

**THE PAIN  
AND  
PLEASURE  
OF  
FORGIVENESS**

**DR. E. MAC JOHNSON**

# **THE PAIN AND PLEASURE OF FORGIVENESS**

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## WARNING

Reading this book will cause you to consider what you believe about religion. It could cause you to see the deception of many religious experiences taking place today. You might even consider more seriously your own relationship and service with the Lord. The result may be you becoming more fruitful and productive in the Lord's service.



## **THE AUTHOR'S PERSONAL TESTIMONY**

On November 30, 1932 I was born into the family of Claude and Lucille Johnson near Lumpkin, Georgia. It was my privilege to be reared on the farm. My parents, who had ten children, regularly attended the Shady Grove Baptist Church. As a young man I made a profession of faith and was baptized into the membership of the church. At the age of 19, I married Mary Ann Martin, of Charles, Georgia.

The Lord has blessed us with six living children, (four boys and two girls), who have provided us with thirteen grandchildren and several step-grandchildren. They are very important to my wife and me.

In April 1965, I was challenged for the first time in my life concerning my destiny: was I sure that I was going to heaven? Up to that time it was never suggested to me to be sure that I was going to Heaven. I believed in Jesus, was teaching Sunday school, and was the President of the Brotherhood of the First Baptist Church, of Lumpkin, Georgia.

It was a pleasure for me to go to church, and tithe my money. Drinking, smoking, cursing, or carousing was not part of my life style . It did not make sense that God would send me to Hell with all that I was doing.

The man witnessing to me, after hearing my testimony, stated: "According to your testimony and this Bible (which he held up), if you die now, you would go to Hell." The statement irritated me. I felt sorry for a man who, in my opinion, was so narrow minded, judgmental, and

inconsiderate .

For weeks I prayed for him that the Lord would straighten him out and give him compassion. One night as I was praying for him, the Lord impressed me with a thought: “suppose he is right - if he is, it was me going to Hell.” My mind was troubled and I began to search the Scriptures to find out if a person could be sure of Heaven. As I learned of the simplicity of salvation, it seemed that no one should have trouble with the matter. A saved person should know for sure that he or she was going to Heaven. I did not.

In August of 1965 two of my brothers, Paul and Fred, came to Lumpkin, Georgia for a two weeks tent revival. I attended all of the evening services and listened very intently. If one could know, I wanted to be sure. I even prayed, “Lord if I’m not saved, save me now”. Of course, nothing happened.

In my study, I learned that the word “believe” meant to rely upon; to cling to ; or to rest on. At five o’clock Tuesday morning, August 24, 1965, I awoke from sleep, understanding John 3:16. I saw that for one to believe is to know. I did not know, so I understood I was an unbeliever and going to Hell. I realized I was going to Hell and deserved to go. I trusted the Lord Jesus Christ to take me to Heaven. It was thrilling for me to understand that because Jesus died for all of our sins, we must know in order to go to Heaven. To believe God is to know.

To my surprise, when I gave my testimony, my pastor and friends thought that I had become mixed up. They refused to accept the fact that I was lost and had recently trusted Christ as my Savior.

I learned that Satan had the power to blind a person . He had blinded me. I became concerned about my relatives, Pastor, and friends. As I prayed for others, the Lord called me to preach.

After one year under the leadership of Tennessee Temple graduate Charles Boyd, we moved to Chattanooga,

Tennessee where I attended college for four years. It was my privilege to attend every class without being tardy or absent during my entire stay at Tennessee Temple. The last year and a half of my schooling, I pastored Mt. Olive Baptist Church, of Dayton, Tennessee. It was a good ministry.

After graduating in 1971, I accepted the call to pastor Faith Baptist Church, in Milton, Florida. My first service as Pastor was October 24, 1971. Through the following years the Lord led us to start a number of ministries which included Faith Christian School, Faith Bible College, Home and Abroad Missions, Inc., Faith Bible Theological Seminary, Southeast Accrediting Association, and an extensive rehabilitation program.

