

*Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice" (John 18:37).*

God the Father had anointed His Son, Jesus the Christ, (the Anointed One), as Prophet, Priest and King over the Kingdom of God (Acts 10:38).

It is through these three offices Christ fulfills His mission as Mediator (Isaiah 61:1).

His anointing was with power by the Holy Spirit, who was given to Him without measure (John 3:34).

As Creator and King, Jesus has the right and authority to command obedience from all men, not just those who are part of His Kingdom.

*Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel (Mark 1:14-15).*

Repenting and believing the Gospel is not an idle suggestion.

Nor are your feelings taken into consideration.....If you feel like it, repent and believe.

It is a command, as the Present Imperative tense in the original Greek

indicates.

*The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent* (Acts 17:30).

There is much confusion in the Body of Christ concerning the command to 'repent and believe.'

If, as some Christians teach, man is incapable of repenting and believing apart from the gift of the Holy Spirit, who only bestows the Elect with these gifts, how is it possible for this command to be legitimate and just?

Would it not be the same to command a blind man to see.....which is impossible?

Because of this alleged 'contradiction,' many Christians have found a way around what they have determined to be an insurmountable difficulty.

They have determined man's sin nature bad, but not so bad as to have permanently destroyed his ability to choose that which is holy and good.

By accounting man's nature and will sufficient in and of itself to repent and believe, they are then able to maintain the righteousness of God's command, as well as His integrity.

For, according to their doctrine, God would never command that which is impossible for man to obey.

To do so would be cruel and unjust.

However, Scripture is quite clear as to the impossibility of man's natural ability to obey the command of God to repent and believe.

*And they that heard it said, Who then can be saved?*

*And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God (Luke 18:26-27).*

Man's inability was proven in the Garden, when Adam, our representative, who was blessed with original righteousness, being without sin, disobeyed God's command.

Our Lord is not so ignorant and ill-advised that He needs test mankind over and over and over again to discover disobedience.

We are, by nature, all sinners and, as such, naturally disobedient children who are constantly in open rebellion against our Creator and King (Romans 3; Ephesians 2).

Knowing full well man's disposition before He created, the Father and the Son made a compact, a Covenant of Grace, by which the Son would perform that which man would not and could not do.....perfect obedience to the Law (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:6).

This Christ accomplished through His perfect Mediation on behalf of those given Him by the Father (John 17).

Today the Holy Spirit is effectually applying eternal life, acquired by the Son, to those elected by the Father.

This application by the Spirit is called 'quickenings', 'making alive,' 'regeneration,' and 'born again.'

Because this supernatural work of God is from grace alone, God does no injustice in depriving others, whom He wills to punish, that which is not owed them.

Justice is owed them and justice is what they will get.

But the question still remains: How is God just in commanding that which men, by nature, refuse to do?

The answer is two-fold.

First, man's refusal is moral, the result of a corrupt nature and evil heart.

This condition is the fault of man, not God.

It's not as if man cannot read or hear the words of the Gospel.

It's not as if most men are mentally incompetent to understand the

words of the Gospel.

Their defect lies within their very being, which cannot but bring forth bad fruit (Matt. 7:18).

Thus, it cannot be compared to commanding a physically blind man to see.

The genuinely blind man has not the power to change his vision.

Nor does the Ethiopian have power to change the color of his skin.

Nor do we have the power to add one inch to our adult height.

But God has the power to change a man's heart (Ezekiel 11:19, 36:26).

God has the power to make those once unwilling to be willing (Lamentations 5:21; Psalm 110:3; Philippians 2:13).

This is the power of God's love for His Elect.

Second, the command to repent and believe is not an evil command. It is holy, righteous and truthful.

Those who repent and believe will be saved.

God will not lower His standards and expectations to accommodate sinners who naturally hate that which is holy.

“Simply do your best as a Christian and all will be well with your soul,” is not the Gospel message.

Following Christ as His disciple is going to cost you your life (Matt. 16:25); the loss of the love of the world (John 15:19); the loss of family relationships (Matt. 10:35); persecution (2 Timothy 3:12); and even martyrdom (John 16:2).

Thinking of becoming a Christian? Christ warns us all of the necessity to ‘count the cost’ of discipleship (Luke 14).

How many invitations “to receive Jesus into the heart” are prefaced with a warning to ‘count the cost?’

And should the reader think God is ‘stingy’ with His Holy Spirit, refusing to give Him, though asked to do so by a non-Elect, consider Luke 11:13:

*If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!*

**NEXT:** The Kingdom of God on earth.