



Biblical
Doctrine of
Salvation

Moses C. Onwubiko

BIBLICAL DOCTRINE
OF
SALVATION

by Moses C. Onwubiko

Grace Evangelistic Ministies, Inc.
Nashville, Tennessee, U.S.A.

**“Buy TRUTH, and do not sell it”
(Proverbs 23:23a).**

Indeed, Truth (sound Bible teaching) is hard to come by. When God in His infinite grace leads you to the Truth, you are to embrace and cherish it. You are to hold to it tenaciously. For hidden in this Truth is the capacity to enjoy life, happiness, and blessings in time and eternity.

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Open Invitation

Here is the Good News: You are loved with a perfect eternal love.

When our Lord Jesus Christ was hanging on the Cross, He had you on His mind. There never was a sin committed, no matter how heinous, that was not poured out on Jesus (1 Peter 2:24). As the God-Man, He endured all the afflictions, insults and pain, unto death, so that He might pave a way for you to have life more abundantly through Him. Regardless of how sinful you are or how you have failed, you can begin a new life with a clean slate right now. How? By simply telling God that you believe in His Son Jesus Christ as your personal Savior at this very moment. When you put your trust entirely in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are God's child forever! The Bible says,

But these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name (John 20:31).

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16 NIV).

“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be [are guaranteed to be] saved...” (Acts 16:31a).

This book cannot be of any benefit to you unless you are born again. You can be born again right now.

Will you believe in Him now? If you believe in Him, as you read this book the Holy Spirit will help you understand and apply this information to your life.

To the Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ

In order for you to learn from this book, you must be empowered by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit cannot control your soul if there is any unconfessed sin in your life. You may want to pause and apply the following verse.

If we confess [acknowledge] our sins, He [God] is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

Preface

The doctrine of salvation is so vital to the Christian life that we are devoting this entire book to it. Consider the following analogy: A group of blind students were escorted by their teacher on a visit to the local zoo. She wanted them to enjoy a new experience, but she also wanted them to learn an important lesson about life. They visited many animals at the zoo and were able to name the animals by the inscriptions in braille at each cage. Their teacher led them over to the petting area. In one section, there were some tame elephants roaming around. She took them to this area and asked the students to describe the animals by what they felt. One student felt the trunk and described the animal as long and snake-like. Another student felt the huge round legs of the animal and described it as round and tall. Still another student felt the tusk of an elephant and described it as having one sharp horn.

Afterwards, the teacher gathered the students together. They were arguing over the identity of the animal. One student said the animal was a snake. Another student insisted that it was a giraffe. Still another student demanded that the animal was a rhinoceros. The teacher told the students that they were all mistaken. When she told them which animal it was, they were all surprised. She reminded them that they had not taken advantage of their opportunity and had not taken the time to feel the whole animal before making their final conclusions. They also did not work together as a team to find the right answer. The students all learned a valuable lesson that day.

Similar situations occur in our churches today. Believers are not devoting the necessary time to study the Bible carefully and thoughtfully to see the whole picture of God's Word. And, instead of working together to learn more, they allow differences in opinion to divide them. In the following chapters, you will see how the many different aspects of the doctrine of salvation come together to make up the whole picture as planned by God. If you are disciplined and take the time to study these points, you will have greater insight into God's plan for the believer, both at salvation and in your life after salvation.

Salvation — A Closer Look

Introduction

Many believers are in bondage today simply because they lack doctrine, which is defined as accurate Bible teaching. God addressed the problem this way:

My people [believers] are destroyed [including living in fear, not being fruitful], for lack of knowledge [lack of understanding the Truth]" (Hosea 4:6a).

A lack of understanding of God's Truth keeps many believers in bondage—and many unbelievers from salvation. How can you, as a believer, communicate something you are not sure about? How can you talk to unbelievers about the simple Gospel message of Jesus Christ if it is still unclear in your mind? Many are paralyzed by fear — a fear of “not being truly saved,” or of “losing their salvation.” If this describes you, it is nearly impossible to evangelize the unbelieving world with either your words or your life. How can you communicate about that which you are not sure? How can your life be a life of peace that attracts the unbeliever? This study will give you the understanding needed to live your Christian life with confidence and peace.

“And you will know the Truth, and the Truth will make you free” (John 8:32).

Let us begin to define “salvation” by examining the Greek word for salvation. This Greek word is *soterion*, and its Hebrew equivalent is *yeshuah*. Bible scholars agree that originally it was not necessarily a theological term, but that it denoted “deliverance” from almost every kind of evil, whether material or spiritual. In the Old Testament, God is identified as the “Savior” (Isaiah 43:3; Jeremiah 14:8). Then, in the New Testament, this word “Savior” becomes identified with our Lord Jesus Christ. These experts also agree that the word “salvation”

becomes a technical, theological term with the development of the concept of the Messiah (Jesus Christ as the prophesied deliverer of the Jewish people) and the Messianic age. Without going deeper, let us see if we can define this word “salvation.” Salvation is God’s love in action¹. We are going to develop the following definition of salvation throughout this book: *Salvation is the ultimate manifestation of the righteousness of God, His justice and His love expressed in grace, through Jesus Christ, to sinful and helpless mankind.*

When someone makes a promise to you, the first thing that concerns you is not so much the promise but the character of the person making the promise. Just as a building is no stronger than its foundation, a promise is only as strong as the one who promised it. Man’s promise is never guaranteed, but God’s Word stands firm in Heaven forever. The Psalmist wrote,

Your Word, O Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens
(Psalms 119:89 NIV).

This means whatever God has promised, He will *always* do (Romans 11:29; 2 Timothy 2:13); therefore, at this time, let us examine the essence of the One who has promised salvation to those who have trusted Christ (Hebrews 7:25). His essence consists of the following 10 characteristics:

God is Sovereign. God has the supreme, ultimate will. What He says is final. All the people of the world and all the angels of the universe, both fallen and elect, are not able to cause God to change His will (Psalms 103:119).

God is Righteous. God is perfect. He never sins and He can never compromise. This is His perfect righteousness (2 Timothy 2:13; Revelation 3:7; 1 Samuel 2:2; Leviticus 19:2b).

God is Just. God is fair. In fact, it is impossible for God not to be fair (Deuteronomy 32:4; Job 37:23).

God is Love. “... for God is love” (1 John 4:8). Because God is unchangeable and eternal, so is His love. His love is unchanging and enduring (Jeremiah 31:3). In other words, His love does not swing back and forth like a pendulum depending on the circumstances of life.

God is Eternal Life. God had no beginning and has no end (Deuteronomy 32:40; Exodus 3:14; Psalm 90:2).

¹Lexical Aids (dictionary) to the Old Testament NASB Greek Key Bible

God is Omnipotent. Satan is powerful, but God is all-powerful (see Psalm 147:5). God is not only all-powerful, but He is also mighty to save (Nehemiah 1:10; Hebrews 7:25). He has the power to keep those who have trusted Christ (1 Peter 1:5). This means that nothing can separate them from His love (Romans 8:33-38) or snatch them out of Christ's hand (John 10:28).

God is Omniscient. God knows everything that there is to know (1 Samuel 2:3; Job 37:16). God knew everything about each person even before they were born (Psalm 139:15,16).

God is Omnipresent. God is everywhere (Jeremiah 23:24). No one can hide from His presence.

God is Immutable. God is absolutely consistent and has perfect stability (Isaiah 40:28). He cannot change (Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 1:12; Psalm 102:26). This also means that God is obligated to keep His promises (Romans 11:29), including His promise of the gift of eternal life for believers (Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5a).

God is Veracity. He is absolute Truth. He cannot and will not lie. He is faithful and keeps His promises (Numbers 23:19; Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 3:4).

All these characteristics of the essence of God reflect the integrity of God. Each co-equal member of the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, has all ten attributes. If God says that He gives you eternal life as a believer, you can count on Him, for He cannot change.

Definition

We defined salvation as *the ultimate manifestation of the righteousness of God, His justice and His love expressed in grace to us — the sinners*. Let us look at this in more detail.

- The righteousness of God condemned the entire human race because they were the offspring of Adam, who willfully sinned in the Garden of Eden (Romans 3:23; Romans 5:12,19; 1 Corinthians 15:22a).
- God's unconditional love toward condemned mankind moved Him to offer His only Son, the unique Jesus Christ. He was the **ONLY ONE** who could be the sacrificial substitute for the entire world (John 3:16). God gathered together the world's sins

ranging from the original sin of Adam to the last sin of the end of time, and poured them out on His Son as He hung upon the Cross.

- In justice God the Father judged His Son, Jesus Christ, which resulted in the grace provision of salvation for sinners.

Do you now see how three characteristics of God's essence, righteousness, justice, and love, were displayed on the Cross? You may ask, "Where does grace come in?" Grace is the channel through which we, the undeserving sinners, receive God's gift of eternal life: "... By grace you have been saved" (Ephesians 2:5b, 8a). We will further develop this concept.

Let us focus on God's grace. First of all, the Bible clearly states that unbelievers are spiritually dead, totally separated from God. (Ephesians 2:1-5). (It is important to remember that the Holy Spirit communicates divine policy in terms that we can understand. Since the average person understands the concept of death, He used this concept to describe our status as unbelievers.)

Think about the following question: What can a dead person do? You may want to take a piece of paper and list a few things you think a dead man is capable of doing. You may say, "That is a crazy thing to ask!" Yes, it is, but in reality it is a great way to help you understand the grace of God given to you when you were spiritually dead. A spiritually dead person can do nothing, just as a physically dead person can do nothing.

A spiritually dead person cannot comprehend anything of spiritual value. He does not see his depravity, sinfulness, or his need for salvation. A spiritually dead person is not in the position to contribute to his own salvation. He does not understand that God the Father, made a costly decision to sacrifice His only Son to provide a way of salvation through the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ on the Cross. Jesus likewise made a costly decision when He agreed to obey the Father's plan.

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners [spiritually dead], Christ died [spiritually judged by God] for us [as a substitute] (Romans 5:8).

This is a demonstration of God’s love in action—putting all the sins of the human race on His Son’s shoulders (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24). When the Gospel was presented to you (as a spiritually dead person), you could not understand it (1 Corinthians 2:14); therefore, the Holy Spirit graciously came to your assistance and helped you to understand what Jesus did for you on the Cross (John 16:8). When you responded to the Gospel message of “faith alone in Christ alone,” your response was permanently credited to you as eternal salvation. At that time, God permanently transferred you from spiritual death to spiritual life (John 5:21; Romans 6:13).

We have examined the following characteristics of the essence of God: sovereignty, righteousness, justice, love, eternal life, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, immutability, and veracity. We have seen that the Almighty God has the integrity to keep His promises.

He who promised is faithful (Hebrews 10:23b).

He can never withdraw His gift of grace (Romans 11:29).

God the Father's Role in Salvation

Long, long ago, in the eternal past, God in His omniscience (1 Samuel 2:3; Job 37:16) knew the future of human history. He knew when Adam and Eve would commit their first sins of disobedience. He “heard” the dialogue that would take place between the serpent (Satan) and the woman, Eve, and how she would be deceived (1 Timothy 2:14b) by the serpent (Genesis 3:1-6). God also knew how Adam would willfully disobey the command forbidding him to eat the fruit from a specific tree (Genesis 2:15-17; 1 Timothy 2:14a). This command, if broken, carried the severe punishment of spiritual death, which included *being separated* from God forever.

God, who knows everything, knew from before the beginning of time (human history) that this would be an insurmountable problem. God did not want His creatures to suffer the punishment of spiritual death and be separated from Him forever. The Trinity addressed this impending tragedy in love, and provided the solution long before the problem ever occurred.

Imagine God the Father as the head of a meeting with the other two co-equal members — the Son and the Holy Spirit. The outcome of that meeting follows with its gracious plan and the unimaginable price which would have to be paid to secure the opportunity of salvation for Adam and Eve, and for every man and woman throughout history.

God the Father Authors the Plan

Condemnation The Trinity was in agreement about the Father's plan to condemn both Adam and Eve and their future offspring (Genesis 3:16-19; Romans 3:23). Romans 5:12 adamantly declares, “Therefore, just as through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world...[sin] spread to all men, because all sinned.”

Judgment After condemning Adam and Eve and their future offspring, God the Father had no choice but to render a verdict upon

all of mankind: “...the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23a). Primarily, the “death” spoken of here is a spiritual death — total separation from God as we have noted.

Provision of Salvation God the Father then drafted a plan of salvation in which His integrity would not be violated (See Chapter One). This plan was one of grace (See Chapter Five — Genesis 3:15; Romans 5:19; 1 Corinthians. 15:22). The Father made the plan, the Son carried out the plan, and the Holy Spirit revealed the plan to mankind.

Rejection of Salvation God the Father gives the eternal verdict: judgment to the Lake of Fire forever, on those who reject His plan of salvation (Revelation 20:11-15; John 3:18, 36).

In summary, this meeting explains the verse:

... He [God the Father] chose us in Him [Jesus Christ] before the foundation [creation] of the world [billions of years ago in the eternal past] (Ephesians 1:4).

Let us see how the plan unfolds in time. Adam and Eve were created and lived in the Garden of Eden. They were forbidden to eat from one particular tree. However, they both disobeyed God and ate. God was not shocked. Why? Because God in His omniscience already knew that they would disobey Him. God then confronted Adam and Eve and pronounced His judgment on them (which had been decided upon in eternity past). Adam and Eve were condemned equally but were judged differently. Adam became the carrier of the original sin. Why? The Bible explains,

And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression (1 Timothy 2:14).

God punished Adam by making him the carrier of sin because Adam knew what he was doing when he took the fruit from Eve’s hand. That also explains the verse,

For as through the one man’s [Adam’s] disobedience the many [all of mankind] were made sinners... (Romans 5:19a).

Therefore, through Adam, the entire human race was condemned (Romans 3:23). This also explains part of the reason why our Lord Jesus Christ had to come into the world through the virgin birth, which will be our next topic.

God the Son's Role in Salvation

God the Son, who is Jesus Christ, said:

“Behold, I have come...to do Your will, O God” (Hebrews 10:7).

What was the plan of God the Father for God the Son? The Father's will was for the Son to be judged on the Cross for the sins of the entire world knowing it would require Him to endure the most intense and agonizing suffering imaginable. The Son knew what it would mean to obey the Father's plan. The Son knew that He would have to set aside His eternal glory and be identified with the sins of the world on the Cross. While in the Garden of Gethsemane, He offered the following prayer to the Father.

“My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You [God] will” (Matthew 26:39b).

Jesus Christ followed God's will to the Cross. While He bore the sins of the entire world on the Cross,

Jesus cried out ... “Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken Me?” (Matthew 27:46).

Why did Jesus Christ have to suffer like this? We will explore the answer in three categories:

1. The unique qualifications of Jesus Christ
2. Jesus Christ the God-Man
3. Jesus Christ removes the barrier between God and man

Let us go back to Adam's creation in the Garden of Eden. He was perfect because his Creator was perfect. Adam had a body, a

soul and a human spirit. Through his human spirit he had fellowship with Holy God. The Apostle Paul gave us a hint of this miracle.

The Spirit [Holy Spirit] Himself testifies with our spirit [human spirit] that we are children of God (Romans 8:16).

Without this human spirit it would be impossible for one to communicate or have fellowship with God.

When Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden, his human spirit died. This condition is referred to as “spiritual death.” This is **THE BARRIER** between man and God and it was brought about by sin. When man sinned, God the Father rendered a verdict concerning man’s disobedience.

For the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23a).

This verse can be expanded in the following manner. The payment, or consequences, of sin (Adam’s original sin) is spiritual death—total separation from God. If you look at Romans 6:23, you can see that the word “sin” is in the singular form. Why is this? The Apostle Paul was not talking about our personal sins. He was referring to the original sin of Adam and Eve, which is the *origin* of our personal sins. It was this sin that brought condemnation on the entire human race. Paul puts it this way:

For as through the one man’s [Adam’s] disobedience the many [entire human race] were made sinners (Romans 5:19a).

He adds, “...in Adam all die...” (1 Corinthians 15:22a). Paul is referring to spiritual death. The next questions are:

- Is there any hope for mankind?
- Who could save them from eternal separation from God?
- Was there anyone qualified to pay the debt of sin to satisfy God?

Jesus Christ: Uniquely Qualified

Four criteria were necessary for a man to be qualified to pay this debt.

1. He must be a man. Only a man could pay for the disobedience of another man. For example, angels could not pay the debt of mankind because they could not be a true substitute.
2. He must also be perfect and without sin.
3. He would have to face Satan and be tempted as Eve was in the Garden of Eden.
4. He must remain sinless and be sinless when God judges Him.

Could anyone meet these requirements? God looked forward from eternity past. What was His conclusion?

...“There is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one” (Romans 3:10-12).

This conclusion called for Jesus Christ, the second member of the Trinity, to become part of the plan.

Let us see how Jesus Christ fulfilled the four criteria that were necessary to pay for the sin of mankind.

1. He was born as a man through the virgin birth (Matthew 1:23, 25).
2. He was born without a sin nature. We discussed earlier that Adam was the carrier of the sin nature; therefore, in order for the humanity of Christ to be perfect, Joseph, Mary’s betrothed husband, was not involved in the conception process. The virgin birth paved the way for the humanity of Jesus Christ to come into the world without the sin nature.
3. He was tempted by Satan just as Eve was (Matthew 4:1-10). He fasted for forty days and forty nights in the desert after which He was tempted three times by Satan. And yet, He did not sin.
4. He remained without personal sin. On the Cross He received our sins, the sins of the entire world, and paid their penalty through His spiritual death. (2 Corinthians 5:21).

We will see why these four criteria were necessary as we continue.

The next question is, how could Jesus Christ, a man without sin, pay for sins He had not committed? Paul put it this way:

He [God the Father] made Him [our Lord Jesus Christ] who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Peter also writes,

And He Himself [Jesus Christ] bore our sins in His body on the Cross... (1 Peter 2:24a).

Jesus Christ: The God-Man

The Son of God came to earth with one purpose in mind. This purpose was to fulfill the Father's plan. That plan was for God the Son, Jesus Christ, in His humanity, to go to the Cross and be judged for every sin of the human race — and pay man's debt to God. Theologically, Jesus is the name of the humanity of Christ, and the title, Christ, (Greek: *christos*) means Savior or Messiah and refers to His deity. The Bible demonstrates that Jesus Christ is God.

In the beginning [eternity past] was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1:1).

The Apostle Paul declared, "He [Jesus Christ] existed in the form of God. . ." (Philippians 2:6a).

John records:

And the Word became flesh [the humanity of Jesus Christ], and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and Truth [Bible doctrine] (John 1:14).

Why was it necessary for Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to become a true man? It was necessary because:

1. He could be an impartial mediator between sinful man and Holy God — God the Father.

This is good, and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the Truth [Bible doctrine]. For there is one God [in essence], and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:3-5).

A mediator, generally, must be equal with both parties. Jesus Christ met these requirements. He was, and is, both true man and true God (God the Son) joined in one person forever.

2. He could be an equal substitute to pay mankind's debt to God. As God He could not have died on the Cross because God can never die. Only man can die. But as the God-man He was subject to both spiritual and physical death. Paul made this point clear when he said,

Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death — even death on a cross (Philippians 2:8).

3. He could experience the suffering, pain and heartache that you and I experience today. He suffered during His time on earth and, therefore, He can help us when we suffer.

Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same [physical humanity] . . . for since He Himself was tempted in that which He suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted (Hebrews 2:14a, 18).