After working with the rehab people, we realized we would need much more income than our church was able to provide. We

started Helping Hand Missions, a program similar to Goodwill Industries, or the Salvation Army. Presently it consists of four thrift stores which serve the people of Santa Rosa County and some in the adjoining Escambia County.

Soon after starting the mission we bought a 1,000 watt AM radio station and applied to the FCC for an FM station. We built the FM station, and we presently own and operate a 1,000 watt AM station and a 45000 watt FM station.

After a trip to Red China, the Lord led me to establish the American-China International Development Agency. It was one of the first American non profit organization to be registered in China. The purpose is to provide business consultants with a good Christian testimony to assist the people of China.

As we minister to people, it becomes more obvious that there are many deceived people who are expecting to go to Heaven, but in reality are going to Hell. They have been deceived by Satan, whose method is usually religion.

We believe the old King James Bible is God's Word for English-speaking people, and is true and precious. We understand that salvation is definite and the work of God is the most important work available.



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# God's Threefold Salvation

**W**e must understand that salvation is threefold to prevent false teaching. Let us consider several verses of Scripture. To fail to understand that salvation is in three stages could easily lead to false teaching. In Romans 1:16 and Acts 4:12, the word “salvation” refers primarily to the salvation of the soul or to the new birth. In Philippians 2:12 and Romans 10:10, the word “salvation” is speaking about the salvation of the life. As we confess Christ, we work out the salvation which is within us. The salvation of the soul took place when we believed the Gospel. In Romans 13:11 and I Peter 1:5, the word “salvation” refers to the redemption of the body (Romans 8:23) which is saved by hope (earnest expectation). These three divisions are found in II Corinthians 1:10, which reads as follows: ***“Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: In whom we trust that He will yet deliver us.”***

This verse is divided into three areas of time: past, present, and future. The thought, “...***who delivered us...***” refers to the past. The emphatic verb phrase, “...***doth***

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*deliver:...*” speaks of the present, and the words, “*will yet deliver...*” concern the future.

Bible salvation must be considered as threefold in order to teach the truth. The salvation of the soul is deliverance from the penalty of sin. The penalty was paid by Jesus Christ. By trusting or receiving Christ, we enjoy being delivered from the penalty of sin. The life, or influence, is before us. As we follow Biblical principles, as led by the Holy Spirit, our lives are saved. At the rapture we will enjoy the salvation of the body.

We are safe to say that the salvation of the soul is past tense, the salvation of the life (influence) is present tense, and the salvation of the body is future tense. Christians have been delivered from the penalty of sin. We are being delivered from the power of sin. We will be delivered from the presence of sin. For one to use Scripture that teaches salvation of the life or body as the way of salvation for the soul is false teaching and misleads individuals. It is sad that this is the case in so many churches.

Several years ago, I heard a man say that a person could not know for certain that he was going to Heaven. He would quote a portion of a verse in Romans, chapter eight, that states, “***For we are saved by hope....***” That hope is actually an earnest expectation of receiving a new body. The man ignorantly and falsely used that passage relating it to one being born again. He would also quote a verse from Philippians, chapter two, “***...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.***” This is referring to Christian living or the salvation of the life. To teach it, as a way to be born again, is to teach false doctrine because we are saved by faith without the deeds of the law. In the past, I heard a radio preacher encourage his listeners to awake out of sleep and work faithfully. He would

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quote, “...***for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.***” (Romans 13:11). This passage is certainly not teaching one about the new birth, but is referring to the new body that every born again believer will receive because he has experienced the new birth.

Let us consider very briefly the threefold division of salvation. First, salvation is to know Christ. Jesus said in John 17:3 “***And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.***” He also said to the woman in John 4:10, 11 “... ***If thou knewest ... who it is ... he would have given thee living water.***” Knowing Christ aright is to be born into the family of God.

