

(I) The Gospel of God's Great love - Part 9 (This IS Eternal Life)**~Other Speakers S-Z: Robert Wurtz II:**

I have tried to establish a backdrop for the question, "How do I become a Christian?" From a biblical perspective, the question really is, "How do I become a place of God's rest?" The religious people in the New Testament did not get this. It is a critical point. To miss this is to miss the very purpose of the question itself.

What is Eternal Life? Is it to be saved from the wrath of God? Is it a promise of blessings in this life and the next? Is it streets of gold and mansions bright? Jesus answers the question in John 17, As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

Men don't mind religion so much, because religion is worship in the absence of God. This is the crux of the message Steven preached in Acts 7. God desired to draw near to his people, but they would not. He desired to rule and reign preparing them for even greater glory in Acts 2. But they could not handle even a slight nearness to God. it is a sad commentary, but common among men, that they used the hypocrisy of Samuel's sons as an excuse to usher in a king in Israel.

This would mark God's ongoing departure from Israel. He laments this fact in conversation with the prophet in I Samuel 8. And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee.

God was trying to draw near and the people were pushing Him away. Yet they still wanted to retain their identity as His people. They wanted to be known as the people of the book, but God wanted them to be the people of the God of the book. There is a great difference. They were OK so long as God stayed in the Tabernacle or the Temple, but when Christ came walking the earth as the living Temple of God they rose up to destroy that Temple. And this is the tragedy of the human condition, men and women do not like to retain God in their knowledge. They resist God on every hand even under the pretense of serving Him.

Steven quoted directly from Isaiah 66:1,2 and put his finger on the point of controversy God had with those religious people. God was not interested in dwelling in a Temple. what fellowship has God with the gold and wood that those places were built from? Had not His hand made all of those things? Was not heaven His throne and the earth His footstool? He created the raw materials that they made the Temple with. Has not my hands made all these things?, He asked. God did not fellowship with the materials when they were in the ground and He did not fellowship with them once man fashioned them into a dwelling place for Him.

To this man will I look, God said. This is what Acts 2 is all about. God was taking up residence in those that were willing to turn to Christ in sincere repentance and faith; and to cease striving with the Holy Ghost so He could come in to them and rest. They needed the well spring of Sin dealt with in them individually so God could dwell there. They needed to cease grieving the Holy Spirit by stopping entertaining things that offend Him. We have an entire Old Testament to demonstrate to us how easy it is to grieve the Holy Spirit when we entertain sin and compromise.