4. He could reconcile us to God (2 Corinthians 5:18).

5. He could become our ultimate High Priest (Hebrews 10:21).

6. He could be able to represent believers in the courtroom of Heaven as their defending attorney. He is in the highest court in Heaven 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year to present evidence to God the Father that Satan has no case against believers. Paul wrote:

Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1).

As our advocate, Christ reminds God the Father that our salvation was paid in full, by Him, on the Cross.

My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin and if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world (1 John 2:1-2).

7. It reminds us that God always keeps His word. In the Old Testament, God promised David that He would send one of his descendants to rule as King forever. The fact that the humanity of Jesus Christ came from the line of David is evidence that God fulfilled His promise.

Jesus Christ Removed the Barrier Between God and Man

Jesus Christ came into contact with sin, for the first time, on the Cross (2 Corinthians 5:21). God the Father poured the sins of all mankind onto Jesus Christ — all the sins that had ever been or ever will be — and judged Him. At that moment, Jesus Christ died spiritually and therefore was separated from God. His spiritual death was payment equal to mankind's debt to God, (payment sufficient to cancel man's debt to God). This is called "substitutionary spiritual death" (Romans 5:8).

Consequently, just as the result of one trespass [Adam's sin] was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness [Jesus' substitutionary death] was justification that brings life for all men (Romans 5:18 NIV).

The barrier between God and man was demolished. Fellowship between God and man was made possible again.

Let us look closely at the events around the Cross. The death of the unique Son (God-man) on the Cross, where He was judged for

mankind's sin, was the moment for which the angels in Heaven had been waiting. It was also the moment that Satan fought so hard to prevent. At the appointed time, Jesus Christ, although He was God, became obedient to the Father's plan and was judged by both man (Matthew 27:11-20, Mark 15:2-15), and God (2 Corinthians 5:21). The first judgment by man meant nothing to Him (John 18:19-40), but the second judgment, which came from God, did. In Acts 8:32-33a, Luke quotes from Isaiah 53:7-8:

“...He was led like a sheep to the slaughter ... so He did not open His mouth. In His humiliation He was deprived of justice” (Acts 8:32-33a).

Jesus Christ was mistreated in many ways by His accusers. He was literally skinned alive with the Roman whip. He was slapped mercilessly (Mark 15:19), mocked (Mark 15:31), and spit upon (Mark 15:19b). Not one time did He react. On the other hand, when God the Father placed the judgment for the sins of mankind on Him, He shouted in agony, “ ... My God, my God, why have You forsaken (abandoned) me?” (Matthew 27:46b). God abandoned Him:

He [God the Father] made Him [Jesus Christ] who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The human race owes God a debt, for we all bear Adam's sin:

For the wages of sin is death [spiritual death] (Romans 6:23a).

However, the spiritual death of Christ on the Cross canceled man's debt.²

Having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, [with its legal demands] which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the Cross (Colossians 2:14).

²Moses C. Onwubiko, *Riding The Death Train*

Now you have the opportunity to pause for a moment and consider the meaning of these verses:

...though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor [set aside His glory] (2 Corinthians 8:9b).

Who, although He existed in the form of God ... emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men (Philippians 2:6-7).

This is exactly what was required for our salvation.

God the Holy Spirit's Role in Salvation

Many believers seem to be unaware of the dynamic ministry of God the Holy Spirit. His role in salvation is equally important to that of God the Father and God the Son. First of all, He helped God the Son carry out the plan of salvation. Throughout the earthly ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit provided Him with the power to be triumphant even under the most intense suffering ever experienced (Matthew 3:16; John 1:33). The Holy Spirit sustained the Lord Jesus Christ when He led Him into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan (Matthew 4:1). God the Holy Spirit also gave Him the strength and courage to face the Cross.

The Holy Spirit Reveals the Plan of Salvation

God the Holy Spirit's primary role in salvation is to reveal God the Father's plan to mankind. Let us examine how He does this.

1. The Holy Spirit helps an individual understand the Gospel. He assists when the person becomes aware of the reality of God and shows an interest in learning more about Him. Jesus said:

“And He [the Holy Spirit], when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment” (John 16:8).

Since unbelievers are “spiritually dead” (See Chapter Three), they do not have the capacity to understand the Gospel, let alone anything else of spiritual value. So the Holy Spirit steps in to help. Paul put it this way:

But a natural man [unbeliever] does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them because they are spiritually appraised [discerned] (1 Corinthians 2:14).

Therefore, when the Gospel is presented to a “spiritually dead” person, the Holy Spirit helps the individual understand it.

2. The Holy Spirit instantly produces a “new birth” at the moment of salvation. This is true for any individual who responds to the Gospel message of “faith alone in Christ alone,” (John 3:7-8). As a result of this new birth, the individual’s human spirit becomes alive and he is able to have fellowship with God.

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6).

The new believer is also transferred from eternal condemnation to eternal life (John 5:24), and the Holy Spirit constructs a temple in the soul of each believer providing a place for the permanent indwelling of the Trinity (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; John 17:23a).

3. The Holy Spirit seals the believer’s salvation for eternity. Paul declared,

Now, He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge (2 Corinthians 1:21-22).

The Apostle further asserted,

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation — having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise (Ephesians 1:13).

This is another way of God saying to you, “Listen My child, the salvation which you have through faith in My Son Jesus Christ is a settled matter. This chapter is closed forever. No one can undo what I have done. As God, what I do is perfect.” King Solomon emphatically stated,

I know that everything God does [including your salvation] will remain *forever*; there is nothing to add to it and there is nothing to take away from it... (Ecclesiastes. 3:14a).

In the light of this verse, it is blasphemy for one to suggest that salvation can be lost.

4. The Holy Spirit brings the believer into “union with Christ.” This is called the “baptism of the Holy Spirit.” Take note that this baptism occurs at the moment of salvation as a part of the process of regeneration, which will be discussed later. The new believer does not have to do anything to receive this baptism. Note also that this baptism is not the same as a water baptism. Jesus made a distinction between “water baptism” and “baptism of the Holy Spirit.”

“For John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit...” (Acts 1:5a).

Paul declared,

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body... (1 Corinthians 12:13a).

This verse is often misinterpreted but actually means that the new believer is entered into union with Christ.

For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:27-28).

5. The Holy Spirit gives at least one spiritual gift to each believer (1 Corinthians 12:1-11). Since this gift is given in accordance with His sovereign will, no one has the right to boast about his or her spiritual gift(s).

God the Holy Spirit Seals The Believer

In Him [Jesus Christ], you also, after listening to the message of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation – having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise (Ephesians 1:13).

The Greek: *pisteuo* is correctly translated “believed,” and it is used in the perfect tense; therefore, it is translated to mean “having put” or “fixed one’s trust” in someone – in this case, our Lord Jesus Christ. It is also a completed action verb; therefore, this verse can be translated to mean that the moment a person put his trust entirely in Christ Jesus, he was sealed with the Holy Spirit. The Greek: *sphragizo* is translated “sealed” and it means, “to stamp with a signet or private mark for security or preservation.” We can see how the original language of the verse is necessary to fully understand its meaning. It is also important to understand the context in which the verse was written. As the chapter continues, we will see how God has used the context to deepen our understanding of the concept of the sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit.

It is interesting to note that archeologists have discovered thousands of “seals” in their excavations dating back to the fourth millennium B.C. They were used throughout the ancient civilized world from Mesopotamia to Rome.³ These seals were made from a variety of hard substances and of different shapes.⁴

Seals had many different uses:

- Seals were used as a mark of authenticity and authority on letters and royal commands (1 Kings 21:8; Esther 3:12; 8:8-10).
- Seals were used as a mark of the formal ratification of a transaction or covenant. An example is when Jeremiah’s friends witnessed his purchase of a piece of property during Old Testament times (Jeremiah 32:11-14).
- Seals were used as a means to protect books and other documents so that they could not be tampered with (Jeremiah 32:14; Revelation 5:2, 5, 9; 6:1, 3).

³Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary; Zondervan Publishing House, 1964

⁴Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary; Zondervan Publishing House, 1964

I love the phrase “could not be tampered with.” This is exactly how believers should view their sealed salvation. No one can ever remove a believer from the omnipotent (all-powerful) hand of Christ Jesus.

“ ... and no one will snatch them out of My hand” (John 10:28b).

Nothing can ever remove or separate a believer from the love of God (Romans 8:38-39). The sealing ministry of God the Holy Spirit becomes the protective seal of God.

- Seals were used to serve as proof of delegated authority and power (Genesis 41:42).
- Seals were used to ensure that unauthorized persons would not enter a specified area (Daniel 6:17; Matthew 27:66). An example today would be the yellow tape at a crime scene that reads “Do Not Cross.”
- Seals were used as an official mark of ownership (Revelation 7:2-4).

One demonstration of the uses of seals can be found in the book of Daniel, chapter six. The story is about Daniel, a young believer, who had made extraordinary achievements in a foreign land. Daniel’s co-workers were envious of his success and tried to destroy him. These cut-throat co-workers decided on a plan to get rid of Daniel.

“All the commissioners of the kingdom, the prefects and satraps [subordinate rulers], the high officials and the governors have consulted together that the king should establish a statute and enforce an injunction that anyone who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, shall be cast into the lion’s den. Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document so that it may not be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked.” Therefore the king signed the document...(Daniel 6:7-9).

Talk about hypocrites! These co-workers spoke to the king as if their motive was to encourage everyone to worship the king, but their true intent was to harm Daniel. However, Daniel was not disturbed by the new law, nor did he let it prevent him from praying to and worshiping the true God (Daniel 6:10). In verses 11-15, Daniel was caught violating this new law in his daily communion with God, and he was brought before King Darius for judgment. Now, the king loved Daniel very much, and he tried to deliver Daniel. But, it was to no avail. Even when he discovered that the new law was actually a conspiracy to destroy Daniel, he could not save him. Why? Because the law which he signed was irrevocable (verses 8 and 15). The king was forced to uphold the law and gave the command to throw Daniel into the lion's den (verse 16). A stone was used to cover the den (verse 17a).

. . . and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signet rings of his nobles, so that nothing would be changed in regard to Daniel (Daniel 6:17b).

Those who remember the story know that in the end, God delivered Daniel.

The question troubling many believers today is this: How does a person know for sure that the contract between him and God, made when he believed in Christ, is final? The only place to find the answer is in Scripture.

For all the promises of God in Him [Jesus Christ] are Yes, and in Him Amen . . . (2 Corinthians 1:20a NKJ).

This verse means that God can never break a promise. The Apostle Paul continues,

Who [God] also has sealed us and gave us the Spirit [Holy Spirit] in our hearts as a guarantee (2 Corinthians 1:22 NKJ).

In Him [Jesus Christ] you also trusted after you heard the word of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation; in whom also having believed you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who [Holy Spirit] is the guarantee of our inheritance until the

redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory (Ephesians 1:13-14 NKJ).

This is the eternal contract: “I, God, hereby purchased you (anyone who believes in Christ) with the precious blood of my unique Son (through His spiritual death on the Cross) (1 Peter 1:19), and sealed you with the Holy Spirit, which is my protective signet” (2 Corinthians 1:22).

If God decided to break this contract and revoke His gift of everlasting life, it would not only violate this law of sealing, which is irreversible, but it would violate His integrity. Thinking that God would do this is to say that God could alter His perfect integrity. This thinking is arrogant and blasphemous! However, knowing that this gift of eternal life cannot be revoked is neither license nor permission to live without regard for God or man. Divine discipline from the highest court of Heaven will be sent to believers who fail to obey God (Hebrews 12:5-11).

We have been discussing the role of God the Holy Spirit in salvation and His sealing ministry in the life of the believer. Misunderstanding of the Holy Spirit’s sealing ministry has caused confusion about the eternal security of the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ; therefore, we will elaborate on this topic by using the following premises found in Scripture.

1. Believers are sealed (marked) for protection.

Then out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth; and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power. They were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads (Revelation 9:3-4).

The seal (mark) of God is on the foreheads of those who become believers during the tribulation for their protection.

2. Believers are sealed until the day of redemption.

Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30).

Believers are redeemed (purchased out of the slave market of sin), the very moment they trust in Christ. Ephesians 4:30 emphasizes the guarantee that believers will remain SEALED until the day of redemption, the final day when they are presented to Christ in Heaven in their body which cannot be destroyed — their Resurrection body.

3. The redemption document is sealed until the end of time.

“Those [believers] who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of Heaven, and those [believers] who lead the many to righteousness [by witnessing], [will shine] like the stars forever and ever. But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase” (Daniel 12:3-4).

God’s revelation to Daniel is sealed until the end of time.

4. Satan’s punishment is sealed.

Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of ... Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him ... until the thousand years were completed... (Revelation 20:1-3).

The seal (mark) guarantees that Satan will be locked up for one thousand years.

5. Daniel’s punishment is sealed.

Then the king gave orders and Daniel was brought in and cast into the lions’ den ... A stone was brought and laid over the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it [the lions’ den] with his own signet ring and with the signet rings of his nobles, so that nothing would be changed in regard to Daniel (Daniel 6:16a,17).

The lions' den was sealed so that Daniel's punishment would be final. This was done in accordance with the law passed by the king that was irrevocable.

6. The believer's salvation is sealed.

In Him [Jesus Christ], you also, after listening to the message of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation — having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise (Ephesians 1:13).

The believers are sealed (marked) with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as God's guarantee for their salvation.

7. The seal on believers is guaranteed.

Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, who sealed [marked] us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge (2 Corinthians 1:21-22).

The symbols: “seal” (mark), “pledge,” “down payment,” and “guarantee” are words that God used in Scripture to further demonstrate the eternal security of the believer. These words are metaphors for the role of God the Holy Spirit in securing the believer's salvation. God the Father is the One who initiated the plan of salvation and He promised that He would finish what He started. He will gather all believers unto Himself either through their physical death (2 Corinthians 5:8b) or through the rapture⁵ (Romans 8:23; 1 Thessalonians 4:17).

God the Holy Spirit directed the human writers of Scripture to introduce the ancient word “seal” into the Bible. Why? Because the seal in history always indicates permanence. The seal used in reference to the believer's salvation, shows that his position in Christ is final, sealed, not able to be reversed. A believer “sealed” by the Holy Spirit is as permanent as any historical document bearing a king's seal. God the Holy Spirit inspired the use of the word “seal” to protect the doctrine of eternal security. He knew that throughout history many would debate the doctrine of eternal security of the believer.

⁵Rapture: An event where all believers living on the earth will be taken into the sky to meet the Lord. This event is in the future and will take place seven years before the second Advent of Christ. 1 Thessalonians 4:16 & 17

Today, many experts of the Bible undoubtedly understand the implications surrounding the use of the word “seal” in ancient times. What troubles me is that some believers today fail to see the connection between its ancient use and its use in Scripture. I know that Satan is behind this because he is the father of heresy (false teaching) and confusion. In ancient times, whenever a “seal” was applied to any transaction or document, it could never be broken or withdrawn. The guarantee was the seal. God had a plan for using the word “seal” when addressing the salvation of the believer. The serious student of doctrine will not overlook the importance of context when interpreting Scripture.

In conclusion, let us briefly review Premises No. 4, 6 and 7. If you agree with No. 4, (which says that Satan will be chained and sealed for the entire one thousand years), there is no Biblical reason for you to reject No. 6 and 7 (which both say the believer’s salvation is sealed, therefore secured).

The connection is the Greek: *spragizo* which means to stamp with a private mark for security or preservation. This same word is used in Premises No. 4, 6 and 7. (This word is also the Hebrew language equivalent used in Daniel 6:17 of Premise No. 5). With this type of evidence, it is not logical to argue against the eternal security of the believer.

Believers have Biblical support to conclude that because they are sealed by the Holy Spirit, their salvation is secure until the day of final redemption (Romans 8:23; Ephesians 1:13-14). This means that their inheritance and their position as God’s children, which includes eternal life in Heaven, can never be taken away.

Salvation: An Act of God's Grace

Introduction to Grace

Do you know that one of the most difficult subjects to understand in the Bible is grace? The word “grace” is used frequently by both believers and unbelievers. It can be found in music, prayers, and everyday conversation; it is even a common name. Grace is one of the least understood and most disputed concepts in the Bible. Theologians have long wrestled over the Biblical doctrine of grace. Many churches have splintered and separated over the role of grace in the church. Denominations have formed solely to be “for” or “against” grace. In fact, some ministers have refused to speak to other ministers who do not share their opinion of grace. Even husbands and wives may have different views about grace.

We see that grace is a very complex subject. Think for a moment about the words to a familiar song: “Amazing grace, how sweet the sound...” Truly the word “grace” does sound sweet to our ears, but does its Truth register in our soul? Undoubtedly, any believer who has a measure of understanding of God’s amazing grace will enjoy His provisions more abundantly. That is because he realizes that God deals with him, not on the basis of who he is or what he does, but on the basis of who God is. Therefore, this individual does not try to earn God’s favor by his deeds or efforts. Instead he gratefully embraces all that God is able to do for and through him because of His unique Son, Jesus Christ.

Think about the following analogy: Imagine that you have worn only one piece of clothing since birth and it has grown in size as you have. One day you realize it bears the entire history of your life. There are milk stains from learning to drink as a baby. There is a spot of gravy from when you tried to hide your food and pretend that you had finished your dinner. There is a blood stain, probably from a fight at school. There is evidence of vomit on your clothing from a drinking binge. Now as an adult you see that your clothing has become quite dirty with the layers of “life” you have experienced.

Then one day you hear of a grand party. The only requirement for attendance is proper dress. Only those wearing white, spotless robes will be allowed inside. You realize there is no way you will get in. However, on the day of the party, as you are coming out of the shower, you see a young man leaving, wearing your piece of clothing. You look around and discover a white, spotless robe lying over a chair. You pick up the robe and put it on, marveling at its cleanliness. It fits! Suddenly, you realize that you can attend the party!

At the party you have a wonderful time. There, one of the guests asks you, “Where did you get your robe?” As you try to explain, you catch a glimpse of the young man you had seen earlier. He is still wearing your clothing but he is standing outside. Obviously he is the one who should to be at the party, not you. Still speechless, you can only point to the young man outside the door to answer the question.

Irritated, the guest asks you the question again, this time in a louder voice, “What did you do to get your robe?”

Exasperated, you yell in response, “Nothing! I didn’t do anything to get this robe! I don’t deserve to be here!”

That was the correct response. You did not deserve to be at that party. Similarly, all of mankind has a coat of sin (Romans 3:23), is cursed (Galatians 3:10), and is separated from God (Isaiah 59:2). This has been mankind’s condition from birth and there is nothing that any human being can do about it. In fact, the righteousness of the most respectable person on earth is like that of a filthy rag (a menstrual cloth — from the original language) in God’s sight (Isaiah 64:6).

God has two requirements for entrance into Heaven.

- First, anyone who desires to enter must have his coat of sin removed.
- Second, he must put on God’s robe of perfect righteousness.

However, there is a problem. The coat of sin is too heavy for any human being to remove. Is God asking for the impossible? Yes, He is. But the good news is that the One who is asking for the impossible will accomplish the impossible Himself. He made a way to remove the coat of sin and give man His robe of perfect righteousness. And man can do nothing to help. He can only believe that God can and will do it.

How did God accomplish this impossible task? He sent His perfect Son, who was without sin (2 Corinthians 5:21) to be judged for our sins.

