

False Concept of Salvation

The following are brief explanations of some verses that have been distorted to deceive people in believing that salvation can be lost.

Matthew 24:13 *But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.* Some think this verse means a person will not go to heaven unless he continues to do good until he dies. They are confused by thinking the word “saved” refers to eternal salvation when actually, it refers to physical deliverance. The context of chapter 24 clearly refers to people who become believers during the Tribulation and survive up to the end. They will then be physically delivered from the judgment that occurs when the Lord returns so that they can populate the earth during the Millennium. Their deliverance is from the baptism of fire.

James 2:14, 17, 24 *What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone.* People quote this verse when trying to prove that good works must be added to faith in order to be saved. But notice that James is writing to “brethren”, people who are already saved. He was not warning believers that their eternal security was in jeopardy but that they were in danger of an untimely death due to a dead faith that produced no good works.

Believers who choose to rebel against their heavenly Father by living a fruitless unprincipled life are in danger of an early physical death (sin unto death) Proverbs 11:19 - As righteousness leads to [prolonged] life, so he who pursues evil pursues it to his own death. God sometimes disciplines an arrogant indifferent believer by taking him out of this world.

The Bible is full of commands to do good works but many believers ignore them because they have no motivation to please neither God nor compassion for their fellow man. James calls this a “dead faith”. It cannot cause him to lose his salvation but it can cause him to: Come under divine discipline to the point of losing his physical life, Lose rewards in heaven. Have no witness before unbelievers.

The key to understanding what James has written is to recognize that there are two kinds of justification. One is by faith and the other is by works. We are justified before God by our faith and we are justified before other people by our works. We are not justified before God by our faith and our works; that is heresy!

Mark 16:16 *He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved, but he who does not believe shall be condemned.* Some think this verse makes water baptism a condition for salvation. Notice carefully that this verse does not say, “he who does not believe and is not baptized shall be condemned”. Only unbelief

condemns. No lack of good works, including water baptism, can condemn a person. The baptism mentioned is not the ritual of water baptism but the Baptism of the Holy Spirit which is a work accomplished by God for us at the moment we accept Christ (I Cor. 12:13) in which God the Holy Spirit permanently identifies us with Jesus Christ by placing us in union with Him.

Hebrews 6:4-6 *For it is impossible to renew to repentance those who . . . have fallen away since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.* Is this saying that a person can lose eternal life and that once he has, it is impossible to get it back? Absolutely not! This was written to Jews who had believed in Jesus Christ but continued to sacrifice animals even after Christ was sacrificed on the cross. It was hard for them to stop observing a ritual that their ancestors had observed for over a thousand years. So the writer of Hebrews reminded them in Hebrews 10:12. But He, having offered one Sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God.

These Jewish believers had fallen away from the fundamentals of the Christian faith which they had been taught. Every time they sacrificed an animal they were again crucifying the Son of God and putting Him up to an open shame, as if His sacrifice was not sufficient. As long as they continued to do this, it was impossible to renew them to “repentance”, which means to “change their mind” to line up with correct fundamental doctrines.

Philippians 2:12-13 *Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling . . .* Again, this was written to believers who already possessed eternal life. The word “salvation” causes confusion because most people automatically equate it with eternal life. But this is never its meaning in the entire book of Philippians. It is used to convey the idea of being physically delivered from something. From what do believers need delivering?

Before this can be answered, one must first understand that some believers are winners and some are losers. The winners are obedient to the commands of God such as growing up spiritually by studying the Word (II Tim. 2:15), confessing sins (I John 1:9), unconditionally loving others (John 13:34), and doing good works (Eph.2:10), just to name a few.

They will receive rewards, decorations, special blessings and privileges that will last for all eternity. Loser believers waste their time on earth by being disobedient and indifferent to God and His Word. They have bought Satan’s lie that happiness and contentment can be found in money, sex, power, friends, a big house, a different spouse, a fun time, etc. Consequently, they never grow up spiritually and they lose out on the great things that winner believers receive. “Working out your salvation” is a call to be a winner believer. It is a plea to be delivered from the miserable life and losses of the loser believer. Fear and

trembling are mentioned in this verse to warn believers that losing eternal rewards is no trivial matter.

Galatians 5:4 *You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by the law; you have fallen from grace.* There is a big difference between an unbeliever who is condemned for rejecting God's grace and a believer who has drifted off course by trying to maintain his salvation by works. The Galatians believers fell for the lies of the Jews that salvation is secured by keeping the Mosaic Law. They fell away from the correct teaching that salvation is obtained and maintained entirely by God's grace. The Greek word used for falling away is "ekpipto" which means to drift off course. Believers drift off course when they exchange grace and freedom for the slavery of legalism and divine discipline.

Hebrews 10:26 *For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins* but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. All sin is willful in the sense that we sin because we want to. However the willful sinning here refers to believers who have abandoned the Christian faith.

They have deliberately ignored the commands (in 10:23 and 10:25) instructing them to, "hold fast the confidence of their hope without wavering" and "forsake not the assembling of ourselves together". They had trampled under foot the Son of God, regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which they were sanctified, and insulted the Spirit of grace (10:29). These apostate believers had abandoned their faith in the only true sacrifice, (Christ's) and were being reminded that there is no other acceptable sacrifice for sins. They were being warned to expect stinging divine discipline that is compared to the fury of fire that would consume the adversaries of the Christian faith which they had joined.

Hebrews 10:39 sums up this idea by saying, "We are not of those who shrink back to destruction (loss of eternal rewards and severe divine discipline) but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul (a life free from the divine discipline of a premature death).

DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

Salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Faith is the only system of perception that is totally devoid of any human merit. Only the object has merit, and in salvation the object of faith is Our Lord Jesus Christ. No one has ever been saved by asking Jesus to come into his heart or life.

How much faith does it take to be saved? It takes just a little bit more than no faith at all.

The perfect salvation work of Christ on the cross, which is called expiation, excludes anything else being added to faith. No works of any kind are allowed.

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

What is grace in relationship to salvation? Grace is all that God is free to do for unsaved mankind on the basis of the saving work of Christ on the cross. Grace is extended to unbelievers, who are living under spiritual death in total depravity and total helplessness regarding salvation. Therefore, salvation is a matter of grace, and entirely the work of God. Salvation is the work of the Father in judging our sins, the work of the Son in being judged for our sins, and the work of the Holy Spirit in common and efficacious grace. This is why the way of salvation is faith in Jesus Christ -- faith alone with no works or emotions added to it.

Lake of Fire

The Lake of Fire is the final destination for both fallen angels and unbelieving mankind, and it is both literal and eternal. The Lake of Fire was prepared originally for Satan and his fallen angels.

Matthew 25:41 Then He will also say to those on His left, "Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;"

However, unbelievers will also go there, with no way of escape.

John 3:18 He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

John 3:36 He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.

Hebrews 9:27 And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment,

The first occupants of the Lake of Fire will be the beast and false prophet of the Tribulation, Revelation 19:20. The devil will also be in the Lake of Fire, Revelation 20:10. After the Great White Throne Judgment, the unbelievers of the human race will also occupy the Lake of Fire, Revelation 20:14. Unbelievers are pulled out of the fire of Hades, judged, and cast into the Lake of Fire, Revelation 20:15 and 21:8.

Both torments in Hades and the Lake of Fire are vividly described in Mark 9:48, where their worm does not die [this represents the conscience], and the fire is not quenched. Everyone should hear the screams of those who die burning in total agony, so that they will understand the importance of believing in Jesus Christ. In eternity, the screams never stop; they go on forever and ever and ever, simply because the souls there refused the so great salvation provided by Jesus Christ.

There is a place of final destiny for every member of the human race who has rejected the Gospel and the doctrine of salvation. It is described as: a place of torment, Luke 16:28; a place where desire is never met, Luke 16:24; a bottomless pit, Revelation 9:2; outer darkness, Matthew 8:12; fire unquenchable, Luke 3:17; the furnace of fire, Matthew 13:42. It is a place of unspeakable misery, indicated by the phrase eternal fire. Many believe it is a place with a liquid form of lava referred to as the lake, which burns with fire and brimstone, Revelation 21:8. It is described as black darkness in Jude v.13; a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth, Matthew 13:50; and it is said about those in Hell that ...the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night, in Revelation 14:11.

If this is all true, then we should all see the value of understanding the doctrine of salvation; and by understanding it, also being accurate in its presentation. God is perfect and His ways are perfect and accurate. This is why Ephesians 5:15 says, Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise.

Salvation by Works is Rejected by the Word of God

There are at least eight categories of salvation by works rejected by the Word of God, as stated in Ephesians 2:9, not as a result of works. They are as follows:

1. SALVATION BY VERBAL WORKS

Repent and believe. Repent means to change your mind about Christ, as occurs under the Holy Spirit's ministry of common grace. The word repent has been misinterpreted as feeling sorry. No one is saved by feeling sorry for his sins.

Confession of sins. This is only for the believer after salvation.

Begging God to save you. This is ridiculous, coming from one who is spiritually dead.

Inviting Christ into your heart. This is total nonsense and blasphemy. A spiritually dead person cannot invite Eternal God, The Lord Jesus Christ, anywhere; not into his heart, or his home, or his life. It is stupidity, asininity, emotion, and works.

Acknowledging Christ publicly. This is not effectual for salvation. It is a distortion of Romans 10:9-10 which refers to cause and effect. The cause is faith; the result, as the believer matures, is to witness and to acknowledge Christ.

2. SALVATION BY RITUAL WORKS

Circumcision. This was a favorite of the Jews. The book of Galatians was written to correct this issue. The Galatians were typical Gaelic people, and they were very excited about Paul's ministry, responded to it, and became believers. However, after Paul left, the Judaizers counteracted, telling these new believers that they could not be truly saved until they were also circumcised. The new Gentile believers accepted the idea, so Paul wrote Galatians, a letter telling them that they had gone astray from the Gospel. Paul likened the Galatians to the priests who had mutilated themselves to impress God, which of course didn't work.

Baptism. The idea of salvation by baptism is prominent today. It was started by the Catholics, and copied by the Lutherans during the Reformation. It is a heresy that has always existed in the Church Age. In reality, baptism was a testimony to, and identification with, retroactive positional truth and current positional truth, prior to the completion of the Canon.

Partaking of the Eucharist. This is a favorite of Roman Catholicism, which teaches that The Lord Jesus Christ goes back into their body, after having left it, through the taking in of the Eucharist.

3. SALVATION BY PSYCHOLOGICAL WORKS

Come forward in an invitation extended at the end of a service.

Raise your hand during prayer.

Walk down an aisle.

Give public testimony to your faith in Christ.

These make an issue of yourself and call attention to yourself. But salvation is designed to call attention to Jesus Christ and no one else.

4. SALVATION BY CORPORATE WORKS

Join the church. If you don't join, you are not saved.

Tithe. This was commanded in the Mosaic Law as a 10% income tax for the client nation Israel. Tithing has no spiritual connotation, either for salvation or blessing. Giving is a matter of the privacy of your own priesthood, and the amount you give is based on your own self-determination and has nothing to do with any blessing.

Church-related works. Just work faithfully around the church and God will save you.

5. SALVATION BY RELIGIOUS WORKS

Satan counterfeits Christianity through religion. Religion is one of the greatest systems of both moral and immoral degeneration.

Keep the Mosaic Law. This is a result of the Reformation. It started out with justification by faith, but it gradually moved to the works of keeping the Law and eventually developed into the Galatian compromise, which stated, first you have to believe in Christ, then you have to keep the Law.

Do penance. A favorite of Catholicism. The noun penance has basically three meanings: (1) remorse for your past conduct; (2) a Catholic sacrament: repentance and confession, then satisfaction and absolution; and (3) self-mortification, self-abasement, i.e. voluntary self-punishment in order to atone for some wrongdoing. All of these are in direct contradiction to the finished work on the cross.