One cannot know Christ until the law does a work in his mind and heart, revealing his sinful condition (Romans 7:7-14). It is also a must that one hear the Word of truth and Gospel of his salvation before believing God, or knowing Christ. “***In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,***” (Ephesians 1:13). He must hear and learn before coming to Christ. “***It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.***” (John 6:45). The Holy Spirit reveals the truth through the Word of God. Knowing Christ is believing God about the record that He has given of His Son. “***He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.***” (I John 5: 10). When one truly believes, he has within himself the witness. While learning and considering the truth, there is unbelief and confusion. When the truth is learned and

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believed, the unbelief is squelched and the soul is set free from sin and death.

Next, salvation is building properly on Jesus Christ, Who is the only sure foundation. “***For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.***” (I Corinthians 3:11). The foundation is laid when one is born again or believes according to the Scriptures (Ephesians 1:13; John 7:38). A reward is promised to believers for all good and scriptural works. “***If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.***” (I Corinthians 3:14). Our works will abide when we make straight paths for our feet (Hebrews 12:14). As we follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit, grace works in our lives and we share with others that which they do not deserve. When grace is absent, bitterness takes over and many are defiled. We should seek opportunities to help and to forgive.

Proper building is taking place as we seek and love the things that are above. Kindness, longsuffering, and a forgiving spirit are common in proper building (Colossians 3:1-2, 12-13). Family activity will be seasoned with love. Husbands and wives will enjoy each other. Parents and children will seek the welfare of each other.

One of the most difficult activities in proper building is to rejoice in trials. This is a must to have God's power and the right influence for Christ. When we see its value, we will be able to say with the Apostle Paul, “***Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.***” (II Corinthians 12:9). There is no place in the Christian influence for complaining and a critical spirit.

Finally, salvation is receiving a new body. There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body. There is a mortal (subject to death) body and there is an immortal (not subject to death) body. There is a corruptible (subject to decay) body

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and there is an incorruptible (not subject to decay) body (I Corinthians 15:44,52-53). When one is born again, the Holy Spirit comes to abide in the body of the believing individual. It is the same selfish body in which abode the old man or the unsaved man. ***“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”*** (II Corinthians 4:7). The indwelling Spirit guarantees a new body (Ephesians 1:13-14; Romans 8: 11, 23). Receiving the new body is the final stage of salvation. It is the time when the Christian will receive the full benefit or son placement of salvation. We wait ***“...for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body...”*** (Romans 8:23).

At the time of the new birth, we receive the spirit of adoption (Romans 8:15) and are predestinated by God to be conformed to the image of His Son, ***“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”*** (I John 3:2).

Salvation is positive. God's provision is complete. Christ came to this earth, was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, went to Calvary, and was judged for the sin of mankind. Every sin was charged to Him. ***“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”*** (Isaiah 53:6). He was judged, or punished, by God Himself for every wrong thought and deed of mankind. It pleased the Lord to bruise Him. (Isaiah 53:10) With His stripes we are healed. He was buried and rose again as our high priest. He went into the holy place and made peace with God for us (Hebrews 9:11,24; Ephesians 5:2; Colossians 1:20-22). He offered His blood on the mercy seat and salvation is ours by faith in his blood (Romans 3:25).

When we hear and understand that Jesus has paid

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our sin debt and made peace with God for us and know that we are going to Heaven because of the finished work of Christ, we enjoy the salvation of the soul. When we share this message with others through word and deed, concerning the record that God gave His Son, we experience the salvation of the life. When the dead in Christ shall rise first and we which are alive and remain are caught up together to be with the Lord, we will enjoy the salvation of the body. Salvation is seen in three stages. Salvation is of the Lord.



# If It's Done, Why Not Believe It?

**R**ecords are made every day. When properly recorded, a permanent record is established. Every county in America has a person and staff in charge of filing and preserving public records. These files include records of marriages, divorces, deeds, and contracts of various sorts. It is possible that these records may be lost or destroyed. This system of records, however, is accepted by the general public.

We have a record of greater value that is divinely established and recorded, which is not so readily accepted. ***“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”*** God's Word states in Matthew 24:35. Many events are recorded in God's Word (Old King James Bible). All these records are true.

