

## STUDY GUIDE

Generations ago, it was enough (from a human perspective) for evangelists to preach ‘repent of your sins!’ Sadly, this is not so today. Is it possible to effectively evangelize our culture today?

1. What is the Gospel?
  - a. Foundational knowledge: Jesus Christ, the Creator, created a ‘very good’ world (John 1:1–3, Col. 1:16). Adam’s disobedience brought sin into the world, and death through sin, and so death passed to all men.
  - b. Power: Christ the Creator, the Son of God, became a man (the Last Adam), to suffer the curse of death and shed His blood on our behalf.
  - c. Hope: There is a new heavens and Earth to come, where there will be no more tears, pain or death (Revelation 21:4), much like the original creation but with no possibility of sin.
2. A Tale of Two Sermons (1 Corinthians 1:23):
  - a. Peter preached to the Jews, for whom the cross was a ‘stumbling block’ (Acts 2:22–24).
    - i. Thousands responded to the message.
    - ii. The main message was the preaching of the cross.
    - iii. Peter was preaching to a creation-based culture, the Jews and gentile proselytes to Judaism.
    - iv. Thus they had the knowledge of the Creator God, sin, the need for atonement for sin, as well as prophecies of the coming Messiah.
    - v. Peter preached the ‘Power’ of the Gospel, because the ‘foundational knowledge’ was already in place.
  - b. Paul preached to the Greek philosophers, for whom the cross was ‘foolishness’ (Acts 17:18, ff).
    - i. The Epicureans and Stoics were basically part of an evolu-

## NOTES

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tion-based culture.

- ii. They lacked knowledge of God, sin, or need for atonement for sin.
  - iii. Paul began with the 'foundation' of the Gospel message, explaining the 'unknown God,' defining the Creator God in detail (v 24). He then preached the 'Power' of the resurrection.
  - iv. Some were interested, some believed (v 34).
3. Modern-day examples of preaching to a 'Greek' culture
- a. Japan: has no Christian foundation.
  - b. New Tribes Mission: have found they need to begin with Genesis, providing the 'foundational knowledge' necessary to preach the Gospel message. Otherwise tribes often just add Jesus to their list of other gods.

## CONCLUSION

Our culture was once like the Jews, with a basic understanding of sin and death and a knowledge of God. Preachers basically needed to concentrate on the message of the cross (i.e. the power of the Gospel) in their preaching. Because the Christian foundation is slowly being eroded by a belief in 'millions of years,' and because the church has compromised with this false belief, our culture is becoming more like the 'Greeks,' lacking a knowledge of the Creator God, and an understanding of sin and death. In our evangelism, we need to be aware of which culture we are preaching to, and need to restore the proper 'foundational knowledge' of the Gospel for those who lack it, enabling them to understand their need for a Savior.

## NOTES

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is the preaching of the cross considered a 'stumbling block' to the Jews?
2. Why is the preaching of the cross considered 'foolishness' to the Greeks?
3. In what ways is our culture like the Greek philosophers? like the Jews?

## RESOURCES

*Creation Evangelism for the  
New Millennium*  
by Ken Ham