Practice the Lordship of Christ. This refers to the false doctrine taught which says, "if Christ is not Lord of all, He's not Lord AT ALL". This is a failure to understand one of the forty-plus things done for us at the moment of salvation. By the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, which enters us into union with Christ, He is Our Lord at the very moment of salvation. Whether we recognize this or not is a matter of cognition of pertinent doctrine. Regardless, we do not have to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord to receive salvation. It is simply believe in Christ.

Practice asceticism. What we give up at any time is inconsequential! People want to take what they have sacrificed or given up in their lives and compare it with the work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Self-denial and maintaining a healthy body. To associate salvation or spirituality with health foods and vitamins is ludicrous.

6. SALVATION BY BEHAVIORAL WORKS

Salvation by morality. Morality has to do with establishment; it is not the Christian way of life. The pre-designed plan of God is higher than morality. Moral degeneracy is very prominent in Christianity today, whereby Christians in their arrogant self-righteousness are trying to straighten everyone and everything out, by superimposing Christian laws and standards on both believer and unbeliever.

Salvation by personality change. Although a change in one's personality may be desirable, it is not the means of salvation.

Salvation by keeping taboos. Many think you cannot really be saved unless you stop drinking, smoking, dancing, wearing makeup, swimming in mixed company, etc.

7. SALVATION BY EMOTIONAL WORKS

Faith is a non-meritorious act of perception and has nothing to do with emotion!

Salvation by ecstasies, or speaking in tongues. No one has legitimately spoken in tongues since August of 70 A.D. The gift of tongues was a temporary spiritual gift at the beginning of the Church Age to evangelize Jews in Gentile languages, as prophesied in Isaiah 28. Where people allege that speaking in tongues, or the so-called second blessing, is necessary for salvation, they are either very emotional or demon possessed.

Salvation through "feeling" saved, or weeping tears at the altar. Again, faith has nothing to do with emotion.

8. SALVATION BY INVITATION

We do not invite Christ anywhere. He does not come to us; we come to Him by believing in Him. Remember Our Lord's invitation in Matthew 11:28: "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

John 6:35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in me will never thirst."

John 6:37 "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out."

John 6:47 explains what it means to come to Christ: "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes [in Me] has eternal life." Always in the salvation invitation we go to Jesus Christ; He does not come to us. Therefore, note that there are three blasphemous invitations:

We do not invite Christ to come to us. Revelation 3:20 is addressed to believers: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me." This is a verse dealing with recovery from carnality, and has nothing to do with salvation.

We do not invite Christ into our heart. Jeremiah 17.9 teaches about our heart, The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it? Inviting Christ into our heart is an emotional form of legalism.

We do not invite Christ into our life. Romans 5:12 teaches about our life, Therefore, just as through one man, sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.

The unbeliever is under spiritual death, which means total depravity and being completely cut off from God. We do not invite Jesus Christ into a state of total depravity, and we do not invite Jesus Christ into spiritual death. We make no invitations to Jesus Christ! If that is all you've ever done, you had better believe in Jesus Christ or you will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire. Salvation is through faith alone in Christ alone; He invites us to come to Him – we do not invite Him to come to us.

Faith Plus Nothing as the Condition for Eternal Salvation

Salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone; nothing is added. There are three reasons for faith plus nothing as the condition for eternal salvation:

1. Efficacious grace (God doing the work and God getting the credit), documented by Ephesians 2:8-9.
2. Our Lord's utterance on the cross, "Tetelestia!" [It is finished, with the result that it stands finished.]
3. The direct statement of Scripture.

COMMON AND EFFICACIOUS GRACE

Efficacious grace fits into the pattern of faith alone. When the spiritually dead person responds to the divine call or invitation to eternal salvation, he simply responds by believing in Jesus Christ. This is classified as faith alone, or faith plus nothing. When the spiritually dead person simply believes in Christ, God the Holy Spirit causes the faith to be effective for eternal life. This is classified as efficacious grace, or the Doctrine of Effectual Faith. The faith of the spiritually dead person indicates positive volition and a non-meritorious function that is compatible with grace. However, because the spiritually dead person who believes in Christ is helpless, his faith is ineffective without the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit's efficacious grace causes the unbeliever's faith to be effective. However, no works can be added to faith. The Holy Spirit can only make faith and faith alone effective for salvation. Any works added to faith in Christ are dead works, and the Holy Spirit does not make dead works effective for salvation. Principle: If a person adds any works at the moment of believing in Jesus Christ, he or she is NOT saved at that point. If anything at all is added to faith, God the Holy Spirit will not touch it, and so there is no efficacious grace.

The omnipotence of God the Holy Spirit will make effectual only non-meritorious faith alone in Jesus Christ.

The very nature of real spiritual death at birth eliminates any system of salvation by works. The spiritually dead person is incapable of doing anything to obtain salvation. Spiritual death at birth includes: (1) total depravity, which means moral or immoral degeneration; (2) total separation from God; (3) total helplessness to attain a relationship with God; and (4) dichotomy, which is having only a body and soul, without a human spirit. Because of all this, we are unable to understand the simplest concepts of the Gospel. The spiritually dead person can only produce dead works, which have no validity with God.

In the function of evangelism, there are two acts of human volition: (1) hearing the Gospel, which is non-meritorious; and (2) believing in Jesus Christ, which is non-meritorious. However, the spiritually dead person is unable to understand what he hears, and powerless to make his faith in Christ effective for salvation.

The sequence of the pre-salvation grace ministry of God is as follows:

1. In common grace, the Holy Spirit makes the gospel message perspicuous [clear and understandable], to a spiritually dead individual.

1Corinthians 2:14 But a natural man 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.

2. God the Father invites the spiritually dead person to believe in Christ, which is referred to as the divine call.

3. The spiritually dead person believes in Christ, and the Holy Spirit causes faith to be effective for salvation, which is called efficacious grace.

The spiritually dead person can choose to listen to the Gospel and believe in Christ; but these two decisions come from spiritual death and are powerless to provide salvation or make faith effective. Therefore, pre-salvation clarification of the Gospel is the ministry of God the Holy Spirit. The omnipotence of God provides the ability for the unbeliever to understand the Gospel, believe in Jesus Christ, and to accept the invitation. At the moment of simply believing, the Holy Spirit makes our faith effective for salvation.

When any works are added to faith in Christ, the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit will not cause that faith to be effective. The reason is because divine omnipotence and human works, or human power, are mutually exclusive and mutually restrictive. Consequently, human works added to faith in Christ cancels faith because human works is human power, which is rejected by grace.

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

Both charis [grace] and pistis [faith] are in the feminine gender. Then follows the peritactic kai, translated and, which is used to coordinate expressions that have no syntactical relationship in the Greek. This is followed by the neuter gender of the immediate demonstrative pronoun houtos which cannot refer to either grace or faith. And so the phrase and that refers to salvation in general; ... that [salvation is] not of yourselves, because it is the gift of God under the grace ministry of the Holy Spirit. We are spiritually dead, meaning we are under total depravity, total separation from God, and totally helpless to do anything about it. Being spiritually dead, we cannot even understand the Gospel because we have spiritual brain death. So, first the Holy Spirit makes the Gospel clear and understandable through common grace. Then when we believe, by expressing positive volition toward the salvation work of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit takes our faith [positive volition] and makes it effectual for salvation. Therefore, salvation is not from ourselves, because it is a matter of common grace, the divine call, and efficacious grace; and that is why it is referred to as a gift from God.

The Correct Order of Evangelism

When someone communicates the Gospel to an unbeliever, the Holy Spirit, under the ministry of common grace, makes only what is accurate understandable and lucid. Then follows the divine invitation of God the Father to believe in Jesus Christ for eternal salvation. The invitation from God the Father is taught in John 6:44: "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him ...". God the Father draws by the ministry of the Holy Spirit in making the Gospel clear. The invitation from God the Son is found in John 10:27-28: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand." Finally, in efficacious grace, the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit makes faith in Christ effective for salvation. Therefore, in principle, the spiritually dead come to Christ for salvation, not the reverse. The spiritually dead person does not invite Christ to come to him.

"TETELESTAI!" OUR LORD'S UTTERANCE ON THE CROSS

Another reason for the fact that salvation is by faith plus nothing is the statement of Our Lord on the cross immediately after he was judged for the sins of the world. After bearing and being judged for our sins, Jesus Christ was still very much alive, as noted by the fact that He said, "Tetelestai", which is translated "finished in the past with the result that it stands finished forever". It is the

spiritual death of Jesus Christ on the cross and his saving work that is in view in the phrase, "It is finished!" in John 19:30.

Like animal sacrifices in which literal blood was used, in the physical death of Christ we also have literal blood involved; however, the blood was inside His Body, not spilled all over the cross.

John 19:28-37 After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, to fulfill the Scripture, said, "I am thirsty." A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop and brought it up to His mouth. Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit. Then the Jews, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. So the soldiers came, and broke the legs of the first man and of the other who was crucified with Him; but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe. For these things came to pass to fulfill the Scripture, "Not a bone of Him shall be broken." And again another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him Whom they pierced."

We need to remember that Old Testament rituals, that so graphically depicted the saving work of Christ, pictured His spiritual death. His spiritual death is the source of our salvation. Therefore, the physical death of the sacrificial animal actually represented the spiritual death of The Lord Jesus Christ. This analogy will not be confused if we understand the nature of the Lord's physical death, and see that although it has great significance, it was not the means of salvation. The means of salvation was not the physical death of Christ, but His spiritual death, so we must understand that the sacrificed animal's physical death was not a picture of Christ's physical death. If it were, the animal would have been nailed to a cross, or Christ would have been slaughtered on an altar!

John 19:34 But one of the soldiers ...[This is a Roman soldier stationed at the cross.]

John 19:34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, ... The Greek word for side is pleura, which refers to the part of the chest where there are no bones, or the chest cavity.

... and immediately blood and water came out. Notice that word immediately; this was literal blood. In fact, it was blood clots and serum.

The Lord Jesus Christ had blood inside of His body when He died; He did not bleed to death. He was fully in control and in command of Himself on the cross. As John 10:17-18 says, "For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father." The red liquid that ran through the veins and arteries of Jesus' body is not related to our salvation, and there is no Biblical basis for attributing any unusual or magical formula to His blood. Our Lord was minus an old sin nature, but that was because of the virgin birth and the Doctrine of Impeccability. From His own volition, He chose not to sin, or as Isaiah 53:10 says, "...He would render Himself [His soul] as a guilt offering [for sin]. The term Blood of Christ is far more significant than any magical or mystical power falsely ascribed to His physical blood. In John 19:30, we are told that The Lord's literal blood was not a factor in either his spiritual or His physical death.

John 19:30 Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

After The Lord Jesus Christ paid the penalty for sins, He announced that salvation was finished. Then He bowed His head and gave up His life.

John 19:31 Then the Jews, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

The religious Jews were always up to something; they would strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. This is a typical evil of religion. They were very particular about the superficialities of life, while ignoring, avoiding or rejecting the things of eternal importance. They had just demanded and secured the execution of the only perfect man who ever lived, their own Messiah! And now, in their hypocrisy, they are concerned about a man hanging on a cross during the Sabbath.

What is meant by the day of preparation? Preparation is the Greek word *paraskeue* and it refers to the day when the Jews prepared either for a weekly Saturday Sabbath or for a special feast Sabbath. The Jews, who were so fussy in observing all of these detached ceremonies and rituals that spoke of Christ, had just witnessed the Passover right before their eyes. But, did they believe? They did not! Religion had blinded them, and blinded by their religion and superstitions, the Jews failed to understand the real significance of the holy days. Principle: Ritual without reality is meaningless.

