results" were either outright lies or embellishments. But the bottom line remains the same: he was able to take totally unsuspecting students and convince them that something they had known all their lives was untrue.

So what? How does that affect you? It's not like you are going to stop brushing your teeth—after all, who

wants to walk around all day with morning breath?! I want you to stop for a minute and ask what happens when the topic is God rather than brushing teeth. What happens when men with lots of letters after their name get up in front of students and proclaim that God does not exist? Or that evolution is a "fact" of science? Or that the Bible contains contradictions? Or there is not just one New Testament church?

Think you are too strong to fall prey to such rubbish? Friends, if an "actor" can convince students to stop brushing their teeth in a one-hour session, what do you think a real professor can do if given a full semester?

Now stop and ask yourself what would have happened if the students had been warned. What if someone had told them that there was going to be this sharp dressed man who was going to try to convince them to stop brushing their teeth? What if they had been told the arguments he was going to use were lies? Think many students would give up their toothbrushes?

Warning: you will likely meet some people who try to teach you false information—don't give up your toothbrush! The Bible clearly warns us that there will be false teachers among us. In 2 Peter 2:1 we read, "But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, *and* bring on themselves swift destruction." Did you catch all that? There are people who are going to try to teach you things—things that will result in their own destruction!

There are several points we must pull from this important warning in 2 Peter 2:1:

**False prophets and false teachers are real.** If you go through life thinking your baptism magically trans-

fers you into some type of protective bubble where everything is going to be rosy, then your very soul is in danger. False teachers are real, and they don't wear nametags that say, "Hi, my name is false teacher."

Some of these false teachers may be literal teachers you have in school. Others may be actors in movies or television shows that are subtly teaching you concepts that are in contradiction to what the Bible teaches. Or it may be singers who use lyrics that are immoral and ungodly. But the bottom line is false teachers are real, and we need to be alert and ready.

You must understand that the Christian life is not like being on a cruise ship where you are comfortable, have great food to eat, and fun things to do. Rather Christianity is about being on a battle ship! You must be ready to defend God's word (1 Peter 3:15) and know that there are those out there who will ridicule your beliefs. Never forget that their laughter and scorn does not change the truth. Paul exhorted young Timothy, "O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane *and* idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge" (1 Timothy 6:20).

**Much of this is done secretly.** Within the last week you have digested some type of false teaching. "Not me" you say! Consider for a moment textbooks that teach things like the Big Bang or fossil man or evolution. Or how about the ads or billboards that feature scantily dressed women? Or what about shows that introduce homosexual actors as being hip and cool? Or teen magazines that talk about how to "get" a guy? Or textbooks that totally exclude the concept of God?! WAIT, STOP THE BUS! Is any of this material that you see on a weekly (or daily) basis actually biblical in nature? Absolutely not! Some of this false teaching is so subtle we don't even realize it is taking place.

Textbooks never just come right out and say God does not exist. But theories like the Big Bang or evolution are most certainly teaching that concept. Same thing with much of the media we view today. The seeds are planted quietly and subtly, usually starting at a very young age. Ask yourself why do they need to do this in secret? I believe it is because they recognize they don't have real evidence to support their claims. The Bible, on the other hand, will stand up to scrutiny. Also, never forget that darkness does not like the light. Thus they perceive part of their job as snuffing

out Christian lights—and they do it little by little all across our country.

**You don't have to say God doesn't exist to be an atheist.** In my work, I have the opportunity to communicate with a great number of atheists—people who don't believe in God. Many of these individuals speak harshly about God and are quick to deny His existence. But there are other people who—through their actions—are communicating the same message and denying God's existence. Numerous people say they believe in God, but the reality is that He is not really first in their lives. For instance, what are we really saying if we "attend" worship physically, but spend all our time texting or flirting? Have we actually worshipped Jehovah God in spirit and in Truth (John 4:24)?

What are we really saying about God when we don't keep His commands about honoring and obeying parents (e.g. Ephesians 6:1) or avoiding premarital sex (Galatians 5:19)? Are we only willing to accept Him on our terms? Do we deny Him through our actions in front of our friends?

**Peter reminds us that mankind was bought.** Do not just read that and quickly skip over it. Let those words sink in. You were bought. We need to spend some precious time here, because I'm afraid sometimes we forget exactly what shape we would be in without Jesus Christ. Make no doubt about it; your life has meaning and a purpose. While textbooks try to convince you that you evolved from some amoeba out of a pool of slime, the reality is that man was the pinnacle of God's creation, and we were created in His image and after His likeness (Genesis 1:26-27). But as you know, man sinned (Genesis 3).

So let's start here: all people have a sin problem and are in need of redemption. If you are like most individuals you read that statement and it rubs you the wrong way. "Well, I'm certainly not a 'sinful creature'" you say, as you try to simultaneously (mentally) agree that redemption is good but justify yourself as a pretty good person. Let me say it again, just to make sure it sinks in: **all men (and women) are sinful creatures in need of redemption.** Think back in the past week and ask yourself: Have you allowed hurtful words out of your lips? Have you looked upon a girl in a way that was wrong? Have you kept your words and thoughts captive? Have you watched or listened to immoral

material? Have you passed along gossip? Have you done something nice, but for the wrong reason? Have you served yourself versus others? Let's face it, when we really examine ourselves, we are woefully lacking. Still don't think so? Compare your thoughts and actions to Almighty God. This is not a pleasant feeling, but we definitely need to be reminded.