“ ... Behold, the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29b).

You may wish to pause for a moment to think about the following question. What did mankind do to bring Christ to earth, down from His throne in Heaven (2 Corinthians 8:9)? Man disobeyed God and sinned. Furthermore, In what way did you help Jesus to be a substitute on your behalf?

- Were you wrapped in cloth and placed in a manger with Jesus Christ at His birth? (Luke 2:7).
- Did you fast for forty days with Him in the wilderness while He was tempted by Satan? (Matthew 4:1-2).
- Were you arrested with Him when He was abandoned by His disciples? (Matthew 26:50) .
- Were you by His side when He received His sentence, the cruellest punishment in the history of man? (Matthew 27:11-26; Mark 15:2-15).

When the Roman soldiers skinned Him alive using whips laced with pieces of bone, did you volunteer to take half of the lashes (Mark 15:19a)? What about when they spit on Him (Mark 15:19b) and mocked Him (Mark 15:31)? Did you defend Him? Did you share in His pain when He was nailed to the Cross? When God placed the sin of the entire world on His shoulders and He screamed, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34), did you scream too? Lastly, when Jesus Christ sighed, “ ... It is finished...” (John 19:30) and died, did you die with Him? Is the word “grace” starting to ring in your ears? Is its meaning starting to sink in?

Why did Jesus Christ have to suffer like this?

- First, so that He could remove man’s heavy coat of sin.
- Second, so that we might have the opportunity to wear His “robe of righteousness.”

He met God’s requirements for the payment of sin. Where did the exchange of the coat of sin and the robe of righteousness take place? At the Cross,

He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree [Cross] ...
(1 Peter 2:24a).

God placed all the sins of mankind on his Son who paid the penalty for them through His spiritual death. When man believes in the Lord Jesus Christ — “faith alone in Christ alone” — to forgive his sins, in effect, his “coat of sin” or the consequences of sin is removed.

As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us (Psalm 103:12).

In exchange for this coat of sin, the believer is given God’s robe of righteousness. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe (Romans 3:22a).

We will discuss this righteousness in a later chapter. Now that you have a glimpse of God’s grace, answer the following question: Did you do anything to be saved? If your answer is, “No,” then you are on your way to understanding the concept of grace. Salvation is obtained only one way — “faith alone in Christ alone” (Galatians 3:26). The Apostle Paul beautifully summarizes it this way:

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Now we can continue the song:

*“Amazing grace! How sweet the sound, that saved a wretch
like me!
I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I
see.
'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears
relieved;
how precious did that grace appear the hour I first be-
lieved.
Through many dangers, toil and snares, I have already
come;*

*'tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead
me home.
When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining
as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we'd first
begun."*



We have established that salvation is a gift of grace; so let us consider the Apostle Paul's words.

For the *gifts* and calling of God are irrevocable (Romans 11:29).

This means that God's gifts cannot and will not be withdrawn under any circumstances. We are also told,

The free *gift* of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23b).

If we look at the *gifts* in these two verses together we can clearly see that the moment a person believes in Christ Jesus, God gives him a free gift — eternal life — and this gift shall belong to him forever (Ecclesiastes 3:14).

Grace in the Garden of Eden

God's grace has been the main theme throughout history, from the creation of the world, to the sin of Adam in the Garden of Eden, to Christ's saving work on the Cross. We will pursue our study of grace by asking: "How is salvation an act of God's grace?" To answer this question we need to start in the garden. God gave Adam and Eve instructions to follow, just as any responsible, loving parent would do. However, one day they chose to disobey God. This decision resulted in Adam and Eve's spiritual death. It also resulted in spiritual death for the entire human race. The Apostle Paul made this clear when he asserted,

As in Adam all [the human race] die (1 Corinthians 15:22a).

David, the psalmist, stated,

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me (Psalm 51:5).

Let us discuss what David meant.

- First, what did David actually mean when he said he was conceived in sin?
- Second, how is it that a newborn baby is considered a sinner when he has not actually done anything wrong yet?

Let us go back to the Garden of Eden where the first act of disobedience was committed. God provided for all the needs of Adam and Eve in a perfect environment. He allowed them to eat of every tree in the Garden with one exception. He gave them, only one simple command:

“But you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die” (Genesis 2:17).

Keep in mind that Adam and Eve were not together when the first act of sin occurred. The serpent (Satan) approached Eve and engaged her in a lengthy conversation. By the end of this conversation, Eve was deceived and had been lured into eating the fruit which God had forbidden them to eat. It is not important what type of fruit it was. What matters is that Eve disobeyed God. Then, after Eve had tasted the fruit, she enticed her husband, Adam, to also eat the fruit. It is important to remember that Adam was without sin up until that point. Picture Adam relaxing in the serene, beautiful Garden of Eden, when all of a sudden Eve comes along holding the half-eaten fruit in her hand. Adam clearly had a choice: disobey God and choose the woman with her offer of the forbidden fruit, or obey God and reject her. His decision? Disobey God.

God, in justice, came down to pass judgment on Adam and Eve for their sin of disobedience. Let us take a look as the drama unfolds. Moses of the Old Testament wrote,

And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden (Genesis 3:8).

Does this remind you of when you were a child and you had disobeyed your parents? Did you frantically look for a place to hide when you heard your father's footsteps coming? I did. And that is what Adam and Eve did. They disobeyed God.

Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew they were naked (Genesis 3:7a).

This means that when they ate the forbidden fruit they were immediately able to discern between good and evil. The first manifestation of this new discernment was they "saw" that they were naked. They quickly sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves (Genesis 3:7b). Then God spoke first: "...But the Lord God called to the man and said, 'Where are you?'" (Genesis 3:9). What was Adam's reply?

He said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself" (Genesis 3:10).

Then God questioned Eve, she pleaded guilty to the sin but blamed the serpent for deceiving her (Genesis 3:13). The Bible says Eve was actually deceived; nonetheless, God declared her guilty and spiritually dead (1 Timothy 2:14b). Now what about Adam? He also pleaded guilty, but blamed God.

The man said, "The woman you put here with me — she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it" (Genesis 3:12 NIV).

What he was really saying was, "God you really went too far this time with your so-called 'grace!' I would have much preferred loneliness over having a wife who gets me into trouble." Did either of them take responsibility for disobeying God? No. People use the same excuses today: "My friend talked me into doing it; my wife

convinced me to; my husband started it first.” It is no wonder that many people cannot find a solution to their problems. They will not admit that they have caused the problem.

Whatever happened to taking responsibility for one’s motives, decisions and actions? The Bible says,

“[We] sow the wind [by choice], and [we] reap the whirlwind [hurricane]” (Hosea 8:7).

Only a mature believer can truly take responsibility for his failures without blaming God or others.

“But you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die” (Genesis 2:17 NIV).

God was referring to both a spiritual and a physical death. The spiritual death came as a direct result of their disobedience to God. This spiritual death was a separation between them and God, therefore, they were no longer able to have fellowship with Him. In the case of Adam and Eve, their new state of spiritual death blinded them and they were no longer able to see the Truth and admit their failure to God. The physical death was merely the end result of the natural course of the sin nature that now dwelled in Adam and Eve. As we will see, this spiritual and physical death would be passed on to all of mankind.

Despite their inability to admit their own guilt, God passed His judgment on them. Both faced immediate spiritual death and eventual physical death and its consequences, as well as specific punishment for their sin. Though both Adam and Eve had sinned, they sinned in different ways and were, therefore, judged in different ways.

And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression (1 Timothy 2:14).

Because Adam was not deceived when he chose to disobey God. For his punishment he had to toil by the sweat of his brow. But most significantly he was made to be the carrier of the sin nature. Eve was deceived by the Serpent, so her punishment was different. She was to bear children in pain.

Let us see how this relates to the plan of salvation. When a man and woman have sexual intercourse and a child is conceived, the man becomes the transmitter of the “sin nature.” His twenty-three chromosomes contain not only the genetic codes (his parents’ characteristics) but also the sin nature; therefore, at conception, when the man’s sperm fertilizes the woman’s perfect egg, it contaminates the egg with the sin nature. The woman’s egg is perfect by itself in the sense that women have been set apart by God — they do not transmit the sin nature. This explains the verse,

...And in sin my mother conceived me (Psalm 51:5b).

When the baby emerges from the mother’s womb at birth, God in His grace imputes the gift of human life and in His justice imputes Adam’s original sin to the newborn; therefore, the baby is physically alive but spiritually dead. This not only explains why a newborn baby is considered a sinner but also why Jesus Christ was conceived in a different manner. God miraculously fertilized Mary’s perfect egg so that Jesus Christ would be born without the sin nature that would have been transmitted by Mary’s promised husband, Joseph. Jesus Christ came into the world as a perfect man. It is plain to see, God is a genius. Even His judgment of Adam and Eve was a part of His plan for salvation to come through Jesus Christ. His wisdom is unfathomable.

How was the grace of God revealed once Adam and Eve had been judged for their sin? To answer this question, it is important to remember first of all that they were spiritually dead the moment they disobeyed God by eating what I call the “curiosity fruit.” As we saw in Chapter Two, God was not shocked or amazed at their sin. Why? Because as omniscient God (Psalm 139:15-16), He knew in eternity past that Adam and Eve would commit the first sin. You might ask, if God knew they would sin, why did He create them? That is a good question. The Bible does not give us a clear answer as to why God created not only Adam and Eve but also Satan and the other fallen angels when He knew they would fail. When we get to Heaven, we shall find the answer.

What we do know is that God adamantly rejected Adam and Eve’s attempts at righteousness. First they tried to deny their sin to appear innocent. Then they tried to cover their nakedness with fig leaves from the Garden. We see God’s response.

The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them. (Genesis 3:21).

This was His way of showing them that their efforts to “cover” their sins were inadequate and that He must provide for them. It was also His way of showing them that a sacrifice, in this case an animal, was needed to provide the clothing to cover them. The death of this innocent animal was a type (or representation) of the sacrificial and substitutionary spiritual death of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, on the Cross. The Apostle John wrote,

... “Behold, the Lamb of God [Jesus Christ] who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29b).

Man’s efforts to overcome the barrier of sin and resultant spiritual death between himself and God are inadequate, and God has to provide for him. The death of God the Son, Jesus Christ, was required to pay man’s debt of sin and restore fellowship between God and man. Man’s way to God is inadequate. It has to be done God’s way. Consider God’s way.

He [Jesus Christ] was oppressed and He was afflicted [badly wounded], yet He did not open His mouth; like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth (Isaiah 53:7).

But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed [drawn near, see Ephesians 2:13] (Isaiah 53:5 NIV).

Did God ever give Adam and Eve what they deserved? Absolutely NOT. Instead, He demonstrated His grace to them by offering them salvation. You may ask, how could they be saved when Jesus Christ had not even come to earth yet? It was Adam and Eve’s acceptance of this free gift of animal skin clothing from the hand of God that was a symbol of their personal faith that Jesus Christ would come as God had promised in Genesis 3:15. From that very hour till this very day, no human being has ever been saved apart from a personal faith in Christ.

...a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus...since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified (Galatians 2:16).

Scripture records the following concerning the salvation of Abraham, the Father of the Old Testament believers:

“Abram [Abraham’s original name] believed in the Lord [Jehovah]; and He [God] reckoned [credited] it to him as righteousness” (Genesis 15:6).

Adam and Eve and a host of other Old Testament believers looked ahead expectantly to the Cross while believers today look back to the Cross. What do believers today have in common with the Old Testament believers? “Faith alone in Christ alone.” It is faith in Christ plus nothing. It is a belief that salvation is for those who put their trust entirely in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the Cross.

But He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time . . . For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified (Hebrews 10:12a, 14).

Throughout my life, I have heard different believers present the Gospel in various shapes and forms. Many have attempted to modify the simple Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Many ministers make the Gospel message difficult to understand because they feel they have to add something to it. The message of Jesus Christ is very simple and straightforward. Jesus said,

“As Moses lifted up the serpent [bronze, Numbers 21:9] in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up [on the Cross]; so that *whoever believes* may in Him have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His one and only Son, that *whoever believes* in Him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:14-16 NIV).

Following in the footsteps of Jesus, the Apostle Paul wrote,

...“*believe* in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be *saved*” (Acts 16:31a).

It is so very difficult for man to accept grace. One reason is because man is so proud he does not want to admit he needs God and His grace.

By Grace, Through Faith, Not By Works

A few weeks ago a salesman came into my office to give a demonstration of a postage meter machine. When he was finished I asked him,

“Where will you spend eternity if you were to die today?”

He paused for a moment and answered, “I think I would go to Heaven.”

“How do you know for sure?” I asked.

He answered, “My pastor said ‘If a person tries hard to live right and do good things for others, he will be accepted into Heaven.’”

“Do you think that is enough?” I asked.

“One also needs to keep the Ten Commandments,” he added.

I handed him the Bible to read certain verses that clearly refuted these concepts. Regarding human righteousness, the Apostle Paul wrote:

As it is written, “there is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one” (Romans 3:10-12).

I paused to ask him if he kept all of God’s commandments all of the time. He said, “Not always, no one can keep all the commandments.” The salesman was absolutely correct — **NO ONE CAN.**

For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all (James 2:10).

Let me stop here to expound on James 2:10. For the sake of illustration let us look at just a small portion of the Law, the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:3-17).

1. You shall have no other gods before Me.
2. You shall not make for yourself an idol . . .
3. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
5. Honor your father and your mother.
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's house, wife, or possessions.

Let us assume a person intends to get to Heaven by trying hard to keep the Law. Every day, he manages to keep ninety-nine percent of the Law. He always falls short of perfection by 1%. Eventually this good man dies and arrives at the Supreme Court of Heaven. God the Father is the presiding Judge and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are the Jurors. The elect and the fallen angels are the spectators.

“All rise,” the bailiff bellows. “The Supreme Court of Heaven is now in session.”

During the trial of “Mr. Do-Gooder Without Christ” vs. “God’s Grace Gift” the record showed that “Mr. Do-Gooder Without Christ” performed extremely well before his sudden death. He took care of the poor, donated generous amounts of money to the church, and he never cheated anyone. His only mistake was that he had an idol — he worshipped his wealth. In other words he failed to keep one of the Ten Commandments. At the end of the testimony the Judge, God the Father, asks,

“Jurors, have you reached your verdict?”

“We have,” God the Son and God the Holy Spirit reply.

“What say you concerning “Mr. Do-Gooder Without Christ” with regard to My Ten Commandments?”

“Concerning commandments one through ten, we find the defendant...guilty.”

The judge responds, “‘Mr. Do-Gooder Without Christ,’ all your efforts to earn acceptance into Heaven have accounted for nothing. My Son, Jesus Christ, is the only person who has ever fulfilled the Law completely; therefore, only by faith in Him can anyone be righteous in My sight and spend eternity in Heaven. Since you did not have faith in Him, your sentence is eternity in the Lake of Fire, separated from Me.”

Another verse sheds more light on the subject of salvation and the Law:

Nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law [keeping the Law] but through *faith* in Christ Jesus, even we have *believed* in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law will no flesh [no human being] be justified [saved]. (Galatians 2:16)

Upon examination of this sentence one might say that it was repetitious. There is a reason for this repetition. The author, the Apostle Paul, was trying to emphasize the importance of the concept, “faith alone in Christ alone.” At the end of our conversation, the salesman’s inner eyes were opened and he saw that it would be impossible for him to work his way into Heaven.

After Adam and Eve disobeyed God, they were acutely aware of their shame in nakedness. They tried to hide this reality by making coverings out of fig leaves. They thought they could hide their sin from God. But God was not fooled. Nor is He fooled today by our attempts to hide our sinful hearts from Him and impress Him with our good works. But rather than reject us forever, He provided His perfect Son, Jesus Christ, who paid for our sins through His substitutionary death on the Cross. Only by faith in Christ and Christ alone can we be forgiven our sins, and thereby glorify God.

What an inexpressible joy it is to meditate on the many facets of the wisdom and the grace of God. May I pause to remind you that as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are no longer your own. You belong to God, “You have been bought with a price...” (1 Corinthians

6:20a). That price was the substitutionary death of our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross (1 Peter 1:18-19). Once you have been purchased by God, He seals your life with His “signet ring,” His Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13). His seal (mark) identifies you as His purchased one which ensures your eternal protection (John 6:39).

For if we live, we live for the Lord; or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s (Romans 14:8).

You are kept by His power (1 Peter 1:5) and that of God the Son, and He promised that NOTHING will ever snatch you away (John 10:28). You are kept 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, all the way into eternity. That is awesome! With this Biblical exposition we can confidently say,

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling [falling], and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority before all time and now and forever. Amen (Jude 24-25).

The Psalmist wrote,

I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it and taken from it. God does it so that men will revere Him (Ecclesiastes 3:14 NIV).

Whatever God does cannot be changed. Whoever God holds in His hand cannot be lost (Psalm 121).

“I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of My hand” (John 10:28).

God’s work is perfect (Deuteronomy 32:4). Sadly many believers do not know God’s Word; therefore, they do not know God. Do you know His Word? Do you know Him as the writer of Ecclesiastes 3:14 did?

False Salvation — Satan Clouds the Way

Many believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are ignorant about Satan's role of creating false doctrines of salvation. It is important for believers to be aware of his schemes.

There are three points that are important to remember.

1. Satan is not the ugly creature that many have portrayed him to be. This is what the Prophet Isaiah wrote about him.

How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! (Isaiah 14:12 NIV).

Also referring to Satan, the Prophet Ezekiel lamented,

Your heart became proud on account of your beauty (Ezekiel 28:17a NIV).

Knowing this, believers should be aware that he often hides behind people or things we admire. After all, he hid himself behind the words of the Apostle Peter.

Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You." But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's" (Matthew 16:22-23).

2. Satan is a master of ways to disguise his deceptions. Unless believers are aware of his tactics, they are bound for spiritual chaos. One of the ways he subtly twists the Truth is by quoting Scripture out of context. He used this tactic on the Lord Jesus Christ during His temptation in the wilderness (Matthew 4:6 cf.; Psalm 91:1-13). The Lord bluntly exposed him.

“He [Satan] was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the Truth, because there is no Truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44-46b).

How do Satan’s deceptions infiltrate the minds of believers? The Apostle Paul answers the question this way:

But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. (2 Corinthians 11:3 NIV)

For such men [the apostate believers] are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, that his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve (2 Corinthians 13-15 NIV).

Undoubtedly, we should consider seriously that which was a source of fear for the greatest Apostle of all time. In light of this, it is doctrinally sound to conclude that anyone whose teachings are contrary to the Bible is being used by Satan. When the Word of God is being presented, believers must listen to the Holy Spirit. He will give discernment to know what is Truth and what is not, for He is the GREATEST TEACHER of all time.

3. Satan is the mastermind behind all false presentations of the Gospel message of our Lord Jesus Christ. Satan is a genius. His main objective in every given opportunity is to divert everyone’s attention away from the simple Gospel message of “faith alone in Christ alone.” He accomplishes his goal by using both apostate believers and unbelievers alike to deliver an inaccurate salvation message.

Satan cannot indwell believers. Believers have been bought with a price and are protected as children of God. However, Satan can deceive apostate believers and influence them to teach false doctrine. You may ask, “Why do we need to study this?” This information is imperative because you need to understand Satan’s schemes so you can be aware of how he can distort Truth in your own life.

False Salvation Messages

We will look at 5 common examples of false salvation messages. There are many more and Satan is busy all the time inventing new falsehoods to deceive us.