Notice the last phrase in John 19:31: ... [they] asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. It was Roman custom to leave a body nailed to the cross until the flesh rotted away. However, Jewish law

demanded that the body of any criminal be put out of sight during a Sabbath or feast day in order not to pollute the land, Deuteronomy 21:22-23. Therefore, the Romans would break the legs by using a heavy mallet in order to crush their bones and cause the body to hang. And these filthy pious religious Jews certainly did not want their victim, whom they had railroaded through the courts, to be hanging on a cross during one of their high Sabbaths.

John 19:32 So the soldiers came, and broke the legs of the first man and of the other who was crucified with Him;

The Roman soldiers went up to the two thieves, one on each side of The Lord Jesus Christ; and, in order to be able to take them down before the Sabbath, the soldiers pounded their legs until their bones were crushed. Once the bones were crushed, the body would hang and suffocate. Then, in deeper shock and unable to force themselves up to relieve the pressure on their muscles, the thieves could not exhale in their lungs, and so they died of suffocation.

The Jews were waiting for the same thing to take place at the cross of Jesus Christ; however, notice verse 33, but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.

The Lord Jesus Christ was already physically dead. Plus, the fact that the soldiers did not break His legs is a fulfillment of specific promises contained in the Old Testament scriptures.

Exodus 12:46 It is to be eaten in a single house; you are not to bring forth any of the flesh outside of the house, nor are you to break any bone of it.

Numbers 9:12 They shall leave none of it until morning, nor break a bone of it; according to all the statute of the Passover they shall observe it.

Psalms 34:20 He keeps all his bones, not one of them is broken.

John 19:36-37 For these things came to pass to fulfill the Scripture, "Not a bone of Him shall be broken." And again another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him Whom they pierced."

God keeps His Word to you and me today, just as He did throughout all the generations leading up to the cross. Passover after Passover, over the time period of nearly 1500 years, the Jews had carefully prepared their Passover lamb in such a way as never to break even one of its bones. Every time they went through this ritual, they were saying in effect, God's Word is true and God will fulfill His promise. Now here, after the crucifixion, God's character was on the line. In spite of the insidiously evil demands of the religious Jews ... in spite of Pontius Pilate's orders ... in spite of the entire Roman army ... not one bone could ever be broken! Why? Because God keeps His Word, no matter what is involved! God always honors and respects His Word, and therefore, Bible

Doctrine resident in your soul is your source of confidence and security (doctrinal vindication).

John 19:34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.

The soldiers had laid down their mallets when one of them picked up his spear and hurled it into Jesus' side. In doing so, He fulfilled Zechariah 12:10, "... so that they will look on Me, Whom they have pierced".

The Lord Jesus Christ anticipated that Satan would attack the cross by perverting the meaning of the blood in an attempt to obscure the importance of spiritual death. So, while still on the cross, Our Lord provided proof that He did not bleed to death; and unlike that of the sacrificial animal, His literal blood has no spiritual significance. Therefore, Our Lord purposely thrust His body forward to demonstrate for all to see and for John to record that He did not die from loss of blood.

The Greek word pleura, translated side, refers to the chest cavity. When the soldier's javelin penetrated upward through Christ's rib cage without breaking any bones, immediately blood and water gushed forth. This is possible only under certain conditions. The word for water is hudor, and this word is used in the medical sense for the grayish-yellow fluid that separates from the blood. Instead of blood and water, a more accurate translation would be blood and serum. Blood is made up of two basic components: red corpuscles and white platelets. When the blood in the body of Jesus Christ stopped circulating and started to settle, it also began to separate. The white platelets, being lighter than the red corpuscles, floated to the top. So, when the spear was thrust into the chest cavity, out came blood (red corpuscles) and serum (white platelets). The blood was not clotting in His body, just separating. For the blood inside the body to separate into red corpuscles and white platelets, or serum, death must not have been caused by bleeding. This is why the word immediately is used to demonstrate the accumulation of the blood in the body. And so, despite prolonged physical torture during His trials and sufferings on the cross, Jesus' physical death came suddenly.

And how did His death come? Well, with complete self-control and clarity of mind, Christ sent away His spirit. He did bleed ... his back was beaten, his hands and feet were nailed, thorns were forced into His scalp! But all these lacerations and puncture wounds did not kill Our Lord, and external bleeding was not the cause of death. Internal hemorrhaging would have resulted in very little blood remaining in the heart. The very sight of blood and serum is medical proof not only that Jesus was physically dead, but that He did not bleed to death.

The Biblical evidence is conclusive; yet, the crucifixion accounts fit perfectly with medical knowledge. With Christ's body thrust forward, it remained in the perfect

position for the maximum amount of blood to settle in the dependent portion of the heart. The evidence to all who witnessed the crucifixion, along with those studying this verse, as to the exact manner of His physical death, is recorded forever in the Word of God. If this evidence is missed, the blood of Christ will be misunderstood, and His finished work will be misunderstood as well.

In John 19:30, The Lord Jesus Christ said, “Tetelesti!” [It is finished!] This is the perfect passive indicative of teleo. The intensive perfect refers to a completed action with emphasis on existing results of that past action. Hence, it refers to a present state resulting from a past action. The present state is that salvation is available. The past action is that Jesus Christ was judged for our sins. The intensive perfect states in a strong way the fact that a thing is. In the perfect tense, teleo means, it has been finished in the past with the result that it stands finished forever. The passive voice represents the subject, Jesus Christ, as being acted upon by someone else; i.e., God the Father, Who imputed our sins to Jesus Christ and judged every one of them. The omnipotence of the Father imputed all of our sins to Christ on the cross. The justice of the Father judged every sin in the history of the human race. Jesus Christ received the action of the verb, being judged as our substitute for the sins of the human race. However, remember that Jesus Christ completed that action on the cross while He was still alive. The indicative mood is declarative for a dogmatic statement of doctrine. John 19:30 therefore indicates that the work of salvation was completed on the cross. And when something is completed, nothing can be added to it!

The one thing for which we can take absolutely zero credit is faith; none of us earn or deserve salvation. The only condition for eternal life is non-meritorious personal faith in Jesus Christ, whose substitutionary spiritual death on the cross provided the efficacious work for salvation. That is why Our Lord said after He had been judged for our sins, “It is finished!” Salvation was completed on the cross. There is nothing we can add to it now or ever. Eternal salvation is a free gift that is compatible with God’s policy of grace. Therefore, it is attained by faith alone in Jesus Christ. By adding any human effort or merit to faith for salvation, man is in competition with God, and that alone is blasphemous.

The phrase blood of Christ actually speaks of three basic doctrines with regard to His saving work on the cross: the Doctrine of Propitiation, Romans 3:25; the Doctrine of Redemption [solving the sin problems], Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 1:14; and the Doctrine of Reconciliation, Colossians 1:20. Remember that, although His literal blood was minus the old sin nature, when His blood is mentioned in Scripture it refers to the saving work of Our Lord Jesus Christ. In Leviticus 17:11, the phrase, for the life of the flesh is in the blood refers to animals, not to humans. We are a higher order of creature than animals; we have a human soul, and human life was imputed to that soul, not to our human blood. When the soul leaves the body, it is the sign of physical death. When a

person dies, his blood remains in his body; only the soul and human spirit are ... absent from the body and ... at home with the Lord, 2Corinthians 5:8.

The blood of Christ had no magical formula or special mystifying substance. His blood was minus the old sin nature, but it was His soul that gave His blood value, not His blood that gave his soul value. The thought of that is blasphemous. As God He was not able to sin, but as man He was able not to sin. It is the person of Jesus Christ that gave His blood value; and His sinless unstained blood was not the issue in salvation, it was His spiritual death and His Soul. It was not the blood that prevented His soul from sinning; it was His soul that kept His blood from being affected by a sin nature.

Animal blood was the basis for setting up a representative analogy, or a teaching aide. The animal blood was used to teach the fulfillment that takes place on the cross. Therefore, when the blood of Christ is mentioned in the New Testament, it is a reference to His saving work on the cross.

Ephesians 1:7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace”

Hebrews 9:14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

1Peter 1:19 but [redeemed] with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.

Revelation 1:5 To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood --

Romans 5:9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.

Hebrews 13:12 Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate.

1John 1:7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

DIRECT STATEMENT OF SCRIPTURE

The third reason why salvation is based on faith plus nothing is the direct statement of Scripture.

John 16:8-9 “And He [Holy Spirit], when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me”

Our personal sins are not an issue in salvation. They were an issue at the cross, and Jesus Christ was already judged for every one of them. Therefore, the Holy Spirit, who convicts us with regard to salvation, never convicts us with regard to our personal sins. However, the one sin He convicts us of is the only sin for which Christ could not die: the sin of rejecting Him, or the sin of unbelief.

John 3:15 so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish [eternal security], but have eternal life.

John 3:18 He who believes in Him [Christ] is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Notice that the word believe is repeated three times in this verse, and that no works are added to it.

John 3:36 He who believes in the Son has eternal life, but he who does not believe in the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on Him.

The issue in salvation is that you either believe in Christ once, or you do not believe.

John 6:47 “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life.”

John 11:25-26 Jesus said to her [Martha], “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die.”

You have to believe while you are alive; there is no second chance after you die.

John 20:31 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.

Acts 16:31 They said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household [meaning, if anyone in your household believes in Christ, they too are saved].”

Notice that the command is to believe; there is nothing added to it.

Galatians 3:26 For you are all sons of God [Royal Family] through faith in Christ Jesus.

Notice that nothing is added to faith.

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek [Gentile].

Everyone is saved the same way, both Jew and Gentile. They are saved, not by keeping the Law, but only by believing in Christ.

Romans 3:20-22 because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin. But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets [Old Testament], even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;

Romans 3:28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the Law.

Notice it is by faith apart from works. This means that when a person adds any type of works whatsoever to faith, he is not justified and therefore not saved.

Romans 4:4-5 Now to the one who works [for salvation], his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work [for salvation], but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness ...

Romans 4:14 For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified;

In other words, God has lied and turned back on His promises.

Galatians 2:16 nevertheless knowing that a man [spiritually dead person] is not justified by the works of 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 no flesh will be justified.

How are we justified in the eyes of God?

Romans 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through Our Lord Jesus Christ."

The only way of salvation is one act of personal faith in Jesus Christ with nothing added to it. To add to faith in Christ for salvation is no salvation at all. If, when you believe in Christ, you are depending upon something else besides faith in Christ, you are not saved.

Philippians 3:9 and may [I] be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.

2Timothy 3:15 and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Even if you later renounce your faith in Christ, you are still saved.

2Timothy 2:11-13 (ASV) Faithful is the saying [Word]: For if we died with Him [Christ; and we have, through retroactive positional truth], we will also live with Him [Christ]; if we endure [suffering for blessing], we will also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He also will deny us [escrow savings account blessings for time and eternity]; if we are faithless [do not believe, after we are saved], He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.

God the Father cannot deny the indwelling of the Trinity.

Romans 3:24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

Salvation is said to be by grace, and grace is God doing the work and God getting the credit, and excludes human works.

Romans 4:16(a) For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace,

Romans 5:1-2 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand;

Romans 5:15 But the free gift [of salvation] is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one [Adam] the many [human race] died [spiritual death], much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.

Romans 5:17 For if by the transgression of the one [Adam], [spiritual] death reigned through the one [Adam], much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the one, Jesus Christ.

2Timothy 1:9 who [God the Father] 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 in Christ Jesus from all eternity past,

CHRIST'S DEATH AS A SUBSTITUTION

Christ died has a substitute for us once; we believe in Him once.

Hebrews 9:27-28 And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, so Christ also, having been offered once ...

