



Jeff Sweeten

# *Thus Saith the Lord*

## **A PEWTER CROSS**

By Jeff Sweeten

One is tempted to admire the efforts many religious organizations put forth to introduce people to Jesus. Standard biblical evangelism (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 8:4) is evidently not the flavor of the month or doesn't fit the modern business model, but if the message is skewed, the mode of distribution becomes irrelevant (cf. Matthew 23:15). Perhaps you received, just recently, a massmailing advertisement (what we normally call "junk mail") from a religious organization in Indiana, ... with a cross.

The slick origami-styled, card-stock envelope is printed front and back with a simply stated goal: "to send a Cross and Path to Salvation to Every Home in America." Now, this would be noble indeed if the "message" stayed with the Bible; Cross America's message does not (and, what's with the cheap, pewter cross?). In fact, it is no surprise so few scriptures are mentioned on the flyer (Romans 10:9; John 20:29) since understanding the Gospel requires multiple references rightly used. What is further disappointing is the encouragement to "declare" a version of "The Sinner's Prayer" (to be fair, they do not call it that but if it walks like a duck...), and that's found nowhere in the Bible.

Further, their message is confusing. Is it really the case that "If you said this prayer, then your life has changed forever"? Oddly enough, when you go to their website to find out "What's Next," the assumption is made that, having "declared" this prayer, you are now saved. Of course, "simply saying this prayer won't get you into Heaven unless you truly believe," they say. Well, I'm curious: who determines whether or not your "believe" is "truly" enough to pass muster? Can one actually believe, and it not be "truly" enough to get you to Heaven?

Well, faith is certainly not sufficient if it is alone. In fact, there is only one place in the Bible that uses a phrase like that and James clearly states that we are not justified by "faith only" (James 2:24). What is more frustrating for the "faith alone" advocates are the multiple places that speak of so many other factors, both on God's part and on ours, associated with salvation (cf. God's grace, Ephesians 2:8; our repentance, 2 Corinthians 7:10; our confession, Romans 10:10; our baptism, 1 Peter 3:21; our faithful obedience to God, Revelation 2:10). It appears from an honest reading of the Scriptures about salvation, nothing, by itself, saves. And, what's with that cheap, pewter cross?

There is no scripture in the Bible that promotes the idea that you can be saved immediately at the point of belief. In fact, Jewish leaders believed and were still lost (John 12:42); the devils believed and were still lost (James 2:17). The Bible commands that you "repent and be baptized for the remission of your sins" (Acts 2:38). And, there's no need to "plug in to a local church" (web page statement) because the Lord adds to the church those who are being saved (Acts 2:47).

*Thus Saith the Lord*  
is presented by the

## **Park Heights Church of Christ**

1300 E. Boynton St.  
Hamilton  
254-386-3953

### **Schedule of Services**

#### **SUNDAY**

9:30 a.m. Bible Class  
10:25 a.m. Morning Worship  
1:30 p.m. Afternoon Worship

#### **WEDNESDAY**

7:00 p.m. Bible Study

Please call or email if you  
have a question or comment

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