Falsehood 1. Salvation by Baptism

There are thousands of unbelievers today who have a false hope of going to Heaven. Their hope is based on an unfounded faith in the practice of baptism. Satan has craftily hidden himself behind the Biblical ceremony of baptism to promote it as a means of going to Heaven. As a result, many have put their faith in something that cannot save them. And this is just what Satan wants. Many never question their eternal destiny because they believe they have fulfilled the “requirement.” Many churches even baptize infants. What if these babies grow up and make decisions to reject Jesus Christ? Will their baptism save them? The truth of the matter is that baptism was designed merely as a teaching aid for those who **HAVE ALREADY BELIEVED IN CHRIST AND ARE SAVED**. Why? To illustrate their new life in Christ. The Apostle Paul describes this symbolic ritual:

We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life (Romans 6:4 NIV).

When the believer is immersed in the water he holds his breath (stops breathing) symbolizing his death and burial with Christ. As the believer is raised out of the water his breathing automatically resumes. This illustrates how he has been raised up with Christ and his new life has begun. Baptism is a public demonstration of this great phenomenon as described in Romans 6:4. It is **NOT** necessary for salvation.

Salvation is a matter of personal faith in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Anything taken away from this faith or anything added to faith is not salvation. Let me illustrate by using the unparalleled drama in human history, which took place on a Cross over two thousand years ago. When our Lord Jesus Christ was hanging on the Cross He was not alone. There were two convicted criminals hanging on crosses on either side of Jesus Christ, the Perfect (sacrificial)

Lamb of God. Our Lord was being judged as a substitute for all of us including those criminals. The two men, on the other hand, were receiving their punishment for their crimes, death by crucifixion. Let us examine their dialogue.

One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at Him: “Aren’t you the Christ? Save yourself and us!”

But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.”

Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into Your kingdom.”

Jesus answered him, “I tell you [the criminal] the Truth, today [not tomorrow] you will be with Me in paradise” (Luke 23:39-43 NIV).

What did this notorious criminal, who deserved death for his crimes, do to secure a place in Heaven FOREVER? In essence, he did one simple thing: he anchored his trust in Christ. What has changed with the Word of God since then? **Nothing!** Isaiah of the Old Testament wrote,

The grass withers and the flowers fades, but the Word of our God stands forever (Isaiah 40:8).

And our Lord said,

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will *never* pass away” (Matthew 24:35 NIV).

In the book of Acts it was simply:

“...Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31a).

And today, it is the same. There are no short cuts. Many people will be shocked to find themselves in Hell simply because they rejected God’s simple solution of faith ALONE in Christ ALONE.

Our Lord emphatically made this point clear.

“Therefore...you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I [Jesus] am He [the Messiah], you will die in your sins” (John 8:24).

Twice our Lord warned, “You will die in your sins.” Such a warning should be taken seriously. It is a matter of your eternal destiny. A criminal (Luke 23:39-43) is in Heaven today simply because he did exactly what Christ said in John 8:24. He was never baptized. He never renounced his sins. The important thing is what he *believed* about the Christ. If you and I do not believe that faith in Christ alone is sufficient for salvation, we are not yet saved. John 8:24 should stand as a solemn warning to anyone who wants to invent other ways for man to go to Heaven.

Falsehood 2. Salvation by Inviting Christ into Your Heart

Many of today’s salvation prayers are based on tradition instead of Scripture. A common phrase misused today is “inviting Christ into your heart.” This concept is based on a misinterpretation of this well known verse.

“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with Me.” (Revelation 3:20 NIV)

Jesus Christ was not speaking to unbelievers but to the believers in the Church of Laodicea. He was rebuking them for their “luke-warm” spiritual lifestyle, admonishing them to become “hot” or eager to study and obey the Word of God.

The heart is no place to invite a king. Look what the Bible has to say about the heart of man:

The human heart is the most deceitful of all things and is desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9a NLT).

Remember the Bible clearly and simply states,

“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.” (Acts 16:31a)

That is very clear, isn’t it? Do you believe what the Apostle Paul said?

One might say, “What is the difference between inviting Christ into my heart and believing in the Lord Jesus?” The difference is, one concept is based on tradition and the other is based on Scripture. There can be serious consequences for blindly following accepted tradition while neglecting to carefully examine God’s Word about the issue. “Inviting Christ into one’s heart” erroneously implies that man can do something to obtain salvation. Instead, *it is Jesus who invites us*. Consider how Jesus Christ Himself presented the Gospel.

“I am the bread of life. He [anyone] who *comes to Me* will not hunger [spiritual hunger], and he who *believes* in Me will never thirst [spiritual thirst]” (John 6:35).

“All that the Father gives Me will *come to Me*, and the ones that come to Me I will by no means cast out” (John 6:37).

“*Come to Me* [every unbeliever] all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28 NIV).

The Prophet Isaiah said,

“*Come*, all you who are thirsty... come...without money, without cost [salvation by grace]” (Isaiah 55:1 NIV).

Another INVITATION to us:

“If anyone is thirsty, let him *come to Me* and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Streams of living water will flow from within him’” (John 7:37b-38).

All of these verses clearly demonstrate that we are the helpless ones and that we must GO TO HIM for salvation. The King of kings and the Lord of lords has issued an invitation to us. Jesus Christ also said,

“I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved” (John 10:9a).

We must GO to Jesus Christ. No verse in the Bible tells us to invite Christ into our hearts or anywhere else. God is precise and there is only one way of salvation.

The story of Naaman in the Old Testament shows the precision of God. Naaman had leprosy and God gave specific instructions for him to wash in the Jordan River seven times in order to be healed (2 Kings 5:10). The instructions seemed ludicrous. God knew this but He wanted Naaman to obey Him and trust Him. Likewise, God requires that we simply obey Him in His plan of salvation. It is Satan who encourages disobedience and blinds us.

The god of this world [Satan] has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God” (2 Corinthians 4:4).

This verse should be a warning to every human being who seeks to have a relationship with God. Satan does not sleep, nor does he take a break. He works around the clock to keep unbelievers away from the Truth. He knows the Truth of the simple Gospel message of the Lord Jesus Christ is “faith alone in Christ alone.” He works hard to distort the Truth and uses ministers who do not know the Word of God to carry out his plan.

It is alarming that many clergy who call themselves God’s ministers are actually unbelievers. How can such a claim be made? The answer is very simple. No one can give what he does not have. Those who preach a false gospel reveal they do not know the true Gospel. If pastors do not know how to be saved, one can conclude they are probably not yet saved themselves.

Falsehood 3. Salvation by Keeping the Law

Nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus...and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified (Galatians 2:16).

The Apostle Paul further declared,

Because by the works of the Law will no flesh be justified in His sight...” (Romans 3:20a).

These two verses clearly demonstrate that no human being will ever go to Heaven through the works of the Law. The sad thing is

that many who claim to be serving God are still preaching this false gospel. These false teachers should study these two verses very closely. This is a matter of eternal destination — either the Lake of Fire or God’s Kingdom.

A believer may ask, “How then did the Old Testament believers receive salvation when Jesus Christ had not yet died on the Cross?” In an attempt to answer any question, especially in the Word of God, one should always start with what is known. What do we know so far? We know that:

...by the works of the Law no flesh [human being] will be justified (Galatians 2:16b).

This means that since the creation of mankind, the Law never played a role in justifying man or acquitting him of the penalties of his sin. Salvation has always been obtained through faith in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. The salvation of Abraham (known as Abram before his salvation) is a perfect example.

Then he [Abram] believed in the Lord; and He [God] reckoned [credited] it to him as righteousness (Genesis 15:6).

One might ask, “How can the Bible say that Abraham believed in the Lord Jesus Christ when He was not alive during Abraham’s lifetime?” Let the Lord answer this question.

“I tell you the Truth,” Jesus answered, “Before Abraham was born, I am [I existed]!” (John 8:58 NIV).

Jesus Christ has always existed. There has never been a time when He did not exist.

In the beginning [the eternal past] was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...And the Word became flesh [the humanity of Christ] and dwelt among us... (John 1:1, 14a).

Throughout history Jesus Christ has manifested Himself in different ways to many people and yet He has remained the same Person. He has always been and always will be the second member of the Trinity.

“Salvation is found in no one else [only in the Lord Jesus Christ], for there is no other name [or any means] under Heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12 NIV).

The Cross of Christ is the central event of human history. All those born before the Cross looked forward to the coming of the Messiah (and His saving work on the Cross) and believed in the One who would be judged for their sins. Every person born after the event of the Cross looks back in history to the finished work of Christ on the Cross. What all believers have in common is Christ’s work on the Cross; therefore, on the basis of the Word of God, we can conclude that no person has ever been or ever will be saved by observing the Law.

Falsehood 4. Lordship Salvation

It is arrogant for man to add to the Gospel. It is arrogance because man is saying he can play a part in his own salvation, that he is not helpless. He believes there is something he can and must do to be saved. This is what the false teachers of the “Lordship Salvation” doctrine are preaching. They teach that in order to be saved, one must not only believe in Christ but also agree to submit to His lordship in their life. To better understand the foolishness of this teaching, consider the following analogy. An overzealous father-to-be tells his unborn child that he cannot be born until he first promises to obey his parents. Is this realistic? Of course not. The child cannot even comprehend this prerequisite. He is not yet born. As he grows up he will learn the meaning of obedience and will then make his choices.

It can be concluded that the doctrine of “Lordship Salvation” is not an accurate representation of the Gospel. The willingness to submit to Christ is not a requirement by God for spiritual birth. However, it is a requirement for spiritual growth and reward, both in this present life and in eternity (1 Corinthians 3:11-15). One’s submission to the authority or the lordship of Christ is a result of his spiritual birth and growth, not a prerequisite for it.

Falsehood 5. Salvation through Tradition

Failure to listen to God’s specific instructions and to respond to

them **PRECISELY** will cost many people dearly — separation from God for all eternity. For example, thousands of Jewish people will not go to Heaven simply because, instead of looking to Scripture for the way of salvation, they are looking to tradition to define the way of eternal life. If this sounds extreme, listen to the Apostle Paul’s words.

What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is *by faith*; but Israel, who pursued a Law of righteousness, has not attained it [salvation]. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were *by works*... (Romans 9:30-32a NIV).

The point is God rejected many Jews, who are His “own people” as His Word calls them, simply because they followed tradition instead of obeying Scripture. Therefore, there is no doubt that He will reject any Gentile who does the same. This gospel of tradition is not a substitute for the true Gospel message.

What was true for the Jews and Gentiles of the Old Testament applies to everyone today. The worlds many religions are the same. They all follow a tradition where man attempts to gain God’s approval and favor. Anyone who does not follow God’s Word, and obey His command to come to God through faith in Christ alone, will be rejected just as the Jews were rejected for following tradition.

What is tradition? The *Webster New World Dictionary* defines it this way: “The handing down of customs, beliefs, stories, etc., from generation to generation by word of mouth rather than in written records.” This is exactly what is happening in today’s Christendom. People are handing down what I call the “gospel of tradition.” Have you heard the old adage, “Old habits die hard?” This is true of tradition and likewise the “gospel of tradition.” The falsehoods of salvation as discussed in this chapter fall under the category of the “gospel of tradition.” When the Bible asked the question: “...what must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30), it alone gave the sufficient answer.

... “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved...”
(Acts 16:31a).

All other instructions for salvation given throughout Scripture MUST coincide with Acts 16:31 because God's Word cannot contradict itself. The key word in Acts 16:31 is "BELIEVE." This means that salvation is by "faith alone in Christ alone." This excludes any other means.

Remember that these are just 5 of many distortions. The Bible is our standard and we should hold each message up to the light of the Word to see if it corresponds to what the Bible says. We are warned to be discerning.

Be of sober spirit, be on the alert your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8).

True Salvation — God’s Way

For by grace you have been saved [Greek: saved in the past, remain saved now and forever] through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Two important words we need to examine in these verses are: “grace” and “faith.” Grace is the only link between a Holy God and us sinners. And God intends for salvation to come to the human race through this grace alone. When a person says he has been saved, his salvation must be traced back to grace, as we have seen. If not, then the individual’s salvation is in question.

What is grace? Grace is a very broad subject (see chapter five). It cannot be defined in one sentence. Many Bible scholars and theologians have attempted to define grace. Some of these definitions have shed light on the knowledge of the grace of God and some have created confusion. Simply, grace is everything that God does for all His creation — past, present, and future.

Grace in Salvation

Charis is the Greek word for grace. The *Lexical aides* (Dictionary) to the New Testament⁶ defines it as, “A favor done WITHOUT expectation of return; ABSOLUTE FREENESS of the loving kindness of God to men finding its only motive in the bounty and free-heartedness of the Giver; unearned and unmerited favor.”

In light of this definition, we conclude the grace of God cannot and will not depend on the following:

- Who and what man is
- What man does — good or bad
- Man’s willingness to serve or worship God

⁶*Lexical Aids (dictionary) to the Old Testament NASB Greek Key Bible*

This definition sheds some light on the unfathomable, immeasurable, matchless, unparalleled grace of God the Father in providing salvation to us, **TOTALLY** undeserving man.

In chapters two, three and four, I demonstrated that every member of the Trinity plays a vital role in making salvation available to us all. God the Father is the sole Master planner. God the Son became the One who carried out this plan on the Cross. And God the Holy Spirit is the One who continues to reveal this great plan to you and me. In this great work of the Trinity, we see that we are completely and totally left out. We each need to understand we are sinful and helpless; we cannot contribute to the work. When we understand this concept, we will never try to impress God with our works.

Consider the following illustration of the concept of grace. A benefactor decides to build a home for orphans. First he has the necessary plans drawn up for a suitable home. Then he purchases the many needed materials and tools. He begins the process of slowly building the home, brick by brick. Finally after one year, it is finished. When he shows the orphans the completed home, they are overwhelmed by this gift. All they are required to do is move into the house and live and grow. What part did these helpless children play in the preparation? *None!* This is exactly how God perfectly designed salvation. There is nothing we can do to help God in salvation. Not one of us can honestly say that he has earned salvation from God.

Faith in Salvation

Faith and grace work together in salvation. What is faith? The Bible has the answer.

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1).

For believers, faith means holding tenaciously to the fact that regardless of what happens, our belief in the Lord Jesus Christ will result in our salvation. We each have a measure of faith within us. The mental capacity to rely on or accept something to be true is a gift of grace given to all. The free will to use faith, to decide, to chose, is yet

another gift of grace to everyone. God does not manipulate our will so that we will apply that faith to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. If He did, then free will would not exist. If that were the case, then all of us would believe in Christ, but not by our own choice.

The reality is there will always be both believers and unbelievers. This is precisely because God gave mankind free will. God never manipulates any person's faith to believe in Christ. He does not chose one person while passing over another. If that were true God would be accused of partiality and injustice. But the Bible declares God to be just.

“...the Lord will have no part in unrighteousness or partiality...” (2 Chronicles 19:7b).

Therefore, to put one's faith in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ is a matter of individual choice. Passages in Scripture demonstrate that the Lord Jesus Christ offers salvation to everyone. Some will choose to put their faith in Christ and some will not. Which are you?

One verse which demonstrates that salvation is offered to all says,

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His one and only Son, that *whoever* believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16 NIV).

Another example is recorded by the Apostle Matthew in his Gospel:

“Come to me *all* who are weary...” (Matthew 11:28a).

Who among the members of the human race is not weary (a sinner)? The call to come is made to all. Who will answer the call is still being determined. Will you?

The prophet Isaiah also demonstrated this concept.

“Ho! *Every one* who thirsts [every unbeliever], come to the waters...” (Isaiah 55:1a).

How to Obtain Salvation — God’s Way

The question of how to be saved⁷ is the simplest concept in the Bible to explain. It is as simple as a man drinking a glass of cold water to quench his thirst. First a person hears the Gospel message. Then with the help of the Holy Spirit, he begins to understand Christ’s death on the Cross and how his personal faith in Christ Jesus is sufficient for his eternal salvation. He does not need to add anything else. At the very moment the helpless sinner believes this message, God saves him and gives him His righteousness.

This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe (Romans 3:22a NIV).

Does this make sense to you?

With this gift of God’s righteousness comes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and adoption, which we will discuss in the following chapters.

⁷Moses C. Onwubiko, *Riding The Death Train (a Gospel tract)*

Conversion and Regeneration

In the next four chapters we will study each of the five biblical terms used in defining salvation: conversion, regeneration, justification, sanctification, and adoption. Understanding the meaning of these terms will help believers build a solid foundation for their Christian faith. It will also serve as a launching pad for our further growth in grace and Truth.

Conversion: Turning to God through Faith in Christ

Let us first define conversion by examining the original languages. *Shuv*, is the Hebrew word for “conversion.” The Greek equivalent, *epistrophe*, occurs only once in the Bible in Acts 15:3. However, there are other synonyms for these Greek and Hebrew words in the Bible. They are translated as follows: “Turn, return, turn back, or turn again?” Therefore, one can conclude that conversion is synonymous with a “turning.” This action of turning may be either to God or from God. In the Biblical sense, it is more often used to mean a turning to God. Let us illustrate this concept with Ezekiel’s message to the Israelites.

“Say to them, ‘As I live!’ declares the Lord God, ‘I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back; turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?’ ” (Ezekiel 33:11).

Do you see the command in this verse? “Turn back; turn back from your evil ways!” According to the context God expects the Israelites to do the turning. God’s expectation underscores the free will of mankind. Jesus Christ had a similar message.

“...unless you turn [unless you are converted]...you cannot enter the Kingdom of God” (Matthew 18:3 NLT).

Free Will — Man’s only Involvement in Salvation

What I want to illustrate here is that man’s will is always involved in his spiritual conversion. One may ask, “How can man be involved in his conversion if he is saved by God’s grace?” That is a good question. We will see that God does all the work, but man still has free will and the responsibility to choose.

1. The understanding needed to make a decision to turn or not to turn to God is a gift from God. In Chapter Three we stated that an unbeliever is spiritually dead and thus unable to understand anything of spiritual value. When the Gospel message is presented to the unbeliever, God the Holy Spirit helps him to understand the saving work of Jesus Christ on the Cross. Without the help of the Holy Spirit, the individual would not even know that he needed to make a decision.

2. Man’s free will is also a gift of grace from God. Free will is freedom to choose. *But, it is also important to remember that it is man’s responsibility to choose. He decides to turn toward or away from God.*

- **The first grace initiation** occurred on the Cross where His Son Jesus Christ was crucified as a substitute for our sins. Luke wrote,

“For you first, God raised up His Servant [Jesus Christ], and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you [that have believed] from your wicked ways” (Acts 3:26).

- **The second grace initiation** by God is the dynamic ministry of God the Holy Spirit in revealing the Gospel. The Apostle Paul put it this way,

“But a natural man [an unbeliever] does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised [discerned]” (1 Corinthians 2:14).

3. No one can become a believer apart from the work of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In eternity past God the Father designed a plan to bring peace between Himself and sinful mankind without compromising His perfect integrity. Jesus Christ became the focal point of this unique plan of God the Father by going to the Cross to make this reconciliation possible.

He [God the Father] made Him [Jesus Christ] who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21).

God the Holy Spirit works to reveal the plan of salvation to unbelievers. Jesus Christ said,

“And He [the Holy Spirit], when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment” (John 16:8).

The Apostle Paul wrote,

Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ...namely that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses [sins] against them... (2 Corinthians 5:18a,19a).