Romans 5:8 demonstrates the proposition of substitution: *huper* plus the genitive of *ego* in the plural. But God demonstrates His own love toward us [this is impersonal unconditional love for all mankind in the status of real spiritual death], in that while we were yet sinners [objects of divine impersonal love], Christ died [as a substitute] for us. This is substitutionary spiritual death on the cross.

1Peter 3:18 (ASV) For Christ also died once for our sins, the righteous one [impeccable humanity of Christ] as a substitute for the unrighteous ones.

Notice how this word *once* keeps occurring. It is the Greek word H-A-P-A-X-Z. In this verse we have *huper* plus the genitive of advantage of *adikos*, which means, on behalf of the unrighteous ones or better still, as a substitute for the unrighteous ones.

In both Romans 5:8 and 1Peter 3:18, Christ died as a substitute for us. Notice that both verses say Christ died once. So our response to the one act of sacrifice is one act of faith, and faith alone. By one act of faith, we have eternal life.

Galatians 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for [instead of, in place of, on behalf of, as a substitute for] us – for it stands written (Deuteronomy 21:23), “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree [cross]” –

The Law puts a curse on sin. Jesus Christ, as our substitute, was judged for our sins. In Galatians 3:13, the Doctrine of Redemption is used because it is talking about the Mosaic Law. The Mosaic Law is designed to put us into the slave market of sin. The only way we can be redeemed from the slave market of sin, as members of the human race, is for someone to pay for our freedom. Jesus Christ paid for our freedom on the cross. That is the meaning of redemption. Yet, the Mosaic Law is used by many as a means of salvation. Such people add the works of the Law to faith in Jesus Christ. That is why Romans 3:20 says, because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through

the Law comes the knowledge of sin. The purpose of the Law is to make us aware of the fact that we are sinners with an old sin nature.

Romans 3:28 adds, For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law. This means faith alone, and only one time is necessary for us to believe in Christ. And the first time we do believe, we possess eternal life.

Galatians 2:16 nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus,

One act of faith in Christ is all it takes to possess eternal life.

1John 4:9-10 By this the love of God [impersonal love for all mankind] was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him [or we might be saved]. In this is love [by this is divine impersonal love for all mankind manifested], not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Propitiation means that once God the Father imputed and judged all our sins in Christ on the cross, at that very moment He was satisfied completely with the work of Our Lord. There is only one work of salvation that satisfies God the Father, and that is the saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Grace in salvation is the work of God. God the Father imputed our sins to Jesus Christ on the cross. God the Son received the imputation and judgment for our sins on the cross through His substitutionary spiritual death. God the Holy Spirit reveals the plan of salvation to the spiritually dead person under the Doctrine of Common Grace. So an invitation from God is extended. When that invitation is accepted, it is simply by believing in Jesus Christ that God the Holy Spirit makes our faith effective.

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

Therefore, the whole principle of eternal salvation is faith and faith alone.

“THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WORD”

Introduction

1. Napoleon once said, “The Bible is no mere book, but a Living Creature, with a power that conquers all that oppose it.”

2. The phenomenal American patriot and lover of freedom, Robert E. Lee said, "In my perplexities and distresses, the Bible has never failed to give me light and strength."

3. Horace Greeley wrote, that "It is impossible to enslave mentally or socially a Bible-reading people. The principles of the Bible are the groundwork of human freedom."

4. Immanuel Kant, the German philosopher who lived from 1724-1804, wrote, "The existence of the Bible, as a book for the people, is the greatest benefit which the human race has ever experienced. Every attempt to belittle it is a crime against humanity."

Body

1. The Bible is the mind of Christ, i.e., His thoughts on every subject. In 1 Corinthians 2:16, Paul said, "For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ."

2. God places the highest priority on His Word, and has magnified it above everything else known to man. The RSV of Psalm 138:2 say's, "I bow down toward Thy holy temple and give thanks to Thy name for Thy steadfast love and Thy faithfulness; for Thou hast exalted above everything Thy name and Thy Word."

3. The Word existed, in the form of wisdom, before human history.

A. King Solomon, writing in Proverbs 8:22-30 as wisdom personified, said, "The LORD possessed me at the beginning of His way, before His works of old [/ farthest time of antiquity]. From everlasting I was established [Heb. 'olam here means- eternity past], from the beginning, from the earliest times of the earth. When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills I was brought forth; while He had not yet made the earth and the fields, nor the first dust of the world. When He established the heavens, I was there, when He inscribed a circle on the face of the deep, when He made firm the skies above, when the springs of the deep became fixed, when He set for the sea its boundary, so that the water should not transgress His command, when He marked out the foundations of the earth; then I was beside Him, {as} a master workman; and I was daily {His} delight, rejoicing always before Him."

B. Some scholars have viewed these words as belonging to the Lord Jesus Christ. I.e., they see Him in this personification of wisdom in the Proverbs, as the OT counterpart and predecessor to the Logos of John in the NT.

A Greek philosopher named Heraclitus first used the term Logos around 600 BC to designate the divine reason or plan which coordinates a changing universe.

This word was well suited to John's definition of Jesus Christ as the personal wisdom and power in union with God, His Executor in the creation and government of the universe, and the cause of all the world's life, both physical and spiritual.

4. The Bible surpasses all human intellectual achievement.

A. The Apostle Paul discusses the wisdom of the world and its relation to the Word of God in 1 Corinthians 1:17-31. Cf. passage.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, the German poet and dramatist, who lived from 1749-1842, said, "Let mental culture go on advancing, let the natural sciences progress in ever greater extent and depth, and the human mind widen itself as much as it desires; beyond the elevation and moral culture of Christianity, as it shines forth in the Gospels, it will not go."

B. The Apostle Peter wrote, in 2 Peter 1:19-21, that "...we have the prophetic word [OT] {made} more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is {a matter} of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."

1) When Peter says, "we have the prophetic word [OT] {made} more sure," he's speaking in the light of what he just said in v. 16-18, that "...we were eyewitnesses of" Christ's "majesty," and that "...when He received honor and glory from God the Father," who said, "'This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased,' ...we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven..."

What better way of substantiating the truth than to say, "We saw it with our own eyes and we heard it with our own ears."? What can be more real than seeing and hearing? Peter tells us that the Word of God should be more real to us than anything else in life!

a. In this passage, Peter documents the experience of the Transfiguration which he had shared with James and John on Mt. Hermon in Caesarea Philippi. They had seen Jesus Christ in all His glory, as He would appear at the 2nd Advent. They had witnessed the inward reality of His true nature as eternal Deity shining through. They heard the Father's voice speak from Heaven; and yet Peter wrote with utmost conviction-- "we have the prophetic word {made} more sure, to which you do well to pay attention..."

b. He says that the prophetic word is an even surer confirmation than what he saw at the Transfiguration; that the testimony of the OT is more convincing than even the voice of God which he heard that day.

c. The phrase “more sure” is from the comparative of *be/baioj* (*bebaios*). *Bebaios* means- permanent, certain, secure. It speaks of something that is firm, stable, something that can be relied upon and trusted in.

The idea is that the Word of God which we possess is an even more reliable foundation than the signs and wonders which Peter and the other apostles had witnessed firsthand.

2) To this Word, Peter say’s, you would “do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place.” One might ask the question, in ignorance, “Why place such a profound importance on the Scriptures?” Because the Word of God is what leads us out of spiritual darkness.

a. The writer of Psalm 119 say’s to God in v. 105, “Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.”

b. David wrote, “For You are my lamp, O LORD; and the LORD illumines my darkness,” 2 Samuel 22:29.

c. Solomon said to Rehoboam in Proverbs 6:20-23, “My son, observe the commandment of your father, and do not forsake the teaching of your mother [divine viewpoint instilled by / parents]; bind them continually on your heart [right lobe of your soul]; tie them around your neck. When you walk about, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; and when you awake, they will talk to you. For the commandment is a lamp, and the teaching is light; and reproofs for discipline are the way of life.”

3) The question is, “How long are we to single-mindedly devote our thoughts, our efforts, and our energy to the Word of God?” The answer-- “until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.”

a. The dawning of the “day” here is the Day of Christ-- the Rapture of the Church.

b. The “morning star arising in your hearts” signifies the ultimate decoration in eternity-- the order of the Morning Star. The “morning star” is described as a category of eternal reward in Revelation 2:26-28.

These three vv. are found in the context of a passage addressed “to the angel [/ pastor] of the church in Thyatira,” from the “Son of God” Himself. Thyatira was a church characterized by great spiritual service. In v. 19 Jesus said, “I know... that your deeds of late are greater than at first,” a statement that implies spiritual growth in the body. Their spiritual growth had resulted in “love and faith and service and perseverance.” Yet, in the midst of their spiritual growth, and their Christ-like attitude of service in the cause of the Gospel, they were tolerating a self-appointed “prophetess” by the name of Jezebel who was teaching false

doctrine and leading weaker believers astray into sexual immorality and idol worship.

Nevertheless, our Lord said, that "...he who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I also have received {authority} from My Father; and I will give him the morning star," vv. 26-28.

The "morning star" is a decoration awarded to those few who have become so conformed to Christ in this earthly life that they will reflect the glory of Christ in heaven. There could be no more tremendous honor-- no greater privilege than to exchange at the Bema Seat this uniform of honor, worn in the soul, for that uniform of glory.

4) When Peter writes to these persecuted believers, he doesn't say, "But know this first of all." What he says is, "keep on knowing this."

a. The word Peter uses is a pres. act. part. which speaks of a perception and understanding which is uninterrupted, continually taking place. The active voice brings out the principle of personal responsibility in the application of the doctrine they were being taught.

b. He uses the phrase "keep on knowing this" to refer back to the words "to which you do well to pay attention." That is, as these believers gave their attention to the OT prophecies and the OT Scriptures, they were to keep in mind what followed in the next two vv.

5) In one short sentence Peter lay's down the most important hermeneutical principle you and I will ever learn-- "that no prophecy of Scripture is {a matter} of one's own interpretation."

a. The Greek i)/dij (idios) means- one's own private, exclusive possession. I.e., what he's saying is the Word of God is not subject to the mind of man; it's not a ball of metaphorical clay that even the most brilliant human mind can mold and shape into the form and fashion it desires, nor is it subject to rationalism and empiricism.

b. It is, however, the exclusive possession of the Spirit of God, and therefore, to assimilate the Word, to metabolize the Word, and to interpret it accurately requires the exercise of faith in the power of the Spirit. Allow me, if you will, to illustrate this for you from 1 Corinthians 2.

c. In 1 Corinthians 2:11 Paul told the believers in Corinth that no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. He went on to say in v. 12, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world [human viewpoint-- / wisdom and rationale of / CS], but the Spirit who is from God [HS], that [hina- 'in order that;'] it

begins a final purpose clause, i.e., it is used by Paul to point out / principal reason for our having been given the HS at salvation] we might know [with a clear and absolute knowledge; subj. mood of oida means that volitionally, / choice to learn and apply / Word is entirely up to you and I] the things freely given to us by God [‘freely given’ comes from / verb charizomai- ‘give in grace;’ those ‘things given to us by the grace of God’ are spiritual truths in / form of Bible doctrine].” --Back to 2 Peter.

6) The word “for” in v. 21 is the causal particle gar, and it means- for this reason. Why is it that “no prophecy of Scripture is of one’s own interpretation”? For this simple reason, because “no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will.”

a. Lit, what this say’s is, “no prophecy was ever given by the will and desire of man,” by his choice and his inclination. Therefore, divine truth is not relegated to the sphere of human intellect, or to the subjectivity of emotion. That belongs to cults, like the Mormons, with their completely subjective ‘test of faith’ known as the “burning in the bosom.”

b. We cannot say, as many, many a Sunday School class can testify, “Well, this is what I think it means.” That’s precisely the type of ‘pooled ignorance’ that leads to mass confusion and spiritual blindness.