Now, what we really **deserve** is for God to strike us dead for our rebellious spirit, our materialistic attitudes, our apathy, and our sinful behavior. But instead, God's wrath has been atoned for by an incredible sacrifice. God cannot be God and have anything to do with sin. Thus, there must be something that can reconcile us back to God. But what would be good enough to cleanse mankind of sin?

In Hebrews 9:22, there is a passage that helps us understand what is required: "And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and **without shedding of blood there is no remission.**" This simple statement is a shadowing of a statement written thousands of years earlier when God was forming the Israelite nation: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul" (Leviticus 17:11). Remission of sins requires blood.

But not just any blood. We read, "For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins" (Hebrews 10:4). So if it wasn't the blood of bulls and goats that could redeem mankind, then what blood would be distinctive enough to reconcile us back to God? We begin to fully comprehend thanks to Peter's writings: "knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (1 Peter 1:18-20). Paul wrote, "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Ephesians 1:7). In his letter to the church at Colossae Paul wrote, "He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed *us* into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:13-14). So we know that the **remission of sins requires the blood of Jesus Christ.** Indeed,

you were bought at a very high price.

### **False teaching and sin bring about destruction.**

When you were little, many of the stories you heard ended with the phrase, "and they lived happily ever after." While that makes for a good ending to a story, the reality is that is not the case for people who deny God and have not been redeemed by the blood of Christ. There is a price to be paid for false teaching—and for those who embrace false teaching. The Bible says destruction. Paul observed "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end *is* destruction, whose god *is* their belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things. For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, (Philippians 3:18-20). While we don't often like to think about it, hell is a very real place—and the Bible reminds us that many people are going there.

How can something like a textbook page bring about destruction? Stop and ask yourself what happens when your friends buy into the idea that man evolved and that Adam and Eve are just a myth? Friends, if they question the opening chapter of God's word, don't you think they will question the rest of the book? I have seen a lot of young people go from questioning the opening chapters to being skeptical of the entire Bible. Paul wrote, "And so it is written, '*The first man Adam became a living being.*' The last Adam *became* a life-giving spirit" (1 Corinthians 15:45). Who was the first Adam that Paul mentioned? That would be Adam, of the Adam and Eve couple we read about in Genesis 2-3. Who was the second Adam? That is Jesus Christ. What are we doing to the second Adam if we say the first was a myth? Because friends, Paul indicated they were both real historical figures. Remember, you were bought with a price!

Far too often, students compromise the text and wind up placing their allegiance in textbooks instead of God's book! From there, it is simply a progression that leads to destruction. James wrote, "But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death" (James 1:14-15).

## Conclusion

There will be many people who want you to give up your toothbrush. Don't do it! We have been warned, and I am thankful for that warning. By alerting us to false teachers and doctrines, we are able to arm ourselves with the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-17). I encourage you to not only be aware of false teachers, but also to arm yourselves with their arguments, and then inoculate yourself with the Truth! Strive not to just be a Christian, but be a warrior for Christ. Christianity is a full-time job! But in order for you to really be ready for battle, you are going to need to brush up on His word. In 2 Timothy 2:15 the Bible says, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." The King James Version actually says "Study to show thyself approved." Do you really want the key to warding off false teachers? The Bible says we must study. Study, and never give up your toothbrush.

## Questions

- 1 Peter 3:15 says to "be ready to give a \_\_\_\_\_ to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear."
- The author tells us that "numerous people say they believe in God, but the reality is that He is not really \_\_\_\_\_ in their lives".
- Genesis 1:26-27 tells us we were created in God's \_\_\_\_\_ and in God's \_\_\_\_\_.
- From Hebrews 9:22 and Leviticus 17:11, we learn that remission of sins requires \_\_\_\_\_.
- From 1 Peter 1:18-20, what kind of blood redeems us?
- Philippians 3:18-20 tells us that false teaching brings about \_\_\_\_\_.
- True or False? If we question the beginning of God's word; we are questioning all of it.
- True or False? As long as we have been baptized, we are safe from false doctrine.

## Discussion

- Name a few "false doctrines" you have heard lately. Did you hear them on television, radio or from another person? What is the danger in hearing false doctrine?
- The author tells us that you don't have to say God doesn't exist to be an atheist. In your own words, what do you think this means? Name some specific things that people proclaiming to be Christians do or don't do that shows their lack of belief.
- The author tells us that "all people are sinful and need redemption". How important do you feel it is for a Christian to examine his/her behavior? When a Christian doesn't examine their behavior, what are some of things they do?
- We learn in this chapter that we are bought with the price of Jesus' blood. Why should we always keep this in our hearts and minds? Could we have been redeemed by some other type of blood? Why or why not?
- When people begin to question parts of the Bible, why is that dangerous? Can we accept parts of the Bible as truth but not all of it? Why or why not?
- The author tells us it is important that we arm ourselves with the truth and understand the arguments of false teachers before they try to persuade us. In your own words, explain why this is so important?