In this verse it is clear that God the Father designed the plan of salvation while God the Son carries out His plan and God the Holy Spirit reveals the plan. When man chooses to respond to God’s plan, resulting in his conversion, that choice is merely a response to God’s grace — to accept His grace or reject it.

False Definitions of Conversion

Satan has always fought to distort true conversion. Let us examine some of his methods.

“Some men [false teachers] came down from Judea and began teaching, ‘Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved’” (Acts 15:1).

Paul and other believers were on their way to Jerusalem to discuss the current false teaching regarding salvation. Along their way to this important meeting, they proclaimed the conversion of the Gentiles, affirming their salvation. Luke wrote:

Therefore, being sent on their way by the church, they [Paul and others – Acts 15:2] were passing through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the *conversion* of the Gentiles, and were bringing joy to all the brethren (Acts 15:3).

Does the false teaching of Paul’s time, imposing nonbiblical standards (adding works) to salvation, sound familiar in regards to today’s Christendom?

Consider the following similar versions: “Unless you join our church, you cannot be saved. Unless you are baptized, you cannot be saved. Unless you produce fruit (good works), you cannot be saved. Unless you make Christ the Lord of your life, you cannot be saved.” The list of these distortions goes on and on. Satan is the master deceiver, distorter and liar as we have already seen. Do not fall for his deception.

Regeneration: New Birth in Christ

Regeneration is another important aspect of the doctrine of salvation. *Palingenesia* is the Greek word for regeneration. The basic translation is “to be restored” or “to be born again.”

And Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Matthew 19:28).

The Apostle Paul wrote,

He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, BUT according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5).

Following are the synonyms for “regeneration” in this verse:

- “born again” (John 3:3, 5, 7)
- “born of God” (John 1:13; I John 3:9)
- “quickened” (Ephesians 2:1, 5)
- “renewed” (Titus 3:5)

We should keep in mind that as with salvation, regeneration is the work of the Trinity alone. Man does not and cannot play any part in this process. The Apostle Paul said,

When you were dead in your transgressions [sins] and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He [God the Father] made you alive together with Him [Jesus Christ], having forgiven us *all* our transgressions [at the moment of regeneration], having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the Cross (Colossians 2:13-14).

In the eternal past God drafted a plan for salvation. God the Son then fulfilled this plan and God the Holy Spirit reveals this plan to us. Regeneration is just one part of the salvation plan. It is the work of God and God alone. Without the efficacious sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross and His resurrection and ascension, regeneration would be impossible.

Sequence of Regeneration

1. The Holy Spirit assists the unbeliever at Gospel Hearing.

When the Gospel is presented to a spiritually dead person, the Holy Spirit comes to help him understand the work of our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross (John 16:8).

2. The new believer receives God’s righteousness. When this spiritually dead individual believes in Christ alone for salvation, God imputes His righteousness to this new believer.

Even the righteousness of God through *faith* [plus nothing] in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction (Romans 3:22).

The imputation of God's righteousness in grace to the believer in Christ Jesus becomes the reference point for every other thing that God does for us both now, and throughout eternity.

This gift of God's righteousness to the believer makes the following possible.

a) Believer's transgressions are forgiven (Colossians 2:13).

"I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins" (Isaiah 43:25).

That is a promise from God Himself. Furthermore, the Psalmist adamantly declared,

As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us (Psalm 103:12).

And how far is the east from the west? Infinity! That's how far sins are removed from the believer at salvation. King David joyfully put it this way,

How blessed [how happy] is he [any believer in the Lord] whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered! (Psalm 32:1).

b) Believer's certificate of debt is canceled (Colossians 2:14).

The person who believes in Christ Jesus, in essence is saying, "I have now received my canceled certificate of debt from God. This certificate will now be a key frame of reference for my faith." This certificate reminds him that he is free forever from his debt of sin to God. There is nothing that Satan or anyone else can do about it. This certificate stands for all eternity in the Supreme Court of Heaven.

"...everything that God does will remain forever [including the cancellation of the debt of sin for the believer]..." (Ecclesiastes 3:14a).

You may wish to pause and consider. What does the believer do that results in the cancellation of his debt? Nothing — except simply believe in Christ Jesus.

c) Believer’s new life occurs instantly (John 5:21).

The believer is born again.

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God...
(1 John 5:1a).

...of His will he *brought us forth* by the Word of Truth [the Gospel] (James 1:18).

In the human realm conception cannot take place without the union of two reproductive cells: gametes, one male and one female. Likewise, spiritual birth cannot occur apart from the union of two wills — man’s will to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and God’s will to impute His own righteousness to man.

d) Believer’s human spirit is restored.

“...and that which is born of the [Holy] Spirit is [human] spirit” (John 3:6b).

(See Chapter Three).

e) Believer receives eternal life.

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that *you have eternal life* (1 John 5:13).

The new believer now has the life of God the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. And this life is eternal life. No believer has ever earned or deserved to have the life of God in him. This is grace in action.

f) Believer freed from judgment.

He will no longer have to appear before the “Great White Throne” of the Lord Jesus Christ for judgment (Revelation 20:11-15). This is awesome!

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and *does not* [will not and cannot] come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life” (John 5:24).

The Apostle Paul echoed this promise when he wrote,

Therefore there is now no condemnation for those [all believers] who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1).

3. The believer becomes a new creature.

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come (2 Corinthians 5:17).

It is necessary to examine this verse briefly because much false teaching has come from its misinterpretation. What does it mean to be a new creature? Primarily, it has to do with the spiritual position of an individual before and after his salvation. His position before his regeneration is in Adam.

For as in Adam all [human race] die [spiritual death]... (1 Corinthians 15:22a).

God condemned man because of his position in Adam. The Apostle Paul put it this way,

Therefore, just as through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death [spiritual death] through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned (Romans 5:12).

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

In this state of spiritual death, the Bible describes the individual as one who is:

...separate from Christ...having no hope and without God in the world (Ephesians 2:12).

After salvation, the believer is in what I refer to as “the ultimate position.” The theological term for this concept is “positional sanctification.” When a person believes in Christ he has a new “position” in Christ. The Apostle Paul wrote the following in reference to this new position.

...so also in Christ all will be made alive (1 Corinthians 15:22b).

How does this happen? God cuts off all ties between the believer and Adam’s original sin forever. Paul wrote,

...the old things [the believer’s former position in Adam] passed away (2 Corinthians 5:17b).

God the Father declares the person “a new creature.” This change in the believer comes about by God alone — man has no part in it. At this point, because of his new position in Christ, the believer becomes a partaker of God’s divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). He shares in everything that Christ has because of his new position in Him (Romans 8:17).

4. The regenerated believer has the following names:

- A born again believer (John 3:7).
- A son of God (Galatians 3:26).

It is important to stress that once a person is adopted into God’s family, he will always be in God’s family. This is also true in the human realm. Once a person becomes a son, he will always be a son.

“A slave [an unbeliever] has no permanent place in the family, but a son [a believer] belongs to it forever” (John 8:35 NIV).

His failures and successes have no bearing on his position as a son in his family. This is why God never changes the status of believers when they fail. Rather, He disciplines them.

For those whom the Lord loves [including carnal believers] He disciplines, and He scourges every son [moral or immoral] whom He receives (Hebrews 12:6).

Even when we fail as believers, God still loves us. Why? Because as His sons and daughters we have His righteousness! That is the only thing that attracts His love to us. A believer who understands this concept realizes that it is futile to try to impress God with his works. Rather, he should embrace all that God is able to do for him because of His Son Jesus Christ.

The believer needs to remind himself constantly that ALL the accomplishments in regard to his regeneration are the work of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. In this work of the Trinity, man's efforts are totally excluded. God the Father designed the plan. God the Son fulfilled the unique plan of God the Father on the Cross. And God the Holy Spirit reveals it to us – the depraved ones. Oh, how unparalleled, how immeasurable, how beyond our understanding, and how marvelous is the grace of our great God. His grace has no boundaries!

What do you think of this gift?

Justification

There are primarily two kinds of justification found in the Bible: the justification of unbelievers by faith in Christ (for eternal life) and the justification of believers by divine works (for eternal reward).

- The first justification (salvation) is **ABSOLUTELY** necessary for a personal and eternal relationship with God. It requires one act of personal faith in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1).
- The second justification is necessary for believers to be rewarded. This requires daily intake and application of Bible Truth, obedience to God, and His Word. By means of this grace provision, all believers have the potential to glorify God to the maximum.

Only a few will reach this objective in their spiritual lives, as did Job, Abraham, Paul, and others (The Book of Job; James 2:21-23; 2 Timothy 4:6-8). I believe that only a handful of theologians and Bible teachers, and thus their students and members of their congregations, really know this doctrinal concept.

Let us look at these two different types of justification. The Apostle Paul stated,

For we maintain that a man is *justified by faith* apart from works... (Romans 3:28).

James questions,

Was not Abraham our Father *justified by [divine] works*, when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? (James 2:21).

In order to avoid confusion here, it is imperative to remember that Paul and James are referring to the different types of justification. In his teachings, the Apostle Paul concentrated on *justification for eternal life*, while James dealt with *justification for eternal reward*.

Abraham is a good example of a believer who not only was justified for eternal life, but who also went on to be justified for eternal reward. Abraham was already a believer when God commanded him to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice. This was a supreme test of Abraham's obedience. He was called on to sacrifice his precious son who he had waited for all these years.

Abraham became a believer when he was about 75 years of age (Genesis 12:1-4; 15:6; Romans 4:12). His son Isaac was born when Abraham was 100 years old, fulfilling God's promise. When Isaac was a young man Abraham took him up to the mountain to offer him as a burnt offering just as God commanded. However upon seeing Abraham's faithfulness, God stopped the sacrifice and provided a ram as a substitute for Isaac. It is important to note that Abraham did not become a believer by attempting to offer Isaac as a sacrifice to God. Rather, by obedience Abraham also became "a friend of God" (James 2:23). This title is reserved for those believers whose lives glorify God to the maximum. Another way of saying this, is by consistently learning and applying Bible Truth, Abraham passed God's ultimate test of obedience thereby glorifying Him. Once again, remember that this is an example of justification by works and is cited to clarify the difference between the two doctrines of justification (one for salvation and one for reward).

Our discussion will now focus on the justification by faith that leads to salvation. The Hebrew word for justification is *tsedheq* and its Greek equivalent is *dikaioo*. It means to "make valid," "to absolve," "to vindicate," or "to set right." In the New Testament the word "justification" occurs two times while its verb form "to justify" occurs more frequently. According to the *Pictorial Bible Dictionary*,⁸ justification is defined as: "...that judicial act of God, by which, on the basis of the meritorious work of Christ, imputed to the sinner and received by him through faith, He [God] declares the sinner absolved [set right] from his sin, and RELEASED FROM ITS PENALTY, AND RESTORED AS RIGHTEOUS." This is a profound definition. You may want to read it again.

⁸ *Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary*; Zondervan Publishing House, 1964

The Ark of the Covenant and Justification in the Old Testament

To better understand this concept of justification, we will study the Ark of the Covenant of Old Testament times. The ark was a sacred container holding elements central to their faith. The Jews carried it from place to place in the time of Moses and eventually it came to rest in the temple built by Solomon. We will study how the ark representing the future work of Jesus Christ on the Cross was therefore the means of justification for the Israelites.

The Ark of the Covenant – its meaning and symbolism

God said to Moses,

“They shall construct an ark of acacia wood two and a half cubits long, and one and a half cubits wide, and one and a half cubits high” (Exodus 25:10).

“You [Moses] shall put into the ark the testimony which I shall give you. You shall make *a mercy seat* of pure gold, two and a half cubits long and one and a half cubits wide” (Exodus 25:16-17).

”And you shall make two cherubim of gold...The cherubim shall have their wings spread upward, covering the *mercy seat* with their wings and facing one another; the faces of the cherubim are to be turned toward the mercy seat” (Exodus 25:18a, 20).

The *mercy seat* was the lid on top of the ark and the cherubim on either end of the mercy seat represented the righteousness and justice of God. The ark contained the broken stone tablets of the 10 commandments, a golden jar of manna,⁹ and Aaron’s rod that budded (Hebrews 9:4). These elements represented the hideous sins of the Israelites in the wilderness. Let us briefly look at how the Ark of the Covenant was used for the atonement of sins to better understand the significance of how God dealt with the sins of the Israelites.

⁹Moses C. Onwubiko, *Riding The Death Train*

On the Day of Atonement the high priest killed an animal, one that was physically perfect, free of all imperfection, and sprinkled its blood on the *mercy seat* as commanded by God (Leviticus 16:15). God looked down in His righteousness and justice to judge the sins of the Israelites that were represented inside the ark. However, their sins were no longer visible. Why? What covered them so they were no longer visible? It was the blood of the sacrificial animal that was sprinkled on the *mercy seat* that covered the sins. God's righteousness and justice (represented by the cherubim) were satisfied by the blood sprinkled on the mercy seat. Are you beginning to understand why it was called "the mercy seat"? The Israelites did not play any part in the sacrifice for their sins except to receive the atonement provided for them by God.

It is important to note that God used the Ark of the Covenant as a teaching aid for the Israelites. The purpose of this teaching aid was to help the Israelites understand how God would provide for the atonement of their sins by sending Jesus Christ to die on the Cross. The blood of the *perfect* animal was actually only a temporary sacrifice for the sins of the Israelites who were awaiting the future coming of Jesus Christ, the true and perfect sacrifice. Just like Abraham, the Israelites believed God and they were saved. They believed that this process of atonement through the Ark of the Covenant was not only adequate to cleanse their sins in the present but that it was also a type of Christ. It demonstrated how Jesus would one day serve as the true sacrifice for all of mankind, including themselves. Including you and me!

The Truth that you need to plant deep within your soul is that Jesus Christ is the true *mercy seat*. The Apostle Paul wrote,

Being justified as a *gift* by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation [*mercy seat*] in His blood [His spiritual death on the Cross] through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed (Romans 3:24-25).

Let us look at these two verses in detail.

1. The Ark of the Covenant represents Jesus Christ.

- The acacia wood used in the construction of the ark represented His humanity.
- The gold overlay represented His deity.

2. The cover of the Ark, known as the *mercy seat*, represents the work of Jesus Christ on the Cross for mankind.

3. God the Father imputed all the sins of humanity from the original sin of Adam through the last sin of all time, to Jesus Christ on the Cross.

4. The blood of the sacrificial animal in the Old Testament represented Christ's substitutionary spiritual death on the Cross when He was crushed by the judgment of God the Father.

5. After God the Father's judgment of Jesus Christ both His righteousness and His justice were satisfied.

6. Just as the meeting point of the Israelites and God was at the *mercy seat*, so the meeting point between sinful man and the justice and righteousness of God is the Cross.

7. When anyone believes in Christ alone, God in His grace imputes His righteousness to that person.

8. When God looks down He does not view the sins of this new believer in Jesus Christ. Rather He sees that the sins have been covered by the *mercy seat* which is Jesus Christ.

9. On the basis of the meritorious work of Jesus Christ on the Cross, God forgives the past sins of anyone who believes in Christ. He then imputes His righteousness to that person and justifies him.

You may want to ask yourself the following question. Considering what we have studied so far, what is the basis for the forgiveness of sins in the Old and the New Testament? In the Old Testament the basis for the forgiveness of the sins of the Israelites was the blood of the innocent animal that was sprinkled on the *mercy seat*. This sacrifice demonstrated their obedience to God as well as their faith that

the Messiah, Jesus Christ, would one day become the true sacrifice. In the New Testament, the basis for the forgiveness of man's sins is the efficacious sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, the true Lamb and the true *mercy seat*.

Justification through Jesus Christ

Sequence of Justification

1. God the Father, in His infinite mercy and wisdom, designed a plan of salvation in eternity past to include sinful mankind (Ephesians 1:4).

2. God the Son, Jesus Christ, went to the Cross to fulfill this unique plan of God the Father (1 Peter 2:24).

3. God the Holy Spirit reveals to sinners this amazing sacrifice of God the Son (John 16:8).

4. The sinner, by means of the Gospel message and the enabling power of the Holy Spirit, understands the work of Christ on the Cross (Ephesians 1:13).

5. The sinner believes in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:14-15).

6. God imputes His righteousness to this sinner who has believed (Romans 3:22).

7. God looks down and sees this helpless sinner who now possess God's very own righteousness.

8. God immediately acquits the sinner from his sin and releases the sinner once and for all from the sin's eternal consequences.

This is awesome! It is obvious that the only factor in this process is the grace of God. Man played no part in the process. Not then, not now, not ever!

Basis for Justification

1. The Cross, where the perfect Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, was crucified and where God the Father judged the sins of all mankind, is the meeting point between holy God and sinful man. All who ignore or reject the Cross will remain condemned forever.

2. The finished work of Christ on the Cross is the **ONLY** basis for the justification of anyone who believes in Christ Jesus.

3. When a person believes in Christ God imputes His righteousness to that person and he will no longer face eternal condemnation.

Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are [or have believed] in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1).

“...he... does not come into judgment...” (John 5:24).

4. The justification of one who believes in Christ is based on grace rather than on merit (Romans 3:28; Ephesians 2:8-9). No one has ever worked, earned, or deserved to be justified. Apart from the grace of God, there is no justification.

Principles of Justification

1. God the Father imputed every sin ever committed to Christ Jesus on the Cross and judged Him for every one. The Apostle Peter declared,

And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the Cross (1 Peter 2:24a).

The Apostle Paul put it this way,

He [God] made Him [Jesus Christ] who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21).

2. God was totally satisfied by the finished work of Jesus Christ on the Cross (Romans 3:25).

3. Faith in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ results in the imputation of the righteousness of God (Romans 3:22-24).

4. God also grants freedom from the eternal consequences of sin to every believer. Paul tells us,

Just as David also speaks of the blessing upon the man to whom God credits [imputes] righteousness apart from works [good or bad]: “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, and whose sins have been covered. Blessed is the man [any believer] whose sin the Lord will not [and cannot] take into account” (Romans 4:6-8).

Therefore, based on the Word of God a believer should never entertain any anxiety about his eternal security. Have you personally anchored your faith in Christ alone? If so, your sins have been covered once and for all and you are eternally saved!

5. God forgives the believer’s sins based on his new position in Christ (Romans 4:5; 6:7).

6. A believer receives favor from God, not because of who the believer is and what he does, ***but because of who God is and what He does!***

The Apostle Paul emphatically declared,

But by His doing [God’s] you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us...righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, so that, just as it is written, “Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 1:30-31).

In fact, if a believer’s boasting is not insulated by the grace of God, he is swimming in the pool of arrogance. A believer’s maturity and accomplishments are the result of who God is and what He has done in his life. You might want to ask yourself the following important question: If my salvation is totally dependent on God, then why do I work as if my salvation depended on me? The Bible clearly states that the more a person works for his salvation, the farther he is from salvation. The Apostle Paul further declared,

But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly [the unbeliever], his faith [alone] is credited [imputed] as righteousness (Romans 4:5).

7. God declares the believer to be personally righteous in Christ, and He accepts him based on this righteousness.

8. The believer becomes a son of God. The Apostle Paul says,

For you are all sons of God through faith [plus nothing] in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ (Galatians 3:26-27).