7) Peter begins his last statement with “but.” The Greek word is alla, the strongest conjunction of contrast possible. In perfect contrast to the finite intellect of man, “men moved by the HS spoke from God.”

a. Phero means- ‘be carried or borne along.’ It signifies that the prophets of old were impelled by the power of the Spirit, that He controlled and superintended them so that what they wrote was the exact message He wanted written.

They didn’t simply write what they felt like writing, they were “carried along” by the HS. Neither can we simply interpret the Word according to what we feel it means, or what we feel it ought to mean. We must let the writer speak for himself, without putting our thoughts in his head.

b. The verb lale/w (laleo) here means- use words in order to declare one’s mind and disclose one’s thoughts. Without waiving the human authors personality, literary style, IQ, vocabulary or frame of reference, G / HS inspired these men to declare and disclose to the human race, in the language and vernacular of their own day, the mind and thoughts of God-- the divine viewpoint infallibly expressed in human terms.

8) So, we have seen, without a shadow of a doubt, that the Bible far surpasses any human intellectual achievement.

C. Sir William Herschel said, that “All human discoveries seem to be made only for the purpose of confirming more and more strongly the truths contained in the Sacred Scriptures.”

D. “The grand old Book still stands; and this old earth, the more its leaves are turned and pondered, the more it will sustain and illustrate the pages of the Sacred Word.”-- Charles E. Dana

5. The Bible is our most important provision for daily life. In Matthew 4:4 Jesus answered the temptation and testing of Satan with the words, “...Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.”

Consider the narrative of Luke in 10:38-42 of his gospel. “Now as they were traveling along, He [Jesus] entered a certain village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home [Jn. 11:1-5 tells us that Martha was / sister of Mary and Lazarus, all of whom were close friends of our Lord, friends He loved unconditionally]. And she had a sister called Mary, who moreover was listening to the Lord’s word, seated at His feet.”

The Greek word akouo is used here, not only for Mary’s hearing, but for her comprehension and understanding of what was being taught. “But [now we see / contrast between Mary’s hunger and desire for / Word of God, and Martha’s preoccupation with details] Martha was distracted with all her preparations [verb Luke uses, perispao, means- ‘be driven about mentally, over-occupied with something;’ we would say, ‘she was stressed out’]; and she came up {to Him,} and said, ‘Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? [notice she doesn’t wait for an answer, instead she answers for Him] Then tell her to help me.’”

That’s just like a woman, isn’t it? Martha assumed, without actually knowing, that our Lord didn’t care about her being left to do all the serving alone, but in reality, what He didn’t care about was that she was distracted by temporal details while He was breaking the Bread of Life. So, he turns her attention back to the real issue, back from the temporal to the eternal.

In v. 41 it say’s, “...the Lord answered and said to her, ‘Martha, Martha, you are worried [anxious] and bothered [word means- to be troubled, disturbed, and confused] about so many things; but {only} a few things are necessary, really {only} one [/ one necessary thing in life, / one absolute, / one thing you cannot live without, is / Word of God], for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.’”

There’s no mistake here, the word Jesus uses for “good” is from agathos- ‘divine good.’ What our Lord said was, “Mary has chosen that part which is of eternal

value and eternal consequence, as opposed to the merely temporal.” The “good part” which Jesus spoke of was to listen and to learn at the feet of the Master.

6. Our response to the Word of God determines whether we will receive God’s blessing or cursing in time.

In Proverbs 8:33-36, wise old Solomon told his son Rehoboam, to “Heed instruction and be wise [(amf\$ shama’ is / Heb. equivalent of / Greek akouo; it means- hear and obey, which leads us where?-- to / path of wisdom], and do not neglect {it [instruction; and from where does instruction come?-- from / Word of God; cf. pr.].} Blessed is the man who listens to me [who listens to wisdom and instruction], watching daily at my gates, waiting at my doorposts. For he who finds me finds life [LXX translates this word by zoe- ‘abundant life’], and obtains favor from the LORD [ratson is one of / Heb. words for ‘grace’]. But [in contrast to / wise man who listens and learns from instruction] he who sins against me injures himself [this is / self-induced misery of negative volition]; [Solomon finishes this brief discourse with a principle that stands firm throughout every dispensation] all those who hate me [teaching of / Word] love death [temporal and operational].”

Principle: The man who hears and obeys instruction from the Word is a wise man.

7. Our response to the Word of God is the basis for our eternal reward.

A. I want to look at two passages in the book of James-- 1:25; and 2:12-13.

1) In 1:25, James tells us, that “...one who looks intently at the perfect law, the {law} of liberty [of freedom-- Word of God], and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does.”

a. “Looking intently” refers to diligent study, to concentration on the Word. It comes from the verb paraku/ptw (parakupto)- inspect curiously, look at very carefully.

Parakupto pictures someone leaning over a railing, or stooping down in order to get a closer look at something. It was also used in the ancient world of people standing outside of someplace straining to see what was going on inside.

b. When James speaks of the believer who “abides by” the law of freedom, he uses parameno, which means- ‘remain beside, continue near or in something.’ It speaks of the believer’s steadfast continuance, his perseverance in the Word of Truth, and therefore, in the plan of grace.

Parameno was a military term in the Classical Greek and was used by both Homer and Thucydides for an army at war that ‘stands its ground’. The first part

of v. 25 could be translated-- “one who diligently studies with curious inspection, the perfect law of freedom, the Word of God, and by it stands his ground.”

c. “A forgetful hearer” is one who hears the Word taught but never makes the leap of faith into application.

d. “An effectual doer” is one who applies the principles, promises, and truths from the storehouse of doctrine in his own soul.

e. James says, “this man shall be blessed in what he does.” Why? Because he made the decision to take the Word out of his soul and bring it into the realm of experience.

2) In James 2:12-13, he writes, “So speak and so act, as those who are to be judged [evaluated, at / Bema Seat] by {the} law of liberty [Word of God; what James is saying is that our spiritual lives will be assessed in / light of / divine standard found in / ‘law of freedom’]. For judgment [at / Bema Seat] {will be} merciless to one who has shown no mercy [James recognizes that because of our arrogance, our inability and our insufficiency, what we need more than anything else, standing in / presence of / omniscient Judge, is mercy, i.e., / fullest possible measure of compassion]; mercy triumphs over judgment [not only will mercy triumph at / Day of Christ, mercy is victorious right now; mercy triumphs over arrogance, mercy triumphs over hypocrisy, mercy triumphs over self-righteousness and a judgmental attitude; 2 principles of mercy from vv. 12-13].”

a. Because God has shown us great mercy, we are to show mercy to others.

b. The standard of mercy that you measure out to others is the standard by which you yourself will be measured.

In Matthew 7:1-2 Jesus told his fellow Jews, “Do not judge lest you be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.”

The question then is: How do you judge others? With mercy and grace, or without? Because this is the divine standard of judgment, whether with mercy and grace, or without, it’s measured back to us.

B. The Apostle John, in 2 John 8, exhorts these believers, to “watch yourselves, that you might not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward.”

1) The word for “watch” here is a mental word in the Greek. It means-- consider, contemplate, direct your thoughts and attention toward something.

2) John penned these very words in recognition of the “...many deceivers” who had “gone out into the world.” He describes them in v. 7, as “those who do

not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh [those who did not acknowledge / humanity of Christ were / Docetic Gnostics that John labeled as deceivers and antichrists].”

3) What was it about themselves that John was commanding these believers to keep a watchful eye on, to direct their thoughts and attention toward. It was their dedication to the one and only thing that would give them discernment against false teaching, the one thing that would enable them to identify the deceivers and antichrists-- the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God.

C. Hebrews 10:35-36, say's, “Therefore [or consequently, in light of your having endured / ‘great conflict of suffering,’ described in vv. 33-34, he say's], do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward [their confidence, which came about as a result of their understanding / Word of God, rested in an eternal, omnipotent and immutable God]. For you have need of endurance, [now he gives us / reason for our desperate need of divine endurance] so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised [blessing in time and reward in eternity].”

D. Let's look, for a moment, at those links which God designed in eternity past for the Spiritual Chain of the Church Age. There are at least eight links in this chain.

1) The Spiritual Chain begins with communication*, the root from which all spiritual fruit is borne.

2) Communication of the Word must be heard before faith can be exercised, thus accentuating the importance of Bible class and personal study-- “faith {comes} from hearing*, and hearing by the word of Christ,” Romans 10:17.

3) Faith* must be exercised, ‘inhale faith,’ before application can take place, for the simple fact that you cannot apply what you do not know.

4) Full knowledge, knowledge* to which faith has been applied, is a reality only when we believe what has been perceived and understood through the illumination of the HS, through His teaching ministry.

5) Once we possess epignosis, full knowledge, in the heart-- the right lobe of the mentality-- now we can move into the realm of application*. We call this ‘exhale faith.’

6) From application of the Word in the power of the Spirit comes character*. Christian character means virtue, and eventually, integrity. Integrity is consistency of character.

7) From spiritual character comes true spiritual service*, ministry to the Body of Christ. Here's the principle: Character is a result of spiritual growth; service is a result of character.

8) With that service comes a finality in our personal sense of destiny-- joy, peace, contentment, and a sense of completion and fulfillment* unequalled and unparalleled by anything the world has to offer!

Principle: Inner tranquility and contentment come from learning how to rest in the arms of God's matchless grace.

a. The personal sense of destiny, the joy of spiritual service, the fulfillment and contentment which come from ministry to the Body of Christ, are all a part of the believer's blessing in time which will be parlayed into reward in eternity.

b. So, what we have here is basically a four-fold breakdown in the execution of God's Protocol Plan-- growth leading to character, character leading to service, and service leading eventually to reward.

8. Nations stand or fall based on their attitude to God's Word.

A. The great American hero and President, Andrew Jackson, once said, "That book, sir, is the rock on which our Republic rests." Cf. Hosea 4:1-14.

B. "If there is anything in my thoughts or style to commend, the credit is due to my parents for instilling in me an early love of the Scriptures. If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and to prosper; but if we and our posterity neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury all our glory in profound obscurity."-- Daniel Webster

In Conclusion

"The vigor of our spiritual life will be in exact proportion to the place held by the Bible in our life and thoughts. I solemnly state this from the experience of fifty-four years. The first three years after conversion I neglected the Word of God. Since I began to search it diligently the blessing has been wonderful. Great has been the blessing from consecutive, diligent, daily study. I look upon it as a lost day when I have not had a good time over the Word of God."-- George Muller

ETERNAL SECURITY: DOCTRINE OF

Definition: Eternal security is that aspect of Soteriology (study of salvation) which contends that no individual, once the recipient of the saving grace of God through faith in Christ, will ever fall from that estate, but shall be "protected by the power

of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time,” 1 Peter 1:5b.

Historical note: The Westminster Confession of Faith declares, “They whom God hath accepted in His Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from that state of Grace; but shall certainly persevere to the end and be eternally saved!”

Four Points of Introduction To Be Understood In Studying Eternal Security.

