

# **A New Year's Resolution:** *Proclaim the Word!*

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During the coming year, how can we as Christians help people who do not believe in our Savior? Is there really such a thing as proving to them that the Bible is true?

Believing the Bible is absolutely essential, for unless people believe what the Bible says about the substitutionary death and the glorious bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ the Lord, they cannot be saved. "If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." (Rom. 10:9). "So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

But here is the dilemma we face: "The natural (unsaved) man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14). Our Lord put it bluntly: "This is the condemnation, that the light (Jesus Himself, cf. John 8:12) has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). How then can we help people believe the message of God's Word?

First, let us consider the wrong way. God informs us that finite, merely human pressure or manipulation cannot change people's hearts. "The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked; Who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9).

This is the profound weakness, for example, of the recent and increasingly popular Intelligent Design Movement. The leaders of the IDM believe that materialistic evolutionism can be removed from all secular schools by rationalistic evidentialism alone. They believe, in fact, that an appeal to the Bible drastically weakens their scientific credibility and closes the door to the existence of an Intelligent Designer (whoever that may be).

The Bible, of course, gives due recognition to the function of "intelligent design." It is so powerful, in fact, that men are "without excuse" (Rom. 1:20) for denying the supreme Designer of the universe and living things.

The Apostle Paul began his magnificent sermon to the chief philosophers of Athens by appealing to the Lord God. "God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things" (Acts 17:24, 25).

But Paul did not commit the colossal blunder of inviting these people to start walking on a bridge broken at the other end! He told them in loving concern, "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead" (vv. 30, 31).

In this context, this message of a divine ("He will judge the world" [v. 31]) yet human being ("by the Man whom He has ordained" [v. 31]) named Jesus ("he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection" [v. 18]) was the dynamic for genuine conversions ("some men joined him and believed" [v. 34]).

So we too, in our day, must proclaim Jesus Christ as the exclusive and all-sufficient Lord and Savior of men. May God enable us to climax our personal testimonies, presentations, lectures and sermons with a clear explanation of how sin can be overcome through the perfect sacrifice of God's Son upon the cross and His glorious resurrection from the dead.

Only then will God open darkened hearts and minds to His truth, His love and His eternal salvation.

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