Imagine yourself as a soldier. On your next assignment you will have to live in the desert for one year. In the desert you are allotted one uniform and one set of undergarments for the duration of your stay. The problem is that there is no water to wash them because of water rationing. You can imagine how worn, smelly, and dirty your uniform and undergarments are after a year without being washed. Then a stranger visits the camp bringing you a new, spotless uniform. He did not bring any fresh undergarments however. You put the new uniform on anyway. A friend sees you and says, “You’re sure looking good. What a sharp uniform you are wearing!” The truth of the matter is that he does not see your year-old undergarments. He compliments you based on what he sees, the new uniform.

Similarly, this is what happens in the justification of unbelievers. The dirty uniform and undergarments represent our human righteousness and our efforts to please God. The Bible says man’s righteous deeds are like a menstrual cloth (Isaiah 64:6). That means man cannot be good enough for God to justify him. However, when an individual believes in Christ, God in His matchless grace imputes His perfect righteousness to the believer. Then, seeing His own righteousness in the new believer, God’s only choice is to justify and accept the new believer as His son forever. What did this new believer do to receive justification from God? As far as the Bible is concerned, he did ABSOLUTELY NOTHING. All he could do was to believe in His Son, Jesus Christ. The clean new uniform represents the righteousness of Christ. After covering your under-

garments with the new uniform, imagine yourself standing before God in His holiness.

The Apostle Paul tells us:

...[you] have clothed yourself with Christ” (Galatians 3:27b).

...Who became to [you] righteousness and sanctification, and redemption (1 Corinthians 1:30b).

God accepts you on the basis of His Son’s righteousness which you now wear. Where then is your boasting?

Sanctification

So far, we have examined the doctrines of conversion, regeneration, and justification. We have seen that man is responsible to accept what God has given him in grace, namely the free gift of eternal life, which is received through personal faith in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Everything that occurs at the moment of salvation is the work of the Trinity. We have examined how regeneration takes place at the moment an individual trusts in Christ. We have also seen how God the Father was free to justify the believer once and for all because of the imputation of His righteousness to him.

The word “sanctification,” has suffered much at the hands of false teachers who know little to nothing about the Word of God. In addition many believers practice what I call “false experiential sanctification.” These believers walk slowly inside a church, piously uttering phrases like, “Praise the Lord, Brother,” “Hallelujah, Sister,” “God bless you Pastor,” or “If the Lord wills, we will all be in heaven one day.” These believers think nothing of interrupting the teaching of the Word with a “Hallelujah!” or a “Pastor, preach on!” They may intend to affirm agreement, but in reality they draw attention to themselves and distract others. This practice is not holy as they may assume, but rude. Even worse it displays an arrogant and careless attitude; it interrupts the teaching ministry of God the Holy Spirit. As far as the Word of God is concerned, they are far from understanding the meaning of sanctification.

Keep in mind that the sanctification of a believer is the work of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit — the entire Trinity.

What is sanctification?

The word “sanctification” is the Greek noun *hagiasmos* which means “a separation” or “setting apart.” It originates from the Greek word *hagios*, which means “holy” or “saint”. Sanctification may be defined as a process whereby God, through the redemptive work of

Jesus Christ, purchases all who believe in Christ Jesus, and sets them apart in both time and eternity. The Apostle Peter put it this way,

Knowing that you were not redeemed [or purchased] with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ [His substitutionary spiritual death] (1 Peter 1:18-19).

Think about the following analogy. A successful rancher is building a new ranch. While it is under construction, the rancher buys a large number of cattle. He sets them apart from the rest of his stock by branding them with a special mark. His job is to feed and care for these cattle until the new ranch is ready for them. Similarly, God in His infinite mercy has purchased those who have believed in Jesus Christ. He leaves these people, His children, temporarily in the devil's world until their home in Heaven is completed. To this end, our Lord said,

“Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will receive you to Myself, that where I am, you may be also” (John 14:1-3).

When God purchases believers from Satan's domain, He sets them apart. This is known as sanctification and is divided into three categories:

- positional sanctification
- experiential sanctification
- ultimate sanctification

We will examine each of these points.

Positional Sanctification

At the moment any person believes in Christ, God the Father, by the means of God the Holy Spirit, brings him into union with Christ. The Apostle Paul put it this way:

For by one Spirit we were all baptized [immersed] into one body... (1 Corinthians 12:13a).

Keep in mind that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is not the same as water baptism, nor does it have anything to do with speaking in tongues as some false teachers claim. In positional sanctification, the believer in Christ is totally, and forever, detached from his old position in Adam which was a state of spiritual death since birth. This condition of spiritual death is replaced by a new position in Christ wherein the new believer's human spirit is made permanently and irrevocably alive. The new believer shares in Christ's Eternal Life. The Apostle Paul declared,

For as in Adam all die [positional], so also in Christ all will be made alive [positional sanctification] (1 Corinthians 15:22).

Concerning the new position, the Apostle Paul wrote:

Therefore if any one is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things [his former position in Adam] passed away, behold [pay attention, take notice], the new things [position in Christ] have come (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Believers should always remember that their union with Jesus Christ is accomplished by God alone. The believer has no part in this. The Bible declares,

But by His [God's] doing you are in Christ Jesus [positional sanctification], who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption (1 Corinthians 1:30).

Because Jesus Christ is sanctified, when believers enter into union with Him, they share His sanctification. God the Father accepts believers as equals in holiness with His Son, Jesus Christ, not because of anything they have done, but because of the sanctification of His Son Jesus Christ. This is what grace is all about!

The believer's union with the Lord Jesus Christ is forever anchored and completely irrevocable. He has been sanctified in Christ once and for all.

For by one offering He has *perfected* for all time [forever] those who are sanctified (Hebrews 10:14).

Nothing can ever change this status. The believer's failures have no bearing on it. In fact the failures of all believers combined are not enough to alter the perfect work that was planned and accomplished by God the Father through His Son, Jesus Christ. From the moment that God the Father declares a believer sanctified, His only option is to love that believer with an unparalleled, immeasurable, and unchanging love. The Apostle Paul wrote,

For I am convinced [absolutely] that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present [including present failures] nor things to come [including the rapture], nor powers [all powers], nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing [including Satan himself] shall be able to separate [remove] us from the *love of God, which is [anchored] in Christ Jesus our Lord* (Romans 8:38-39).

Why does God the Father personally love the believer?

- He loves him because he possesses God's very own righteousness.
- He loves him because each believer is His child (Galatians 3:26).
- He loves him because he is in union with His Son whom He loves dearly.

Because of this, the believer receives the love which God the Father has for His Son, Jesus Christ. The French people have a saying: "Les amis de mes amis sont mes amis" which means "the friends of my friends are my friends." Similarly, all the friends of the Lord Jesus Christ are the friends of God the Father as well. The Father has a priceless love for His Son, Jesus Christ. All those who belong to His Son share in that same love.

You might want to ask yourself the following important question: How can a believer see this clear Truth and still deny the doctrine of eternal security of the believer in Christ?

The Principles of Positional Sanctification

1. God is perfect and His work always reflects His perfection.

I know that everything God does will remain forever; there is nothing to add to it [nothing to add to salvation] and there is nothing to take from it [there is no loss of salvation]" (Ecclesiastes 3:14a).

2. A believer's entrance into union with Christ is totally accomplished by God.

But by His doing [God's] you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us...righteousness and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30).

3. Once a believer is entered into union with Christ he remains in Christ because of the perfect integrity of God who placed him there.

Jesus Christ Himself affirmed,

And I give eternal life to them, and they will *never* perish; and no one [I mean no one] shall snatch them out of My [Jesus Christ's] hand...And no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand (John 10:28, 29b).

This is the strength of the believer's eternal security. We are held firmly by two pairs of omnipotent hands! Could we believers be more secure?

Sequence of Positional Sanctification

1. God the Father designed a plan that involved the spiritual death of His Son on the Cross.

He [God] made Him [Jesus Christ] who knew no sin to be [imputed] sin on our behalf (2 Corinthians 5:21a).

2. In God's perfect time Jesus Christ went to the Cross and bore the sins of the whole world in His body.

And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the Cross...
(1 Peter 2:24a).

3. God the Holy Spirit reveals this unique plan of God to mankind and convicts him of his sinful condition.

“And He [the Holy Spirit], when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin...” (John 16:8a).

4. The Gospel message with regard to the work of our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross is presented to the unbeliever.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16 NIV).

5. The truth of this message is made clear in the unbeliever’s mind by the power of the Holy Spirit.

6. The unbeliever now has the option to make a decision to believe **ONLY** in Christ Jesus or to reject Him.

He [Jesus] said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” He [the unbeliever] answered, “Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?” Jesus said to him, “You have both seen Him, and He is the One who is talking with you.” And he said, “Lord, I believe” (John 9:35b-38a).

Three words — “Lord, I believe” — is all it took for him to be saved. It is just that simple for you or anyone to be saved.

7. God the Father instantly imputes His divine righteousness to the new believer.

Even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction [there are no exceptions] (Romans 3:22).

8. The imputation of God’s righteousness becomes the basis for justification of this new believer.

Therefore having been justified by faith [alone], we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1).

9. Immediately the Holy Spirit brings the believer into union with Christ.

For by one Spirit we were all baptized [immersed] *into* one body [the body of Christ] (1 Corinthians 12:13a).

10. Because we have been acquitted (justified) in the courtroom of heaven, God is free to bring us into union with Christ and thereby sanctify us.

But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us...righteousness, *sanctification*, and redemption (1 Corinthians 1:30).

This brings us to the next subject, experiential sanctification.

Experiential Sanctification

Experiential sanctification is a process (in time) which qualifies believers for reward (both in time and eternity). As noted in Chapter Nine, justification of believers for reward, otherwise known as experiential sanctification, is covered in the book of James.

When a believer confesses his sins to God the Father he is purified. His soul is prepared to learn and apply the doctrines of the Bible under the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The believer must name his sins to the Father on a regular basis whenever he detects sin in his life. This practice is the only way to maintain fellowship with God.

After salvation the believer remains on earth for a purpose: to learn God's Word, to grow in grace thereby glorifying God in the devil's world. For this very reason James reminds believers about the importance of daily study and application of the Word of God. He also warns believers about the danger of taking their experiential sanctification lightly.

Therefore putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the Word implanted, which is able to save your souls [lives]. But prove yourselves doers of the Word, and not merely hearers who delude [deceive, trick, fool] themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty [one who consistently learns Bible doctrine], and abides by it [applies it], not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does (James 1:21-25).

Before we examine these verses more closely, we must establish that the book of James is written to believers only (not to unbelievers). James identified his audience as “brethren” in all five chapters (1:2; 2:1; 3:1; 4:11; and 5:9). In other parts of the Bible, the word “brethren” refers only to believers in Jesus Christ, those who are in union with Christ. The Apostle Paul used the same word in his epistles. To the Colossian church he wrote,

To the saints [*hagios* — all believers] and faithful brethren in Christ... (Colossians 1:2a).

As he closed his epistle to the church at Ephesus he concluded,

Peace be to the brethren... (Ephesians 6:23a).

Sequence of Experiential Sanctification

Now that we have established the intended audience of the book of James, we can examine how experiential sanctification works as taught in James 1:21-25.

1. The believer must be in fellowship with God before he begins to study the Bible.

Therefore putting aside all filthiness...(James 1:21a).

We must ensure that our soul is purified from all known and unknown sins. How do we do this? We need to examine our soul and acknowledge all our known sins to God. Scripture says:

If we [believers] confess [acknowledge, cite] our [known] sins, He [God] is faithful and righteous to forgive us our [known] sins and to purify us from all unrighteousness [all unknown evil deeds or wrongdoing] (1 John 1:9).

When we confess our sins directly to God the Father, God faithfully purifies our soul so that the Holy Spirit can fill our soul and help us understand the Truth of the Word of God. The Holy Spirit only translates Truth for our benefit. Therefore a sound Bible teaching pastor is important. Each of us should pray for God to lead us to a pastor who teaches the Word of God accurately, whether by means of literature, recordings, or public teaching.

2. The believer must approach the Word of God with humility.

“...In humility receive the Word implanted...” (James 1:21b).

Humility is not self-abasement. It is not the manner in which a person dresses, walks, or talks. It is how a person thinks. Does he think in terms of grace or does he think in terms of arrogance? Humility is a relaxed mental attitude. It is a state of mind in which the believer recognizes that apart from the grace of God, he is nothing. He recognizes that he cannot learn the Truth of the Word of God apart from a human expositor and the ministry of God the Holy Spirit (2 Timothy 2:15). He approaches the Word of God in reverence, constantly submitting himself to the authority of his pastor.

3. The believer receives Truth from Scripture.

The believer in fellowship begins learning the Truth. He examines every doctrinal concept carefully, like the Berean believers in the New Testament (Acts 17:10-12). These believers always re-examined the Scripture to determine if the teachings of the Apostle Paul were accurate.

When the believer hears and understands a doctrine he has a choice to accept it or to reject it. Doctrine believed is doctrine ac-

cepted. At that moment of acceptance, the Holy Spirit takes that doctrine and transfers it from the believer's mind to his soul where it is stored. This Truth has now changed from mere information to Truth in the soul ready for application.

Belief in the doctrine taught might be expressed in the soul by saying to God "I believe this teaching" or "Amen." It is important for such expressions to be made inwardly to avoid distracting others or drawing attention to oneself.

4. The believer builds up an inventory of doctrines in his soul.

When we consistently learn, understand, and believe Truth, through the working of the Holy Spirit, we amass an inventory of Bible doctrine in our soul. In times of trouble the Holy Spirit helps us recall the applicable doctrine stored. It is important to remember that the Holy Spirit helps the believer to *recall* only doctrine already stored in his soul. He does not infuse new doctrine into a believer's soul in times of crisis. Our ability to handle problems in life is directly proportional to the amount of Truth stored in our soul. If we have no Truth in our soul, we do not have any resources available to apply to the situation. If we have only a few doctrines, our application will be minimal and we will not grow or learn significantly from the situation.

This is why James urges believers to make learning Bible Truth the first priority in their lives (James 1:21b).

5. The believer applies Bible knowledge.

This is the most important area in our spiritual life. Application of knowledge, as we all have experienced, is the most difficult thing in the Christian life. It determines whether a believer will be rewarded in eternity or not. It is what separates the winner believer from the loser believer. We all want to hear the Lord say to us, "...Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21a NIV).

The scales of Heaven do not register the amount of Bible Truth we know, but the amount of Truth we apply to our life. Are we obedient to the commands of God? Some believers can recite the principal points of the essence of God (righteousness, justice, love, sovereignty, eternal life, veracity, immutability, omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence). But the real test comes when we need

to apply God’s character to our present situation — calm or crisis. Today there are millions of believers who fail the Lord daily, simply because they either do not have Bible knowledge in their soul or they do not apply what they know.

The BIG QUESTION: Do you apply the Biblical teaching you know to your life so that God the Father may be glorified? Let us look at this topic more closely.

Application — the Power of the Word

In every situation application of Bible Truth is the key. Knowledge gets turned into power through application. Here are some examples.

1. Facing problems

When the believer faces a problem of any kind, he may pause under the control of the Holy Spirit (absence of sin in the soul), and apply the doctrine of God’s essence. If we are students of the Bible, we will be able to reflect on God and His essence in the following manner.

- *Omniscience*: The believer recognizes that his life history is known by God. He knows that God was, and is, totally aware of his situation, not just in that very moment, but from the eternal past. The Psalmist puts it this way,

Your eyes have seen my unformed substance [unformed fetus]; and in Your book they were all written, the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them (Psalm 139:16).

This verse is saying that God knew everything about each of us, even before we were born. The Prophet Jeremiah put it this way,

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you...” (Jeremiah 1:5a).

- *Omnipresence*: The believer knows that God is always with him. He knows that God is aware of his situation.

...Where can I flee from Your presence? (Psalm 139:7b).

- *Love:* The believer knows that God loves him. Love is part of His essence.

...God is love (I John 4:8b).

- *Conclusion:* The believer combines these three aspects of God's essence. Since God knows everything about me, He knows exactly why He has allowed this situation in my life. Since God is here with me, He knows every detail of my problem. And most of all, since He is Love, He will deal with me based on His other attributes, including justice and righteousness, expressed in love through His grace. The believer then leaves the situation in the hands of the One who knows, understands, and loves him. He can then relax within the infallible Word of God.

And we know that God causes all things [including my situation] to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28).

The believer may choose to have the confidence and the inner peace that Job had when he was faced extreme suffering. Job wrote,

“But He knows the way I take [He knows what is happening to me]; when He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold” (Job 23:10).

The believer knows, without doubt, that God will turn his situation into blessing. James encourages believers to persevere.

Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing (James 1: 2-4).

2. Facing hatred

When the believer is hated by anyone he will need the virtue of love. In this situation he must pull love out from the inventory of

Truth in his soul. Love is one of the fruits of the spirit enjoyed by the believer when he is in fellowship. We are also promised that “love covers a multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8).

The believer can also use doctrinal rationales. The believer may consider God’s love for this person, realizing that God loved him enough that Jesus Christ died for his sins too. If God loves this person shouldn’t we also love him? Why? Because we are all ambassadors for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20).

The believer is not bitter toward the one who hates him and he is very careful not to bear any grudges against this person. Rather, the believer is eager to go before the Throne of God and lift his adversary up in prayer (Luke 6:28). The believer is totally dependent on the power of both the Word of God and the Holy Spirit to sustain him in dealing with this person. The believer shows grace to this person whenever he is in contact with him. The believer leaves the entire matter in God’s hands at all times.

Never take your own revenge, beloved...for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord (Romans 12:19).

3. Facing fear

The believer is able to live a lifestyle free of fear.

“Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you [hold you tight] with My righteous right hand” (Isaiah 41:10).

The believer learns to trust the Word of God. The believer continues to learn more Truth and applies it to each and every circumstance. In doing so, he is growing in grace and fulfilling the principles of experiential sanctification. These principles are learning, growing, and glorifying God.

Remember why you are left on earth after your salvation. God’s purpose for your life as a believer is to learn His Word (1 Peter 2:2), grow in grace (2 Peter 3:18a), thereby glorifying Him in this world.

WARNING!

Your life on earth is worthless, in the light of eternity, unless your ultimate goal is to learn and apply sound Bible teaching on a consistent basis.

Examples of Failure to Apply The Word of God

1. Sin of partiality

My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism. For if a [wealthy] man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in [at the same time] a poor man in dirty clothes, and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, “You sit here in a good place,” and you say to the poor man, “You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool [sit on the floor],” have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives? (James 2:1-4).

Does this apply to you? If so, you have the option to confess that sin (1 John 1:9) and get out of that lifestyle quickly before God sends divine punishment.

2. Sins of the tongue

So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! (James 3:5).

The Bible equates the tongue to fire. Everyone knows what an uncontrolled fire can do. The tongue can be just as destructive. Do you judge, malign, or gossip about others? Do you cause others to be distressed or distracted by your malicious words? That is not part of experiential sanctification. God warns He will deal with such believers severely (Matthew 7:1-3). Such a lifestyle always backfires and inevitably results in heavy punishment. Therefore, each of us should be very careful about what he says about any other person.

3. Sin of fear

For God has not given us the spirit of timidity [fear]... (2 Timothy 1:7a).

Fear results in an inability to concentrate. Consider the believer who faces a crisis, who starts to panic, and thinks irrationally. He fears the outcome of the situation. He cannot sleep because of his constant worrying. He forgets that Jesus Christ is in control. He cannot think in terms of Bible Truth because the sin of fear has entered his soul and severs his contact with the Holy Spirit. The pipeline of Bible Knowledge is blocked by fear and cannot be accessed and applied.