1. Total depravity of man. There is nothing in fallen man that could in any way commend him to God. He is an object of divine grace.
2. Efficacious grace. Fallen man’s salvation is actualized (made real) entirely by God the Holy Spirit. It is His power and His graces that acknowledge the faith of a spiritually dead person and make it effective for salvation.
3. Sovereign and eternal election. Those who are saved by efficacious grace from the estate of depravity have been chosen for that special purpose from before the foundation of the world, i.e., eternity past. How? Because the foreknowledge of God looked down the corridor of time into human history and saw your volitional decision made in perfect freedom, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.
4. Eternal security. Those chosen of God and saved by grace are, of necessity, preserved until the plan and design of God is realized. What is that plan? To be conformed to the living image of His Son.
 - A. The truth of eternal security is inherent in the nature of salvation itself! Why? Because if salvation is the creation of a new spiritual species composed of unchangeable and imperishable elements-- and it is-- and every aspect of it is made to depend on the perfect and immutable merit of the Son of God, then there can be no failure!
 - B. There are no proper grounds for drawing a distinction between salvation and eternal security. Why? Because God is not offering a salvation to men which is not eternal in its very nature.
 - 1) Jesus said in John 3:15, “that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life.” And in 3:36, John the Baptist said, that “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”
 - 2) In John 10:28, Jesus said of all believers, that “...I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand.”

3) Romans 6:23 say's, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

4) The Apostle John wrote in 1 John 5:11-13, that "...the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know [with absolute certainty] that you have eternal life."

Principle: Scripturally, it is a fact that no soul once saved has ever been, or ever will be, lost again.

Doubts about the security of believers can be traced almost universally to a failure to comprehend the reality of what God accomplishes in sovereign grace-- a finished and complete redemption, reconciliation and propitiation!

Positional approach:

Romans 8:1

1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 1:3-6

3 Blessed {be} the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly {places} in Christ,

4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.

5 In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. (NAS)

1 Corinthians 15:22

22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. (NAS)

A. Every believer is in union with Christ from the moment of salvation. This is part of the strategic victory of the Angelic Conflict.

1) Romans 6:3 say's, "...do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?"

2) In 1 Corinthians 12:13, Paul writes, "For by one Spirit [Holy Spirit] we [Church Age believers] were all [none excluded] baptized into [identified with forever, at the moment of salvation] one body [Body of Christ], whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we [Church Age believers] were all [none excluded] made to drink of one Spirit [a reference to the eternal indwelling of the

Holy Spirit which is another factor that is unique to the Dispensation of the Church].”

B. Regarding point A., principles related to the baptism by the Spirit.

1) The baptism by the Spirit brings the believer into living union with Jesus Christ.

2) Through the baptism by the Spirit, the believer is vitally and spiritually united to the Lord.

3) Being “in Christ,” he is a possessor of the righteousness which Christ is.

4) “In Christ” we are perfected to the point which satisfies divine integrity (R+J) and on that ground alone God declares us justified in His own sight.

a. Romans 5:8-9 tell us, that “...God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath {of God} through Him.”

b. We see in Romans 3:26-28 Paul saying, “for the demonstration, {I say,} of His righteousness at the present time, that He [God / Father] might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? [a law] Of works? No, but by a law of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified [declared legally righteous in the sight of God] by faith apart from works of the Law.”

Principle: Having justified us completely “in Christ,” God cannot and will not bring any charges against His “elect.”

c. Justification logically follows the imputation of God’s absolute righteousness at the moment of salvation.

d. “Justified” is from the root verb dika/iow (dikaioo). To “justify” was a legal term meaning- secure a favorable verdict, acquit, vindicate, declare righteous.

Principle: God disciplines His children (Heb. 12:5-11), but He never condemns His children (Rom. 8:1).

2. Sovereign purpose of God.

In Romans 8:29 Paul say’s, “For whom He foreknew, He also predestined [proori/zw (proorizo), from pro- before, and horizo- determine or appoint; it means- ordain beforehand, predestine] {to be} conformed [summo/rfoj (summorphos), comprised of sun- with, and morphe- refers to the outward

expression of an inward nature or essence; thus together they mean- be similar in form (inner man- soul) and appearance (outer man- body)] to the image [ei]kw/n (eikon)- likeness, embodiment, manifestation; used by Plato for the reflection of the sun in the water and in Mat. 22:20 of the emperor's head on a coin; in the NT it comes to mean not just a copy or facsimile but a living image in which the original is always present; just as the child is the eikon of his parents, so we as children of God are eikons of Christ-- He is refining (Ps. 17:3- "tried... and tested" by God, 66:10- "refined... as silver is refined"; tested and refined both come from the Heb. tsaraph- smelt, refine, test; 1 Pet. 1:7 speaks of our faith being "tested {dokimazo- used for the testing and examination of precious metals for their genuineness} by fire") us into Christ-likeness through the process of spiritual growth, a process to be consummated with our resurrection body at the Rapture] of His Son, that He [Jesus Christ] might be the first-born among many brethren."

He goes on to say in v. 30, "and whom He predestined, these [same ones] He also called [elected to privilege]; and whom He elected to privilege, these [same ones] He also justified [declared righteous]; and whom He declared righteous, these [same ones] He also glorified [a future event written in the past tense- stated as already accomplished, though still future in the fullest sense; Paul is saying that this conclusive step of glorification is both final and inevitable in the divine decrees]."

Ephesians 1:4-5

4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.

5 In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, (NAS)

Ephesians 1:11-12

11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,

12 to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. (NAS)

Ephesians 2:4-7

4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,

5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly {places}, in Christ Jesus,

7 in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (NAS)

A. These passages encompass all of eternity.

- B. They reveal a divine purpose from eternity past.
- C. They reach on to its realization and fulfillment in eternity future.
- D. All of the aforementioned conclusions are accomplished without one reference to human conditions!

Some Questions That May Arise (wrong answers are blasphemous).

- 1) Can infinite God realize His eternal purpose? Yes!
- 2) Is God baffled and uncertain, bewildered and unsure in the presence of mankind, the object of His own creative power? Definitely not! From this we can derive two principles.
 - a. If God could fail in one feature of His perfect plan, however small, He could fail in all.
 - b. If He could fail in anything, He ceases to be God!
3. Omnipotent power of God.

Points of Introduction

- 1) Christians possess an old-sin-nature.
- 2) Christians may (not must) volitionally choose to sin and are therefore experientially imperfect.
- 3) Some have concluded that these facts (pts. 1 & 2) introduce a “moral problem” when their eternal security is considered.

Conclusion: It is this moral problem which is the formidable obstacle in the mind of those who subscribe to the Arminian view (rejection) of eternal security.

The Arminian believes that personal sin can serve to “unsave” the Christian.

An Irrational Conclusion Related To This Statement.

Personal sin can “unsave” the Christian, but not “minor” sins, such as all believers might commit, or else no Christian would endure at all and ever reach heaven.

Because of these irrational conclusions the Arminian cannot contend that one reaches heaven on the basis of a sinless life. Which leads, in turn to--

Further Erroneous Conclusions.

- 1) Those believers who reach heaven did not commit sins sufficiently wicked enough to cause them to lose their salvation.
- 2) The Arminian rationalizes an unscriptural claim which distinguishes between big sins and little sins.
- 3) In his arrogant unbelief he alleges that personal sin may unsave the Christian after Christ has borne the guilt and penalty for it!

Peter deals with this very issue in two separate passages of his 1st epistle-- 1 Peter 2:24, which say's, "and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed," and 1 Peter 3:18, "For Christ also died for sins once for all, {the} just for {the} unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive by the Spirit."

C. Doctrinal principles related to the moral problem of personal sin.

- 1) 1 John 2:2 declares that the believer's sins, as well as "those of the entire world," have had their precise and consummate judgment accomplished and finished by Christ in His death.
- 2) This judgment was so perfect that God the Father is rendered infinitely propitious by it.
- 3) God the Father is able, because of His omnipotence, to keep His children eternally.
- 4) God the Father is set free through the sacrificial death of His Son to keep His children, in spite of the "moral problem" of personal sin from the OSN.

Conclusion: If there is a sin which wasn't paid for on the Cross, and which can subsequently cause a man to lose his salvation, then Christ died for nothing and everything we believe is a lie!

4. Anthropomorphic approach.

Psalm 37:23-24

23 The steps of a man are established by the LORD; and He delights in his way.

24 When he falls, he shall not be hurled headlong; because the LORD is the One who holds his hand. (NAS)

A. The believer is pictured as falling, which is a reference to personal sin, yet held securely by the hand of Almighty God.

Principle: God's hand holds you whether you hold His or not!

John 10:27-29

27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;

28 and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand.

29 "My Father, who has given {them} to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch {them} out of the Father's hand. (NAS)

B. V. 28 tells us that regardless of human conditions and circumstances, the believer will never perish.

Principle: There is no created power sufficient to snatch the believer out of the hand of Christ, including the freewill of the sheep!

C. In v. 29 the hand of God the Father is seen as closed around the hand of Jesus Christ which holds you and I as His sheep.

Rhetorical question: Who would dare claim that mortal man-- the creature-- could usurp the power of the Creator and break open the mighty hand of God? The very idea is both blasphemous and ridiculous.

5. Logical approach-- starts with the grace of God and then works up to our benefit in eternal security.

Romans 5:8-10

8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath {of God} through Him.

10 For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

A. We are seen as the "enemies of God" prior to salvation.

B. While we were His "enemies" God did the most for us by providing the sacrifice of His perfect Son on the Cross.

1) We are reconciled to God through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ (v. 10).

2) This includes justification through His blood (spiritual death) and salvation from eternal wrath through Him (v. 9).

C. Now that we are His children, He will do “much more” than the most.

Romans 8:35-39

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 Just as it is written, "For Thy sake we are being put to death all day long; we were considered as sheep to be slaughtered."

37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,

39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (NAS)

D. V. 35 presents us with the external circumstances of life inside the Angelic Conflict.

Principle: The spiritual believer draws His strength from the Word of God.

1) The Psalmist wrote, “The LORD is for me; I will not fear; what can man do to me?,” Psalm 118:6.

2) Romans 8:28 say’s, “And we know that God causes all things [including pain, sorrow, rejection, loss] to work together for the good [a]gaqo/] (agathos)-good of intrinsic value, i.e. divine good; points to the ultimate objective of God’s plan-- the glorification of Jesus Christ through our spiritual growth, blessing in time and rewards in eternity] to those who love God [mature and / or maturing believers], to those who are the called [‘elected to privilege,’ the Royal Family; specifically-- C. A. believers fulfilling their spiritual destiny] according to {His} purpose [predetermined plan].”

3) These sufferings will accompany the child of God in the devil’s world.

4) Suffering-- for blessing or cursing-- is a fact of life inside the spiritual battle of the Angelic Conflict!

Principle: Adversity is inevitable, stress is optional!

E. V. 37 tells us that we are to identify “these things” as forces ordained by God for the believer’s experience.

F. God has provided for Christians to “overwhelmingly conquer” in two ways.

1) “Through Him.” By faith in Christ we are victorious positionally and eternally (phases 1 and 3 of God’s Protocol Plan).

2) Experientially-- through the divine enablement of the indwelling Holy Spirit (phase 2: the Spiritual Life).

G. In vv. 38-39 Paul is not ambiguous, he doesn’t say “I think, I guess, well maybe.” He is expressing absolute certainty!

Principle: Opinions come and go, a conviction is something you’ll die for.

1) Paul is convinced because the Living Word of God is a reality in his soul.

2) The phrase “I am convinced” is distinctive, used only twice by the Apostle Paul, both times referring directly to the eternal security of the child of God.

a) First usage is universal (includes all believers, v. 38).

b) Second is personal.

Paul writes in 2 Timothy 1:12, “For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted [a banking term meaning- deposit; it speaks of the only thing Paul had to offer Christ-- his faith] to Him until that day [of Paul’s physical redemption].”

3) In vv. 38-39 Paul speaks of celestial realities, of greater issues and superior forces both unknown and unknowable.

Can we speak boldly of eternal security in the face of such things? When the living, powerful Word of God is a reality in your soul, absolutely!

H. Conclusions to the power of God in safekeeping.

1) There is unconditionally no danger, pressure, problem or adversity, including our own personal sins, that can “separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

2) Nothing and noone can ever fracture, invalidate or annul your union with Christ!

