

Friday, September 21, 2012

## The Sinless Savior of the Scriptures



In his book *The Gospel of the Christ*, Tom Stegall presents a fictitious case study about a man named Joe who doesn't believe that Christ "was raised on the third day" (1 Cor. 15:4). Stegall writes: **"Even though Joe believes wholeheartedly in Christ's substitutionary death and bodily resurrection and salvation by God's grace, he is vociferously denying the truth of 1 Corinthians 15:4 that Christ's resurrection occurred on 'the third day.'** So, again, we must ask, is Joe saved or lost?"<sup>1</sup>

Stegall goes on to say that "a person is saved by believing the gospel (1 Cor. 4:14; 2 Thess. 1:8-10)".<sup>2</sup> *But what is the gospel according to Tom Stegall?* Apparently a gospel without any mention of "the third day" (1 Cor. 15:4). Amazingly, Stegall goes on to label Christ's "three day interment"<sup>3</sup> (i.e. three day burial): "more than the gospel",<sup>4</sup> and he makes it clear that in his opinion "a person does not have to believe [this] detail!"<sup>5</sup>

Notice that Stegall is using a completely hypothetical case study to redefine the gospel. That's a glaring problem (see Gal. 1:8-9)! Furthermore, besides the fact that the mention of "the third day" (1 Cor. 15:4) is *included* in the content of Paul's gospel (notice the *hoti* content clause in verse 4: "...*that* He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures...") - the other glaring problem with Stegall's reductionist reasoning is that Christ said He would rise from the dead on "the third day" according to the Scriptures (Lk. 18:31-33; 24:44-48; Jn. 2:19-22; cf. Gal. 1:11-12). Thus, fictional Joe's denial of Christ's resurrection on "the third day" (1 Cor. 15:4) calls into question the veracity of Christ! If Joe is "vociferously denying the truth of 1 Corinthians 15:4 that Christ's resurrection occurred on 'the third day'"<sup>6</sup> as Stegall asserts, then

Joe is not trusting in the sinless Savior of the Scriptures. Concerning Him, the apostle Paul writes:

*"As God is faithful, **our message to you is not 'Yes and no.'** For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us...did not become 'Yes and no'; on the contrary, a final 'Yes' has come in Him. For every one of God's promises is 'Yes' in Him. Therefore, the 'Amen' is also spoken through Him by us for God's glory. (2 Cor. 1:18-20, HCSB)<sup>7</sup>*

Sadly, Joe is trusting in a sinful savior - one that is (unfortunately) "Yes and no". As such, Joe is trusting in a "false Christ" (Matt. 24:24; cf. Matt. 24:4-5) and in "another Jesus" (2 Cor. 11:4) - neither of which can save.

#### ENDNOTES:

<sup>1</sup> Tom Stegall, *The Gospel of the Christ* (Milwaukee: Grace Gospel Press, 2009), p. 563, bold added, italics his.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 563.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Bold, italics, and ellipsis added.

Posted by Jonathan Perreault