Do you live in constant fear? If you do, the reason may be because you are not maintaining fellowship, you are not studying the Word of God, or if you are studying it, you may not be applying it.

Perpetual Failure and its Consequences

Every believer occasionally fails, or sins, in the spiritual life due to the presence of the sin nature in his body. That is why we should be watchful at all times.

Consider the sin of Moses in the Old Testament when he disobeyed God. It is a reminder that even great believers fail (Numbers 20:10-13). Another example is King David who committed adultery and murder (2 Samuel 11-12). God is not interested in our failures, rather He is interested in our getting up and moving forward (1 John 1:9).

Every believer fails. However, when a believer refuses to maintain constant fellowship with God, he can rapidly move into what is called perpetual carnality. It is in this state of perpetual or continuous carnality that the believer will undergo *three progressive stages of divine discipline*.

1. Warning Discipline

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me.” (Revelation 3:20).

This verse is often misunderstood as a salvation verse. Jesus is warning the carnal believer to repent and return to fellowship with Him. If the believer ignores Him, he will then advance to the second stage of discipline.

2. Intensive Discipline

“For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives” (Hebrews 12:6).

The word “scourges” is a very painful type of discipline. It could be emotional, mental, spiritual, or physical pain. If this type of more intense discipline does not motivate him to repent, the carnal believer will experience the third and final stage of discipline.

3. Dying Discipline

This is also known as the “sin unto death.” James warns believers of this final stage of divine discipline.

My brethren, if any among you strays from the Truth [Bible Truth] and one turns him [the carnal believer] back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul [life] from death (James 5:19-20a).

The following verse summarizes the three stages of divine discipline.

For this reason [perpetual carnality] many among you are weak [warning] and sick [intensive], and a number sleep [death] (1 Corinthians 11:30).

The Apostle Paul also warned believers about the consequences of a lifestyle of perpetual carnality.

For if you are living according to the flesh [carnal life] you will die [physically], but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body [by consistent fellowship with God] you will live (Romans 8:13).

The writer of Proverbs had many things to say about perpetual carnality.

A man [believer] who wanders [strays] from the way of understanding [Biblical Truth] will rest in the assembly of the dead (Proverbs 21:16).

The fear of the Lord [respect and obedience] is a fountain of life, that one may avoid the snares of death [sin unto death] (Proverbs 14:27).

The fear of the Lord [a believer who is fulfilling his purpose] adds length to life, but the years of the wicked [carnal believer] are cut short (Proverbs 10:27 NIV).

The perpetually carnal believer will enter Heaven, but with no reward (1 Corinthians 3:15). You may want to pause here and think about this.

Ultimate Sanctification

Ultimate sanctification is defined as the process by which the believer receives a resurrection body, which is perfect, like Jesus Christ's resurrection body.

Before we study ultimate sanctification, let us briefly discuss the transfer of the believer to eternity. Just as God is sovereign in the salvation of the believer, so He is sovereign in that transfer. God Himself determines the time and the means by which each believer will be removed from this world. The believer will be in Heaven, a place where:

“He [God] will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first [former] things have passed away” (Revelation 21:4).

The death of a believer should not be viewed as a tragedy. God knows best. His decision to remove a believer from this world is made in perfect love. The believer may die young or old, in sickness or in health. Whatever the circumstance, the decision is God's and it is perfect. Regarding the physical death of believers, the Psalmist wrote,

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints [every believer] (Psalm 116:15 NIV).

When God removes a believer from the world through death, he will be transferred to Heaven where he will receive an interim body, awaiting ultimate sanctification and a permanent resurrection body.

Completion of Ultimate Sanctification

God will be glorified to the maximum when ultimate sanctification is completed, when all believers, living and dead, receive their resurrection body.

- Ultimate sanctification, for the Church Age (70 A.D.-Rapture) believer who dies before the rapture (see footnote #5) occurs, is a process that begins at death and is complete at the moment when the rapture occurs (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).
- Ultimate sanctification, for the believer who is still alive when the rapture takes place, starts and finishes in the moment of the rapture.
- Ultimate sanctification for the Old Testament believer occurs when Christ returns at the Second Advent (see footnote #5).

God's work regarding man in the Church Age will then be complete. At this time the words of the Apostle Paul will be fulfilled:

Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep [some believers will still be alive at the rapture], but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead [in Christ] will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death where is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:51-57).

According to this passage, who is the One who gives the believer the final victory over death? It is God! Who initiated the sanctification of the believer? Let the Bible answer.

But by His doing [whose doing? God's] you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us... sanctification... (1 Corinthians 1:30).

God begins and God completes your sanctification and every aspect of your salvation. This is the sweetness of the grace of our loving Father. This is the assurance for the eternal security of the believer! One may ask, where is man's effort in this? Man's effort is completely excluded. No wonder the Apostle Paul strongly affirmed,

... For I know [with certainty] whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard [keep, protect] what I have entrusted to Him until that day (2 Timothy 1:12b).

Adoption

So far we have examined conversion, regeneration, justification, and sanctification. The last theological term in the outline is adoption. The correct way to study any topic in the Word of God is to carefully examine both the historical context and the original languages of Scripture. These two factors, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, are essential for accurate interpretation. There is much room for human error when this formula is not followed.

We will study the two different phases of spiritual adoption in Scripture.

The first phase can be seen in the Apostle Paul's words.

So that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons (Galatians 4:5).

The second phase of adoption is also referred to by Paul.

And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body (Romans 8:23).

Now it is important to examine the context of history and the original languages of Scripture as they relate to phase one and phase two of spiritual adoption. Let us begin by discussing the first phase of adoption referred to in Galatians 4:5.

Historical Context

Phase one of spiritual adoption is defined as: The means by which God has purchased those who have believed in Jesus Christ from the "slave market of sin" and placed them as sons into His family. As discussed earlier, it is vitally important to take into account the context in which Scripture was written.

Rules and customs differ from culture to culture and time to time. When the authors of the Bible refer to us being "adopted"

they do so in relation to the meaning and rules of adoption of their time. We need to know the rules and conditions for adoption to understand what the authors of Scripture meant when they said “we are adopted sons of God.”

During the Roman Empire when the Apostle Paul wrote his epistles, the process of adoption was explicitly defined and was irrevocable.

Laws of Roman adoption

- The adoption is based solely on the merit, or work, of the adopting party.
- The adopted person is helpless to provide for himself, let alone provide any sort of payment for his adoption.
- The adopted person depends entirely on the adopting party.

Irrevocable conditions of Roman adoption

1. The adopted person becomes a possession of the adopting party.
2. The adopted person is considered a son in the new family and has equal rights with the other children.
3. The adopted person is considered permanently separated from his former family.
4. The adopted person cannot, under any circumstances, inherit the estate of his former father, even if the father dies and has no other family member to inherit his property.
5. The adopted person cannot be held accountable for the debt of his former parents.

Notice the exact parallels between the Roman Laws we have just examined and the Spiritual Laws below. Consider how the context in which adoption was described relates to the spiritual adoption referred to in Galatians 4:5.

Laws of Spiritual Adoption

- The adoption of believers is based solely on the work of Jesus Christ on the Cross.

- The adopted believer can do nothing to deserve or earn the gift of salvation. It is grace!
- The adopted believer has not done anything to deserve the benefits he receives as a member of God’s family.

Irrevocable conditions of spiritual adoption

1. The adopted believer becomes God’s possession. Considering this phenomenal transition, the Apostle Paul declared,

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that *you are not your own?* For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

2. The believer is considered a son born into God’s family. Paul wrote,

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household (Ephesians 2:19).

For you are all sons [belonging to] of God through faith in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:26).

3. The believer is considered permanently separated from his former life in the “slave market of sin.”

...that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin (Romans 6:6).

4. The believer is permanently removed from the domain of Satan, his former father.

For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us [permanently] to the Kingdom of His beloved Son” (Colossians 1:13).

5. The believer is no longer liable for the debt of Satan, his former father, and no longer shares in Satan’s eternal destination—the Lake of Fire (Revelations 20:15). Speaking to unbelievers, Jesus said,

“You are of your father, the devil...” (John 8:44a).

As a believer in Jesus Christ you can place your name in all the blanks that follow:

_____ has become God’s possession. _____ is now considered as a son born into the family of God. God has permanently removed _____ from the domain of Satan. _____ is no longer in the “slave market of sin.” _____ is no longer liable for the debt of Satan leading to eternal condemnation.

Roman adoption was irrevocable! It is important to note that the spiritual adoption of believers cannot be properly explained by today’s standards of adoption. There are many cases today where biological parents have successfully reclaimed their adopted children even many years after the adoption took place. That was contrary to Roman law. Considering Roman adoption as the context for understanding spiritual adoption, we understand the adoption of the believer is IRREVOCABLE. The doctrine of adoption proves the doctrine of eternal security (see Chapter Four).

Once a believer is placed as a son in God’s family, no judicial system in Heaven or on earth can change it. This marvelous Truth brings comfort to the believer’s soul. Do you have it?

Like Roman adoption, spiritual adoption is irrevocable. *The second and final phase of spiritual adoption is defined as:* This process frees the believer from the earthly struggles of sin and death.

And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body (Romans 8:23).

The author is referring to an event all believers are waiting for, an event that has not yet taken place. The Apostle Paul again referred to this type of adoption when he wrote:

For this perishable [body] must put on the imperishable [resurrection body], and this mortal [body] must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then

will come about the saying that is written, ‘Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death where is your sting?’ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the Law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:53-57).

Dr. H. A. Ironside put it plainly as follows: “So we have been born again by the Word of God and thus are children, as were all believers from Abel down. But as indwelt by the Spirit we are adopted sons, and this will be fully manifested in the most public way when we are changed into our Savior’s image...”¹⁰

Context of the Original Languages of Scripture

In order to further understand and differentiate these two phases of spiritual adoption, it is necessary (as discussed earlier), to study the original languages of the verses. The Greek word for “adoption,” *huiothesia*, is used in both Galatians 4:5 and Romans 8:23. However, it is the different Greek translations of the word “redeem” or “redemption” in these two verses that determines which phase of spiritual adoption to which the author is referring. In Galatians 4:5, the word “redeem” is translated from the Greek word *exagorazo* and it means “to buy up.” In Romans 8:23 the word “redemption” is translated from the Greek *apolutrosis* “to ransom in full.” This corresponds to the definition of the second phase of spiritual adoption — the final liberation of the believer from the bondage of sin and death.

Now that we have studied context regarding both history and the original languages, we can now examine the two phases of spiritual adoption in detail.

Spiritual Adoption — Phase One

The person who receives salvation by “faith alone in Christ alone” is placed into the family of God. The Apostle Paul wrote,

But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem [purchase out of the “slave market of sin”] those who were under the Law, so that we might receive the adoption as sons (Galatians 4:4-5).

¹⁰ H. A. Ironside, *Roman and Galatians Expository Commentary*, Kregel, 206, pg. 62

The Greek word *exagorazo* in verse 5 can be broken down into two parts: “ex” means, “out” or “from” and “agorazo” means “to buy” or “redeem from.” Therefore, *exagorazo* means “to buy out from.” The Apostle Paul is saying that every believer has been permanently purchased out of the “slave market of sin.” The believer is purchased by the sacrificial work of Christ Jesus on the Cross (1 Peter 1:18-19).

Every human being born of a man and woman is placed in the “slave market of sin” controlled by Satan.

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death [spiritual death] through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned (Romans 5:12).

It is impossible to escape from this domain of sin and death by human effort.

God the Father drafted a gracious plan that would make it possible for mankind to be saved from this “slave market of sin.” This plan called exclusively for the spiritual death of God the Son, Jesus Christ, on the Cross. In unquestioning obedience Jesus Christ suffered the Cross and fulfilled God’s plan in its entirety. The author of Hebrews declared,

But He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God (Hebrews 10:12).

God the Holy Spirit reveals this perfect plan to unbelievers. The unbeliever hears the Gospel, understands it with the help of God the Holy Spirit, and chooses to accept or reject Jesus Christ as His Savior. If the unbeliever believes in Christ, then God forgives him of his sins, imputes His righteousness to him, and removes him from the “slave market of sin.”

God gives him a mark of ownership (the indwelling of the Holy Spirit) and he becomes adopted as a member of God’s family. The Apostle Paul wrote,

Who [God] also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge (2 Corinthians 1:22).

This new believer remains on the earth as an ambassador for Christ. Even though he has been purchased from the “slave market of sin,” his sin nature is not eradicated, nor is his free will canceled.

While on earth he continues in the second phase of sanctification (as we studied in chapter ten). To briefly review 1 John 1:9, is how the believer continuously renews his mind through Bible Truth and maintains the filling of the Holy Spirit.

It is not until the final phase of adoption (when the believer is face to face with the Lord) that he is finally free from the ongoing struggle with sin caused by the sin nature which resides in the human body.

With this in mind, let us discuss the provisions of grace God extends to every believer in phase one of spiritual adoption.

God's Provisions for the Church Age Believer in Phase One of Adoption

1. God loves the believer with the same personal love that He has toward His Son, Jesus Christ.

“I [Jesus Christ] in them, and You [God the Father] in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me” (John 17:23).

It is because of our relationship with Jesus Christ that God loves us immeasurably.

2. God transforms the believer to Christ's image.

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His son (Romans 8:29a).

3. God gives the believer the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

So that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts... (Galatians 4:5-6a).

4. God gives the believer His name.

See how great [how immeasurable, how marvelous, how unfathomable] a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we would be called the children of God... (1 John 3:1a).

5. God punishes the believer when he disobeys.

“...My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord...for those whom the Lord loves, He disciplines...” (Hebrews 12:5b-6a).

No father has the right to punish a child who is not his own. When the Lord punishes believers for disobedience, it confirms that they are His children.

But if you are without discipline...then you are illegitimate children and not sons (Hebrews 12:8).

6. God shares Christ’s inheritance with the believer.

The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ... (Romans 8:16-17a).

An adopted son in the family of God also shares in the privileges of God the Son, Jesus Christ.

7. God appoints believers as Christ’s ambassadors.

Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are *ambassadors* for Christ... (2 Corinthians 5:18-20a).

In the human realm one cannot represent one’s country in another country unless he is a citizen of the first country. Likewise God, in His matchless grace, has sworn in all believers as citizens of Heaven:

For our citizenship is in Heaven... (Philippians 3:20a).

As Christ’s ambassador, the believer has the privilege and responsibility of representing the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. The believer

has the duty of witnessing for Christ and living in a manner that is worthy of his citizenship.

8. God makes the believer a priest.

So that every believer would be able to communicate with God, He made every Church Age believer a priest.

But you are a chosen race, a royal *priesthood*, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of the darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9).

As priests, believers have the privilege of unlimited access to the throne of grace.

Therefore, as a priest, the believer is to pray for the following:

- **Those in authority:** It is the will of God that believers pray for their countries and those in leadership.

First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

- **Unbelievers:** for the opportunity to hear an accurate presentation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ:

This is good, and it is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the Truth (1 Timothy 2:3-4).

- **Believers:** for their motivation to learn sound Bible doctrines and thus grow in grace.

... to come to the knowledge of the Truth (1 Timothy 2:4b).

- **Ministers, Pastors and Evangelists:**

And pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador... (Ephesians 6:19-20a).

Spiritual Adoption — Phase Two

This second and final phase of spiritual adoption is similar to that of ultimate sanctification discussed in the previous chapter. When a believer dies before the rapture has taken place, phase two of spiritual adoption begins at his death and is completed at the rapture. For the believer who is still alive when the rapture takes place, phase two starts and finishes at the moment of the rapture. The second and final phase of spiritual adoption of the believer is defined as the means by which the believer is freed from the earthly struggles of sin and death. This future liberation is what the Apostle Paul had in mind when he wrote,

... we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our [final] adoption as sons, the redemption [*apolutrosis*] of our body (Romans 8:23b).

Let us review the original Greek language of the verse. The word *apolutrosis* is translated as “redemption” and it means “to ransom in full.” To better explain this process, consider again the concept of human adoption.

Consider the family that has chosen to adopt a child. All the necessary paperwork has been filed and finally approved. Legally, the child is a member of the new family. However, due to circumstances, the child has to remain in the former family for some time. When the child is finally taken home to be with his new family, there is much celebration. Finally the child can enjoy his new life.

This applies to spiritual adoption as well. The believer is actually a member of God’s family in phase one of adoption. However, he remains on earth for the time God has given him for the purpose of learning obedience and authority orientation. This allows him to study Biblical Truth, grow in grace thereby bringing glory to God. Only in phase two of spiritual adoption does he experience his new life in the family of God to its fullest.

For our citizenship is in Heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself (Philippians 3:20-21).

And He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away (Revelation 21:4).

With this glorious hope of citizenship in Heaven in a new body, every believer, as an adopted son, should live his life in a manner worthy of this high calling.

In conclusion, consider what it would be like to live during the times of Roman law and to understand the definition of human adoption. Think about what it would be like to read or hear the words of Paul when he described believers as the adopted sons of God! One can see how important the context and the original languages are in accurately interpreting, understanding and applying Scripture to our lives.

Forty Gifts Given to the Believer by God at the Moment of Salvation

In the previous chapter we examined the doctrine of adoption. In order to interpret Scripture accurately, we examined the law governing adoption at the time the Apostle Paul used this word. With reference to Roman law, we reached the conclusion that once a believer is adopted into God's family, his adoption is IRREVOCABLE!

Now we will summarize this teaching by examining the work of Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, founder of Dallas Theological Seminary. His work was expanded by Col. R. B. Thieme, Jr., Pastor emeritus of Berachah Church, Houston, Texas. Pastor Thieme is a prolific author who possesses a noteworthy command of the original languages of Scripture: Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic.

I call these forty provisions "The Manifesto of God's Grace." The believer in the Church Age has many special privileges and provisions never given before. The believer who understands these provisions will never be the same again. He will have a clear understanding regarding his relationship with God, and God's love and provision for him in both time and eternity. He will also have a clear picture of the doctrine of eternal security. This believer's spiritual sense of destiny will be forever altered.

As we examine these forty things, note that the words of Dr. Chafer and Col. Thieme are italicized.

1. *The believer resides in the eternal plan of God (shares the destiny of Christ). He is:*
 - A. *Foreknown: Acts 2:23; Romans 8:29; I Peter 1:2.*
 - B. *Elected: Romans 8:33; Colossians 3:12; I Thessalonians 1:4; Titus 1:1; I Pet. 1:2.*
 - C. *Predestined: Romans 8:29-30; Ephesians 1:5,11.*
 - D. *Chosen: Matthew 22:14; I Peter 2:4.*
 - E. *Called: I Thessalonians 5:24.*

Let us briefly examine this verse from Romans.

For whom He [God] foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son . . . these whom He predestined, He also called, . . . and these . . . He justified . . . (Romans 8:29a and 30)

Following is a study of the sequence of this verse: *1. Foreknowledge; 2. Predestination; 3. The Call of God; 4. Justification.*

Foreknowledge — God in His omniscience knows everything about every person who ever lived or ever will live. He also knew man’s every thought, word, and action from the eternal past:

Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O Lord, You know it all (Psalm 139:4).

He also knows how long each of us will live on this earth.

Your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days [or years] ordained for me were written in Your book before one of them came to be (Psalm 139:16 NIV).