3) There is no creature or creation, whether angelic or human, in either the physical or spiritual realm which can “separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Final Conclusion: The Holy Scriptures, inerrant and God-breathed, bear abundant testimony to the unrestrained ability of God to keep eternally secure those whom He has saved through Jesus Christ His Son.

6. Infinite love of God the Father.

A. That which actuated God the Father from eternity past in His elective choice of those whom He would bring into glory was His love (agape) for them.

Ephesians 1:4-5

4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.

5 In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, (Corrected Translation)

Many scholars believe the words "In love" of Ephesians 1:4 rightfully belong to the opening of v. 5. This corrected translation discloses an important revelation respecting the motive of God.

B. "God is love" which means He has never acquired love, He does not sustain it by any effort whatsoever, nor does His love depend upon conditions; for He is the author of all conditions.

Principle: God's love is as eternal and immutable as His own existence.

C. Predestination is, in reality, the supreme endeavor and fulfillment of His infinite compassion.

D. Salvation springs, not from the misery of men which God in mercy might choose to relieve, but from the love God has for His creatures, which love can be satisfied by nothing short of their conformity to Christ in His eternal presence.

In Romans 8:29, Paul said, "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined {to become} conformed to the image of His Son, that He [Jesus Christ] might be the first-born among many brethren."

E. It simply will not do to infuse the love of God with the inconsistency and capriciousness which characterize human love, as though God loved His creatures when they were good but withdrew His love when they were wrong. Foolishness!

F. The fact is God loved mankind enough to give His Son to die for them when they were "enemies" and "sinners."

Again, Romans 5:8-10 say's, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath {of God} through

Him. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”

1) The words “much more” occur twice in this passage and contrast the outworking of the love of God for the unsaved (the provision of salvation) with the outworking of the love of God for the saved (justification- v. 9, reconciliation- v. 10, and eternal security- v. 10).

2) They indicate the opportunity has been made, through salvation, for His love to have a “much more” manifestation in those who are saved.

3) The preservation declared at the end of v. 10 is due to the vital fact of Christ’s own life and all that He, the resurrected Son of God, is to the believer.

a. The writer of Hebrews tells us in 7:25-27, that “...He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the {sins} of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.”

b. And in 9:12, he say’s, “and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.”

G. Love removed every barrier that sin erected and love will keep, by a “much more” manifestation even than that exhibited at Calvary, all whom God has chosen “in Christ” before the foundation of the world.

Point: To deny this love its full manifestation, is an attempt to impair, if not to deny the essential reality of one of God’s most glorious attributes.

7. Experiential approach.

2 Timothy 2:12-13

12 If we endure, we shall also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He also will deny us;

13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny himself. (NAS)

A. V. 12 speaks of rewards.

1) When a believer is operating outside of the power of the Holy Spirit, he is not producing divine good; therefore, he is denying Christ.

2) If we “deny Him” divine good production in time, He will “deny us” rewards in eternity.

B. V. 13- “Faithless” is the present indicative of a) piste/w (apisteo)-disbelieve, be unfaithful. The aoristic present is used to convey the idea of punctiliar action in present time. The declarative use of the indicative mood signifies the statement of a simple fact from the viewpoint of reality.

1) “If we disbelieve” is a literal translation. It designates the Christian who, after salvation, claims that he no longer believes in Jesus Christ and / or His Work on the Cross.

2) “He remains faithful” is a phrase that describes Jesus Christ and His commitment to save us eternally in spite of our renunciation and apostasy.

3) “He cannot deny Himself” is a reference to the immutability of Christ and His unwillingness to compromise His divine essence by taking a course of action other than what He has stated in His Word.

8. Family approach.

John 1:12

12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, {even} to those who believe in His name, (NAS)

Galatians 3:26

26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. (NAS)

A. Based on regeneration you are born again into the Family of God.

Definition: Regeneration is the theological term for spiritual birth. At the moment anyone believes in Jesus Christ for eternal salvation God the Holy Spirit creates for that person a human spirit. God the Father then imputes eternal life to that human spirit.

In 3:5 of his letter to Titus, the Apostle Paul wrote, “He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness [-R: self righteousness; tantamount to human good, dead works], but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.”

Principle: A regenerate person passes from spiritual death to spiritual life.

B. Once you are born again into the Family of God you can no more be unborn spiritually than you can enter back into your mother’s womb physically.

Principle: Regeneration makes the believer a member of the Family of God. The baptism by the Spirit, which is unique to the Church Age, makes the believer Royal Family of God.

9. Sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit approach.

Ephesians 1:13

13 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, (NAS)

Ephesians 4:30

30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (NAS)

A. The believer is sealed "In Christ" forever.

B. The sealing indicates three things, namely:

- 1) A finished transaction, between yourself and God. This means your nonmeritorious faith in Christ has secured eternal salvation. It is a done deal!
- 2) Divine ownership-- that we belong to God.
- 3) Protection and safe deliverance to our final destination (Heaven).

10. Greek tense approach.

Ephesians 2:8-9 say's, "For by grace [God's] you have been saved [with the result that you stand saved forever; from the perfect passive participle of sw/zw (sozo); passive voice- be saved, attain salvation] through faith [man's sole contribution]; and that not of yourselves, {it [[salvation]] is} the gift of God; not as a result of [human] works, that no one should boast."

A. The passive voice indicates salvation is not something the believer does but something he receives.

Principle: What God provides in grace can only be received by faith.

B. "The perfect tense is the tense of complete action, it views action as a finished product." It signifies "the progress of an act or state to a point of culmination and the existence of its finished results." Dana & Mantey, A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament, p. 200

- 1) The perfect tense is as perpetual a statement as can exist in any language.

Definition: Perpetual means lasting or enduring forever; eternal; permanent; continuing indefinitely without interruption; unceasing.

2) This is the quintessence of the expression of permanence in the Greek language.

3) This perpetuity exists from the moment of salvation regardless of any other factor thereafter!

Concluding Statement: The Word of God is a title deed to eternal life and should be treated as an article of surety, for God cannot fail in any Word He has spoken

At the moment of faith in Christ, the Holy Spirit places the believer in union with Christ. This union is created by baptism of the Holy Spirit. The believer's union with Christ qualifies the believer to live with God forever, making him a new spiritual species (2 Cor. 5:17) and guarantees the eternal security (Rom.8:38-39). The non-meritorious phrase *believed in God* is considered by God as act of acceptable righteousness like in the case of Abraham (Rom. 4:3). But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness (Rom. 4:5) For with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation (Rom. 10; 10)

Nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified (Galatians 2:16)

ETERNAL SECURITY means that every believer possesses eternal life now and that which continues forever (John 5:24). This assurance stands on the essence of God and not on man (Numbers 23:19) and that God is eternally perfect (Deut. 33:27) and all His gifts to men are perfect (James 1:17). God gave the right to become children of God to those who believe and receive Jesus Christ (John 1:12) as guaranteed by His unchanging character. Every believer is saved once and for all eternity (Acts 16:31).

The term *saved* means eternal, unchangeable, permanent salvation. Think about this, *Why would God revoke salvation just because of personal sins committed by a believer? when in fact God solved the problem of sin while the entire human race was in sin (Rom. 5:9-10). God solved the problem of sin apart from our knowledge or participation. Christians are saved by the grace of God (Rom. 5:15, 17,20). Grace is everything that God does for men apart from human participation, contribution or assistance.

Salvation guarantees no condemnation (Rom. 8:1) for those who are in Christ Jesus. This positional truth is guaranteed by the perfect integrity of God. Christians are the sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:26), this is a permanent relationship (1 Cor. 12:21) that cannot be removed, altered, changed or desalinated by anything else (Rom. 8:38-39). Every believer remains saved by the power of God (2 Timothy 1:12) not by human power that fails often time. Every believer is born again by the imperishable seed of the Word of God (1 Peter 1:23) not by any inconsistent power, unwavering faith of men, religious activity or sacrifices.

The eternal security of the believer rests on the faithfulness of God. Any person who believed and accepted the free gift of eternal life cannot remove, change, cancel, alter, revoke or invalidate his salvation. An individual may decide to renounce his Christianity but if God has saved him, his salvation will remain intact and he is saved forever. Nothing can change the verdict of God to justify the believer through the finished work of Christ and not on the work of men. A person may renounce his faith, embrace any atheistic ideology or doctrine, but if he is saved, his salvation will remain effective until eternity. Salvation does not depend on men but on God. *If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself* (2 Timothy 2:13).

If salvation is dependent on men then nobody will ever go to heaven that is because we are inconsistent, changeable, untrustworthy and devious in everything. The title or *Deeds of our Salvation* enters our names as beneficiaries and Jesus Christ as the Benefactor. The authority and assurance of salvation rests on the Benefactor not on the beneficiary. The free gift of salvation is eternal and permanent.

GOD'S PLAN OF GRACE is always misunderstood. Majority of Christians rest on false assumption that God's plan of grace is built on human love. As a result, they try to base their lifestyle, relationship with others and with God on these obscure, imprecise and unclear feelings called love.

In God's plan (see Tract No. 34), all the glory belongs to Him, He has all the merit, He receives all the credit, because He does all the work. Grace is the policy of God's plan which is extended to the undeserving, totally helpless and condemned individual. God treats us in His justice. He is always fair to every person. His justice conforms to the demands of His righteousness and everything He does conform to His righteousness. God cannot accept the imperfect righteousness and good work of men.

There is nothing we can do to earn the love of God or the right to live with God forever. We are qualified only by non-meritorious faith in Christ, which is express to man in the simplest form called grace.

SALVATION IS BY GRACE, NOT BY WORKS. Every person is guilty of sin, condemned by God, and needs to be saved. No one is worthy of salvation. Romans 3:10-12 *“There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away; they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.* Romans 3:23 *For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.* There is nothing we can do to earn salvation. God only accepts the perfect work of our Lord on the cross on our behalf. Even our best human efforts are rejected by God:

Isaiah 64:6 *For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are as filthy rags. The harder we work for salvation, the farther away it gets.* Romans 4:4-5 *Now to one who works, his wage is not reckoned as grace, but as debt. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness. Good works are rejected by God as the means of gaining or maintaining salvation.* Titus 3:5 *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.* Romans 3:21-24 *But now a righteousness from God, apart from the law has been made known, to which the Law and the prophets testify.*

This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Jesus Christ. Salvation is received non-meritoriously by depending on Jesus Christ. It is not the strength or the endurance of our faith but the object of our faith, Jesus Christ, that receives all the credit.

WE CAN DO NOTHING to gain salvation, and WE CAN DO NOTHING to lose it. Those who do not believe this are being misled. The idea that Christ did His part on the cross and now we must do our part by maintaining a certain level of morality or goodness in order to get to heaven is not the truth of the Bible but a lie from Satan. Morality or keeping the Ten Commandments cannot save! Christ made a wasted trip to the cross if we can get to heaven by being moral. In fact, hell will be full of good, moral people who have depended on themselves rather than Christ for salvation.

SALVATION IS A GIFT Just because salvation is free does not mean that it came without a price tag. The cost was tremendous! Jesus Christ paid for it in full by dying in our place on the cross. He was our substitute, taking the judgment for our sins on His own perfect body. That was His gift to us. A gift is free. It is either accepted or rejected, but it is never earned. If salvation could be earned, it would not be a gift. It would be payment that we deserve for something we did. Scripture makes it clear; salvation is a gift, no strings attached. God will not freely give a gift and then take it back. To do so would be completely out of character for Him. Romans 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Ephesians

2:8-9 *For by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourself, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.*

“Grace” is receiving something we do not earn or deserve. Wouldn’t you agree that it is foolish to work for something that is free? Anyone who trusts in his own works and ability is in effect saying that Christ’s atonement was not good enough. He ignores what Christ said as he hung on the cross before he died: John 19:30 . . . *it is finished!* Salvation was completed, the gift was purchased, nothing can be added to it, and nothing can be taken from it. We either accept the gift by believing in Jesus Christ or reject it by trying to work for it. Eternal life is a permanent gift. “Eternal” means infinite duration, everlasting, perpetual, endless, and something impossible to lose. There is not one account in the entire Bible where anyone received the gift of eternal life and then lost it.