God, from the eternal past, has always known everything about every man. He initiated salvation for us before we were ever created. God knew that man would fail, and therefore made provision to save him if man desired salvation. In the eternal past, as a reflection of His justice (without partiality or favoritism), He designed a plan of salvation to be offered to everyone (Galatians 2:6; 2 Chronicles 19:7; Job 34:19).

Predestination — Predestination is based on God’s foreknowledge. He knew in the eternal past when each believer would accept His offer of grace. To put it another way, billions of years ago God took His salvation package into the “slave market of sin” and announced, “Which among you would like to be purchased out of this slave market of sin at no cost to you?” Those who would say “Yes” to His offer were purchased, chosen, and predestined. The Apostle Paul put it this way.

For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will (Ephesians 1:4-5 NIV).

We can see that salvation was drafted by God in the past; therefore, there is nothing that we can do to destroy our salvation. Our salvation was predestined even before we were born. It is arrogant to think, for a moment, that any believer can alter God's perfect work of salvation (1 Corinthians 3:11-15).

You may wonder about unbelievers, are they predestined to Hell? No! Absolutely not.

The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9).

Whoever goes to the Lake of Fire does so because of his rejection of God's offer of salvation, an offer made to all mankind.

The Call of God — The call of God is not a mysterious voice from Heaven. It is a call through the Gospel message. This call, although prepared in eternity past, is sent out in the present time. God calls the human race to accept His plan of salvation. This call of God requires a response: “yes” or “no.” When anyone responds by believing in Christ, his salvation (which God knew about in eternity past) becomes a reality.

And you also were *included in Christ* when you heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation [the call]. Having believed, you were [permanently] marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13 NIV).

Justification — Justification comes from the verb “to justify.” This is translated in Greek as *dikaioo* which means “to declare someone as just or righteous and to recognize him as such.” Justification is part of the process that follows a positive response to the call of God. When an individual responds to this call and believes only in Christ, one of the things that happens is that God imputes His own righteousness to him. Because of this, the believer is made righteous in God's sight and is justified. This means that God cancels the judgment against this individual:

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1).

2. *The believer is reconciled (removal of the barrier between man and God).*

- A. *By God: 2 Corinthians 5:18-19; Colossians 1:20.*
- B. *To God: Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:20; Ephesians 2:14-17.*

3. *The believer is redeemed (purchased from the slave market of sin): Romans 3:24; Colossians 1:14; 1 Peter 1:18.*

We have previously examined the issue of the redemption of the believer in Jesus Christ. It is important to remember that the price necessary to purchase the entire human race from the “slave market of sin” has been paid for by our Lord on the Cross. However not all people will accept this offer of salvation from God. It is also important to keep in mind that God is the One who made the transaction. No one who chooses to walk out of the slave market of sin, by accepting God’s salvation offer can ever be returned to it. To say that God could return a believer to his former position in Adam, as spiritually dead, is blasphemous. In essence this would be saying that God made a mistake and brought the wrong people out of the “slave market of sin.”

The Apostle Paul asked,

Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen [purchased out of Satan’s domain]? It is God who justifies. Who is He that condemns? Christ Jesus who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us (Romans 8:33-34 NIV).

This verse says is that neither God nor Jesus Christ can bring any charges against us once we are purchased. The Apostle Paul beautifully put it this way,

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1).

Satan brings charges against believers to the courtroom of Heaven. But Jesus Christ is our advocate and defends us every time.

My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin and if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous (1 John 2:1).

Jesus Christ cannot defend the believer and at the same time prosecute him.

4. *The believer's condemnation (eternal judgment) is removed: John 3:18; 5:24; Romans 8:1.*

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My Word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not [cannot and will not] come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life” (John 5:24).

Jesus Christ unequivocally declared that a believer will never come before the Great White Throne (where unbelievers will be judged). Nothing can change it!

5. *All sins are judged by the substitutionary spiritual death of Christ on the Cross: Romans 4:25; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 2:24.*

This is what the Apostle John had to say.

In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins (I John 4:10).

The word “propitiation” in the English Bible is translated from the Greek *hilasmos*. According to *New Testament Lexical Aids* (Greek Dictionary) this noun is defined as “the benefit of Christ’s [spiritual] death for man.” When we believe in Christ for salvation, we are the recipient of the benefits of the work of Christ Jesus on the Cross. Since God is TOTALLY SATISFIED by His Son’s work to pay for all the sins of mankind, God is satisfied with anyone who believes in Christ. That is why the Cross is the meeting point between Holy God and sinful man. Anyone who tries to bypass the work of Christ on the Cross — and dies without believing in Him — will face eternal condemnation.

6. Every believer receives propitiation for sins (God is satisfied with the work of His Son), Romans 8:3:25-26; 1 John 2:2; 4:10.

7. *The believer is dead to the old life (old sin nature), but alive to God. He is:*

A. *Crucified with Christ: Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20.*

B. *Dead with Christ: Romans 6:8; Colossians 3:3; 1 Peter 2:24.*

C. *Buried with Christ: Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12.*

D. *Raised with Christ: Romans 6:4; Colossians 3:1.*

8. *The believer is free from the Mosaic Law. He is:*

A. *Dead: Romans 7:4.*

B. *Delivered: Romans 6:14; 7:6; 2 Corinthians 3:11; Galatians 3:25.*

The believer is totally and forever shielded from the eternal consequences of the Mosaic Law.

Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the Law, locked up until faith should be revealed ... Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the Law (Galatians 3:23, 25 NIV).

The fact that we are no longer slaves to the Law does not negate our responsibility to follow God's laws. Divine discipline is applied to those who choose to live carnal lifestyles (see Hebrews 12:5-6 and Chapter Eleven of this book).

9. *The believer is regenerated: John 13:10; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Titus 3:5. He is:*

A. *Born again: John 3:7; 1 Peter 1:23.*

B. *A child of God: Galatians 3:26.*

C. *A son of God: John 1:12; 2 Corinthians 6:18; 1 John 3:2.*

D. *A new creation: 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15; Ephesians 2:10.*

Regeneration of the believer results of the work of the Trinity. Man has never been, nor will he ever be, a part of this operation. Look at it this way, when God judged Jesus Christ on the Cross, all of mankind was spiritually dead.

We made the following illustration earlier in Chapter Two. A dead person cannot participate in his own funeral. This is obvious, but the concept is helpful when applied to a spiritually dead person. A spiritually dead person lacks a human spirit. He is in no position to contribute to his own salvation. He is dead! Spiritually dead.

Man is born with body and soul. At salvation, the moment of faith in Christ, God the Holy Spirit gives the believer a human spirit. Man is body and soul before salvation; body, soul and spirit after salvation.

God reached out to us while we were spiritually dead.

...God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners [spiritually dead], Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).

As part of God the Father's plan of grace, God the Holy Spirit comes to the assistance of this spiritually dead person and helps him understand the work of Christ Jesus on his behalf. If this person chooses to believe in Christ, God the Father imputes His own righteousness to the new believer:

This righteousness of God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe... (Romans 3:22a).

At the moment of faith in Christ, God the Holy Spirit gives the new believer a human spirit. Jesus Christ said,

Flesh gives birth to flesh [physical birth], *but* [the Holy] Spirit gives birth to [the human] spirit (John 3:6 NIV).

These two events are the components of regeneration for the new believer. Ask yourself what role does the new believer have in this process? None! He only receives the gift! This is what grace is all about. No one ever earned or worked for his regeneration. Anyone who thinks otherwise is probably still an unbeliever. Salvation is faith in Christ plus nothing!

10. *The believer is adopted by God (placed as an adult son because of positional truth): Romans 8:15; 8:23 (future); Ephesians 1:5.*

11. *The believer is made acceptable to God: Ephesians 1:6; 1 Peter 2:5. He is:*

- A. *Made righteous (imputation): Romans 3:22; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:9.*
- B. *Sanctified positionally: 1 Corinthians 1:30; 6:11.*
- C. *Perfected forever: Hebrew 10:14.*
- D. *Qualified for inheritance: Colossians 1:12.*

12. *The believer is justified (declared righteous): Romans 3:24; 5:1,9; 8:30; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Titus 3:7.*

13. *The believer receives the unique availability of divine power: 2 Peter 1:3.*

14. *The believer is guaranteed a heavenly citizenship based on reconciliation: Luke 10:20; Ephesians 2:13; Philippians 3:20.*

15. *The believer is delivered from the kingdom of Satan: Colossians 1:13; 2:15.*

This is similar to what we studied in points three and eight above. Once we are delivered from the bondage of sin we will never be enslaved again.

16. *The believer is transferred into God's kingdom: Colossians 1:13b.*

When we accept God's grace offer of salvation, He immediately removes us from the "slave market of sin" and brings us into His Kingdom.

For He [God the father], rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son (Colossians 1:13).

In this verse the Greek for delivered is *rhuomai*, to draw out of danger, to draw with force. You and I have been permanently drawn out of, or delivered from danger. Did we play any part in being delivered from this "domain of darkness?" NO! Can a person help push an automobile while he is inside the vehicle? Of course not.

Similarly, one who is lost in Satan's domain is not able to help God deliver him.

17. *The believer is now on a secure foundation: 2 Corinthians 3:11; 10:4; Ephesians 2:20.*

18. *Every believer is a gift from God the Father to Christ: John 10:29; 17:2, 6, 9, 11-12, 24.*

God the Father gives Church Age believers as a gift to Jesus Christ who knows how to protect His gifts for eternity. Jesus Christ promised that He could not, and would not, lose anyone.

"This is the will of Him [God the Father] who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I *lose nothing*, but raise it up on the last day" (John 6:39).

This verse proves eternal security.

There are two important issues: God's will and Christ's promise. If Jesus Christ fails to resurrect any believer at the rapture, He has lied and also the Father's will would go unfulfilled. This thinking is blasphemy! If it were true, this would represent irreparable damage to the integrity of the Trinity. If it were true, Satan would rejoice that He caught Jesus Christ in a lie.

Thank God, this is not going to happen — not now, not ever!

“Heaven and earth will pass away, BUT My words will not pass away” (Matthew 24:35).

If anyone thinks that we can lose our salvation, he is blind to the Truth of the infallible Word of God.

19. *The believer is delivered from the power of sin nature: Romans 2:29; Philippians 3:3; Colossians 2:11.*

This does not mean that we cannot sin again, because we will! Rather it means we are delivered from the eternal consequence of sin — eternal condemnation in the Lake of Fire — eternal separation from God.

Blessed [happy] is he [any believer] whose transgressions [sins] are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him... (Psalm 32:1-2a NIV).

20. *Every believer is appointed a priest unto God. We are:*

A. *A holy priest: 1 Peter 2:5.*

B. *A royal priesthood: 1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6.*

All Church Age believers, both male and female, are made priests at the moment of their faith in the Person of Jesus Christ. This is the only time in human history when this occurs.

21. *The believer receives eternal security: Romans 8:32, 38-39; Galatians 3:26; 2 Timothy 2:13.*

Father-Son Relationship: Let us approach the issue of the eternal security of the believer from the standpoint of a father-son relationship. When an individual believes in Christ, he is born again (adopted) into God’s family and becomes a son of God. The Apostle Paul declared,

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:26).

Once a son is born into a family he WILL ALWAYS be a son of that family. He may grow up and rebel against the standards of his family, but he will always be a son. Even if his legal status changes

or he is adopted, he will always maintain the genetic makeup of his birth family. Modern science and medicine can test his DNA to determine his genetic background. This is the ultimate test, because if he possesses the genes of his parents, it is proof that he is their son no matter how emphatically he may deny it.

More importantly when a person who is born once dies, he retains the genetic code of his parents with its old sin nature (acquired through Adam) intact. On the other hand when a person who is born a second time dies (or is taken at the rapture), the believer loses all the genetic makeup of his first parents while retaining all the DNA of his heavenly father. That is the beauty of God's amazing grace!

Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:50-57).

This is how to know if an individual is a son of God. If he possesses by faith the righteousness and eternal life of God, and he possesses the indwelling of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (all received by the believer when he is born again into the family of God), then he is a son of God. Once he is declared a son by virtue of spiritual rebirth through the grace of God, he remains a son forever. The Lord Jesus Christ made it clear when He said,

"Now a slave [an unbeliever] has no permanent place in the family, *but* a son [a believer] belongs to it [in the family] *forever*" (John 8:35 NIV).

22. *The believer is given access to God: Romans 5:2; Ephesians*

2:18; Hebrew 4:14, 16; 10:19-23.

23. Every believer is within the “much” grace care of God: Romans 5:9-10. We are:

- A. *Objects of His love: Ephesians 2:4; 5:2.*
- B. *Objects of His Grace*
 - a. *For salvation: Ephesians 2:8-9.*
 - b. *For keeping: Romans 5:2; 1 Peter 1:5.*
 - c. *For service: John 17:18; Ephesians 4:7.*
 - d. *For instruction: Titus 2:12.*
- C. *Objects of His power: Ephesians 1:19; Philippians 2:13.*
- D. *Objects of His faithfulness: Philippians 1:6; Hebrew 13:5.*
- E. *Objects of His peace: John 14:27.*
- F. *Objects of His consolation: 2 Thessalonians 2:16.*
- G. *Objects of His intercession: Romans 8:34; Hebrew 7:25; 9:24.*

Let us consider points “A” and “D” from number 23.

Objects of His Love God’s love never changes, regardless of the object. There are two reasons for this.

The first was discussed in Chapter One. God’s immutability. This means that He is always consistent and never changes; therefore, His love does not change. This type of love, called agape in Greek, is a love that depends on the integrity of the giver, not on the integrity of the receiver. So even when we fail, the love of God towards us does not change. The Prophet Isaiah wrote,

“...But My loving kindness will not be removed from you...” (Isaiah 54:10b).

The second reason is that the believer has been given God’s righteousness.

Regarding this gift the Apostle Paul wrote,

He [God] made Him [Jesus Christ] who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21).

This gift of righteousness will never change because, like God’s love, it is based on His integrity. Although we fail and are disciplined, this gift of God’s righteousness does not change. The Bible says,

The Lord loves righteousness (Psalm 33:5a NIV).

And since we have already established that God's love will never change, we can confidently conclude that God's love for us (who possesses God's righteousness), will never change. The Apostle Paul put it this way,

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation [including failures], will be able to separate us from the [fixed] love of God that is [grounded] in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:38-39 NIV).

Objects of His faithfulness: God's faithfulness, like His love, does not change. Even if a believer denounces Christ as Peter did (Luke 22:56-60), God continues to be faithful to him. This is because God's faithfulness does not depend on the believer's integrity but on God's integrity. This Truth underscores the doctrine of the eternal security of the believer:

If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot [and will not] deny Himself [He cannot change His integrity] (2 Tim. 2:13).

24. *The believer is the beneficiary of an inheritance as an heir of God and joint-heir with Christ: Romans 8:17; Ephesians 1:14, 18; Colossians 3:24; Hebrew 9:15; 1 Peter 1:4.*

25. *Every believer has a new position in Christ: Ephesians 2:6. We are:*

A. *Partners with Christ in life: Colossians 3:4.*

B. *Partners with Christ in service: 1 Corinthians 1:9.*

a. *Workers together with God: 1 Corinthians 3:9; 2 Corinthians 6:1.*

b. *Ministers of the New Covenant: 2 Corinthians 3:6.*

c. *Ambassadors: 2 Corinthians 5:20.*

d. *Living epistles: 2 Corinthians 3:3.*

e. *Ministers of God: 2 Corinthians 6:4.*

26. *Believers are recipients of eternal life: John 3:15; 10:28; 20:31; 1 John 5:11-12.*

27. *The believer is created a new spiritual species: 2 Corinthians 5:17.*

28. *The believer is a light in the Lord: Ephesians 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:4.*

29. *The believer is united with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We are:*

- A. *In God: 1 Thessalonians 1:1; cf. "God in you," Ephesians 4:6.*
- B. *In Christ: John 14:20; cf. "Christ in you," Colossians 1:27.*
 - a. *A member in His Body: 1 Corinthians 12:13.*
 - b. *A branch in the Vine: John 15:5.*
 - c. *A stone in the Building: Ephesians 2:21-22; 1 Peter 2:5.*
 - d. *A sheep in the Flock: John 10:27-29.*
 - e. *A portion of His Bride: Ephesians 5:25-27; Revelation 19:6-8, 21:9.*
 - f. *A priest of the kingdom of priests: 1 Peter 2:9.*
 - g. *A saint of the "new species": 2 Corinthians 5:17.*
- C. *In the Holy Spirit: Romans 8:9; "the Spirit in you."*

30. *Every believer is the recipient of the ministries of the Holy Spirit. He is:*

- A. *Born of the Spirit: John 3:36.*
- B. *Baptized with the Spirit: Acts 1:5; 1 Corinthians 12:13.*
- C. *Indwelt by the Spirit: John 7:39; Romans 5:5; 8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; Galatians 4:6; 1 John 3:24.*
- D. *Sealed by the Spirit: 2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 4:30.*
- E. *Given spiritual gifts: 1 Corinthians 12:11, 27-31; 13:1-2.*

31. *The believer is glorified: Romans 8:30.*

32. *The believer is complete in Christ: Colossians 2:10.*

33. *The believer is possessor of every spiritual blessing granted in eternity past: Ephesians 1:3.*

34. *The believer receives a human spirit: Romans 8:16; 1 Corinthians 2:12; 2 Corinthians 7:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:23.*

35. *The believer has all scar tissue removed from the soul: Isaiah 43:25; 44:22.*

36. *The believer is the recipient of efficacious grace: Ephesians 1:13.*

37. *The believer is guaranteed a resurrection body forever: John 11:25.*

38. *The believer is the beneficiary of unlimited atonement: 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, 19; 1 Timothy 2:6; 4:10; Titus 2:11; Hebrew 2:9; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 2:2.*

39. *The believer has equal privilege and equal opportunity under election and predestination.*

40. *Problem-solving devices are available to every believer. They are:*

A. *Rebound: [confession] 1 John 1:9.*

B. *Filling of the Holy Spirit: Ephesians 5:18.*

C. *Faith-rest drill: Hebrew 4:1, 10-11.*

D. *Grace orientation: James 4:6.*

E. *Doctrinal orientation: Romans 12:2.*

F. *Personal sense of destiny: Philippians 1:21.*

G. *Personal love for God: Deuteronomy 6:5; 1 Peter 1:8.*

H. *Impersonal love for all mankind: James 2:8.*

I. *Sharing the happiness of God: John 15:11.*

J. *Occupation with Christ: Ephesians 3:19.*

All these and more are the gifts that we receive when we put our trust in the Person of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Everything that the believer has, including his salvation, depends on who and what God is.

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).

God is perfect and His work is perfect. In grace He initiated salvation. He purchased you through His Son, Jesus Christ, (1 Peter 1:18,19). He sealed you with His Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:22) and He keeps you by His power (1 Peter 1:5).

God grants your salvation in grace and He ends it in grace. With this in mind, we conclude,

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy [He will make you stand in His presence with no accusation against you], to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen (Jude 1:24-25).

“The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms” (Deuteronomy 33:27a NIV).

“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed [consumed with fear], for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand” (Isaiah 41:10 NIV).

Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep [some believers will still be alive at the rapture], but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead [in Christ] will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death where is your sting?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:51-57).

But by His doing [God’s doing] you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and *righteousness* and *sanctification*, and *redemption* (1 Corinthians 1:30).

[God] Who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us [and sealed] in Christ Jesus from all eternity (2 Timothy 1:9).

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