Those who believe they must work for salvation will stand before Jesus Christ at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15). Their sins, which were already judged on the cross, will not be mentioned. Since they rejected Christ’s perfect work on the cross as the only way into heaven, they will have to rely on their own works to get in. They will find that only Christ’s work is acceptable to God. Therefore, they will be cast into the Lake of Fire.

SALVATION RESTS ON GOD’S POWER AND HIS PROMISES. NOT OURS
Our salvation endures because its security depends on God, not on us. What a relief! What great news! I Peter 1:3-5 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Jude 24 Now unto Him [Jesus Christ] who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory [God the Father] with exceeding joy.*

John 10:28 *I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand.* Romans 8:35 & 38-39 *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness or peril, or sword? For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* There is no sin, no power and no person that can cause us to lose our salvation. Even if we change our mind and renounce Christ, we cannot lose our salvation. The gift of eternal life is permanent no matter how much our faith may waver.

I Timothy 2:11-12 *if we endure [suffering] we shall also reign with Him; if we deny Him; He also will deny us [rewards]; if we are faithless [turn away from Him], He*

remains faithful [He does not take back the free gift] for He cannot deny Himself [His promise of eternal life still stands]. Our weakness does not diminish God's strength. Our failures do not revoke His promises.

BELIEVERS ARE CHILDREN OF GOD Romans 8:16 *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.* Galatians 3:26 *For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.* A believer's relationship with his heavenly Father is similar to the one with his earthly father. Our confidence is strengthened by knowing that our spiritual relationship cannot be broken any more than our physical one can be. There is nothing a child or his father can do to sever their physical relationship, and there is nothing a believer or God can do to sever their spiritual relationship. It is permanent! The Bible never speaks of any child of God being disowned or disinherited.

BELIEVERS ARE NOT CONDEMNED Romans 8:1 *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.* John 3:18 *He that believes on Him is not condemned; but he that does not believe is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.* John 5:24 *Truly, truly I say unto you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and shall not come into condemnation, but has passed out of death into life.* It is impossible for believers to come under condemnation because they have gone from spiritual death to spiritual life. They possess eternal life because they were born again the moment they believed in Jesus Christ.

Believers still sin after they are saved, but they are not condemned for their sins. Why? Because Christ was condemned for these sins on the cross. It would be unjust for God to condemn us for the sins for which Christ has already been judged. Does this mean that there are no consequences for our sins? Of course not. Believers suffer divine discipline when they sin. Our heavenly Father disciplines His children, but He does not condemn them. There is a difference between divine discipline, which is temporary suffering, and condemnation, which is eternal death.

"THE REALITY OF GRACE"

Luke 18:9-14

We hear about grace, we read about grace-- its magnificence, its awesome scope and magnitude, its unfathomable depths-- but what does grace teach? What is the actual practice and application of grace?

Luke 18:9-14 say's, "And He also told this parable to certain ones who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: 'Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee, and the other a tax-gatherer. The Pharisee stood and was praying thus to himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax-gatherer. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' But the tax-gatherer,

standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted."

Body

I. The Author of Grace Begins to Teach-- vv. 9-10.

The first thing we notice is who is speaking the parable. "He" is the Lord Jesus Christ-- immediately we recognize the principle that grace is revealed by the Living Word.

A. "Trusted" in v. 9 means that they had confidence. Where did they place their confidence? Where else?-- "In themselves."

B. What were they so confident of? "That they were righteous." This is nothing more than the self-righteous arrogance of religion, the inevitable result of ritual without reality!

C. What kind of viewpoint did this self-righteous arrogance lead to?

1) "Others" comes from the word *loipos* meaning- 'the rest,' i.e., all those who weren't Pharisees, who didn't belong to their exclusive sect.

2) "With contempt" is the Greek verb *exoutheneo*- 'despise utterly, treat with contempt and scorn.' This teaches us two things right away.

a. Self-righteous arrogance leads to contempt and scorn of everyone that doesn't fit your lofty ideal.

b. The fastest way to move from humility to arrogance, from grace orientation to self-righteousness is to trust in yourself-- your strength, your knowledge, your power.

3) The point is that grace teaches us dependence. Is our reliance and dependence on God's Power (HS) and God's Provision (Bible doctrine) absolute? How much reliance is there in your spiritual life on self-- what self desires, what self can achieve, what self can accomplish?

D. In v. 10 we notice the two characters who've now taken the stage of our parable, both of them heading for the temple to pray-- the Pharisee and the tax-gatherer.

II. The Rejecter of Grace Begins to Pray-- vv. 11-12.

A. There is an amazing phrase that comes to life for us if we will read v. 11 with the utmost care and attention-- the Pharisee was praying "thus to himself." While we may find this humorous-- I find it hilarious-- it is no wonder to him, because in his mind he really was as good as God. He was convinced God held his lofty standard.

B. The term "Pharisee" is a transliteration of Pharisaios, which literally means- the separated ones.

1) It was a name originally given them by their adversaries, however, they were indeed separatists-- legalists to an extreme!

2) They called themselves Chaver, a Hebrew term used in the Mishnah and in ancient Rabbinical writings for 'one who strictly observes the law.'

C. He says "thank you" in v. 11 but there was no thanksgiving here. The statement about not being like other people was a bold-faced lie; he was exactly like other people.

D. In v. 12 we find the culmination of his impressive self-worth.

1) Notice throughout his entire prayer that the Pharisee has no praise for God, only praise for self; in the place of praise was self-exaltation. He makes no request of God because he is totally unaware of any need; therefore, he gets nothing because he asks for nothing!

Which brings us to an important principle: The trouble with our religious-- as opposed to spiritual-- ideals is that if we live up to all of them, we become impossible to live with.

2) "The gospel declares that no matter how dutiful or prayerful we are, we can't save ourselves. What Jesus did was sufficient (Jn. 19:30). To the extent that we are self-made saints like the Pharisees or neutral like Pilate-- never making the leap in trust-- we let the prostitutes and publicans go first into the Kingdom, while we ...are in the background having our alleged virtue burnt out of us. The hookers and swindlers enter before us because they know they cannot save themselves, they cannot make themselves presentable or lovable. They risked everything on Jesus, and knowing they didn't have it all together, were not too proud to accept the handout of amazing grace." Manning, *The Ragamuffin Gospel*, pp. 77

"The blood of the Lamb points to the truth of grace: what we cannot do for ourselves, God has done for us." *ibid.*, p 72

3) What to learn from this Pharisaic prayer.

Some Church Age believers find the Royal Priesthood boring, lifeless, unsatisfying and unfulfilling. They get nothing out of prayer, giving or the study of the Word. And you know why?-- Because they ask for nothing. They see absolutely no need for anything that God has to give in grace; consequently, they get exactly what they ask for. Some Christians never benefit from Bible class, no matter how on target, how intense or how practical. They don't go away full because they don't come in hungry.

a. In Luke 1:53 we find Mary, the mother of our Lord, praising the Lord God of Israel. She said, "He has filled the hungry with good things ['hungry' is from / root verb peinao, which metaphorically means- 'crave ardently, seek with eager desire;'] Jesus uses it in Jn. 6:35 of / hunger for spiritual food]; and sent away the rich empty-handed [/ 'rich' here represents / arrogant, / proud, those who recognize no need for that awesome demonstration of God's grace-- His Word]."

It's interesting that the word for "empty-handed" here, kenos, also means- vain, devoid of truth; without content, power, profit or result. Kenos was used to express the 'hollowness' of something. Metaphorically it means- destitute of spiritual wealth. It was used of one who boasts of his faith and yet is without the fruits of faith, one whose labors and endeavors result in nothing, in vanity and fruitlessness.

b. Jesus told the religious Jews in John 6:35, that "...I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst."

III. The Recipient of Grace Begins to Believe-- vv. 13-14.

A. To understand the background you must understand that "tax-gatherer" was just another way of saying "a tax-collector for the Romans." These men were considered traitors by their fellow Jews, and were despised by almost everyone, especially the Pharisees, who classed them as 'sinners' ranking right alongside harlots and Gentiles.

Historical Note: The exclusive attitude of 1st century Judaism with its cultural, religious and racial arrogance led some Rabbis of this period to proclaim, that "Gentiles were created to light the fires of hell."

B. The fact that the tax-gatherer was standing away and apart, unwilling to even look towards God's direction was an indication of the emptiness in his soul. In utter humility he was about to fling himself recklessly at the mercy of God!

The main thing I want you to see in v. 13 is that grace teaches us about sinfulness. Who's the greatest sinner you know? If the answer is anyone but you, then you don't understand grace.

If you cannot look at yourself objectively in the light of the Word of God and in the light of grace, you will never understand the attitude of humility expressed by the tax-gatherer in Luke 18:13.

C. “Be merciful” is from the verb *hilaskomai*, which in the pass. voice means- be propitiated, be gracious and merciful. It reminds us of the fact that grace gives us what we do not deserve, it is extended to those with absolutely no merit; while mercy withholds from us judgment we rightfully deserve, for mercy is extended, in spite of human merit.

The principle is: The only people who can lay hold of grace are those who recognize their need for mercy.

1) The tax-collector-- hated, rejected, an outcast in his own nation-- stood in the temple and uttered seven words, seven words that form one of the most profound prayers in the entire Bible: “God, be merciful to me, the sinner!”

He had no grand illusions about himself, no egotistically inflated ideas about being good enough for God. He saw how awesome his need was, and he knew that nothing but God’s mercy could sustain him.

2) Mercy and grace are vitally united, inextricably linked in the Word of God. Mercy naturally precedes grace.

Here’s the principle: Mercy must remove the condemnation we rightfully deserve before grace can bestow the blessing that we cannot earn and never deserve.

D. In v. 14 Jesus tells us that the tax-gatherer left the temple “justified.”

1) “Justified” is *dikaioo*, a legal term meaning- ‘vindicate, acquit; declare legally righteous.’

2) This tells us that in the recognition of his need for mercy and grace the tax-gatherer had believed in the Messiah of Israel-- Yehowah Elohim-- for there is no other way to stand justified, vindicated, legally righteous before God unless we have received His absolute righteousness, the imputed righteousness which belongs to us through faith in Christ (Phil. 3:9).

Paul said in Galatians 2:16, “nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.”

E. One man went up to the temple in humility, and for his faith received eternal life; the other entered with an attitude of arrogance and for his self righteousness received nothing.

Jesus gives us the reason why in the closing phrase of v. 14, “for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted.”

In Conclusion

“The deeper we grow in the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the poorer we become-- the more we realize that everything in life is a gift. The tenor of our lives becomes one of humble and joyful thanksgiving. Awareness of our poverty and ineptitude causes us to rejoice in the gift of being called out of darkness into the wondrous light and translated into the Kingdom of God’s beloved Son. ...The poor in spirit are the most non-judgmental of peoples; they get along well with sinners. ...The” humble “man and woman have made peace with their flawed existence. They are aware of their lack of wholeness, their brokenness, the simple fact that they don’t have it all together. While they do not excuse their sin, they are humbly aware that sin is precisely what has caused them to throw themselves at the mercy of the Father. They do not pretend to be anything but what they are-- sinners saved by grace,” and saints empowered by His Spirit. *ibid.*, pp. 79-80