The Christians at Thessalonica were commended by the Apostle Paul for believing God's record. ***“...because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that***

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**believe.”** (I Thessalonians 2:13). The truths of the Word of God have been divinely revealed and divinely preserved. The Word of God is the final authority for truth, and should be respected as such.

We want to consider the record of redemption or substitution. The characters involved are important. God the Creator, mankind the created us - you and I - and Christ Jesus the Saviour and Redeemer are involved.

Mankind was created by God: “***And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.***” 27 “***So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.***” (Genesis 2:26,27). Also note Genesis 2:7,21,22. He did this for His glory (Colossians 1:16). Mankind is to glorify God in all his words and deeds. “***And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.***” (Colossians 3:17). “***Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.***” (I Corinthians 10:31). Man has failed and sinned against God. Sin has separated man from God: “***But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.***” (Isaiah 59:2). The wages of sin is death. The end of death is the lake of fire (eternal suffering). Man cannot undo his sin. He needs a Saviour. He needs someone to pay his debt, and clear his record. The sinner would have to go to Hell, and suffer forever in order to pay his debt. Forever never ends. The sinner cannot pay his debt.

God the Judge provided an escape or release from the

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penalty of sin or the judgment of God on sin. “***For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.***” (John 3:16). That provision is redemption in and through Christ. God set the price, or penalty, for man's sin. God provided the payment. His provision is the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is no less than God in the flesh (John 1:1,14; Hebrews 1:3; 2:9).

The word “substitution” should be given serious consideration. Mankind is sinful and guilty. God became a perfect man in order to take man's place in judgment. “***But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.***” (Hebrews 2:9). God's judgment was carried out on man's Substitute, or Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. The purpose of the judgment was to free, or release man from the penalty of sin, and allow him to fellowship with a holy God.

As we consider further details we will look into the record of several accounts that should remove all doubts concerning our standing with God. “... ***whatsoever is not of faith is sin.***” (Romans 14:23). “...***without faith it is impossible to please him...***” (Hebrews 11:6). “...***for sin is the transgression of the law.***” (I John 3:4). “***The thought of foolishness is sin...***” (Proverbs 24:9). “***For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.***” (Romans 3:23). We are sinners, condemned and without hope. The record is clear and positive. Sinful man needs a sinless Saviour.

We are commanded to love God with all our hearts. We do not. We are to love our neighbors as ourselves. We do not. In everything we are to give thanks. We do not. The reason is simple. We are sinners.

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Even before God created man, He planned a provision for man's sin. "***Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,***" (I Peter 1:20). In God's mind, the Lamb of God, Christ Jesus, was slain before the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8). It was determined by God. No one could prevent it. The record is established.

The purpose of Christ Jesus coming to this earth was stated before His birth. "***And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.***" (Matthew 1:21). "***He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.***" (Isaiah 53:11).

***"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."*** (Hebrews 2:9). Jesus came to die for man's sins. He was to receive man's judgment. He was to satisfy the wrath of God relative to the sin of mankind.

After being born of a virgin and living a sinless life, Jesus was nailed to the cross as a willing sacrifice for our sins. Though He was innocent, He was made sin for us. "***For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.***" (II Corinthians 5:21). There, the Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6). "***Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.***" (I Peter 2:24). He took our place in judgment that we might have his place with God in peace for all eternity. That is substitution.

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Because God was made flesh, He could die for our sin. ***“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”*** 14 ***“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”*** (John 1:1, 14). ***“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”*** (Heb. 2:9)

Jesus, God’s Son, left Heaven and came to this earth as a man. He left riches to come to poverty. ***“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”*** (II Corinthians 8:9). He suffered our judgment that we might go to Heaven or that we might be rich. Through his poverty we are made rich. He is our Substitute and Saviour.

Jesus never sinned. He was pure and just. Our sins were charged to Him. He, the just, suffered for us, the unjust. ***“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:... .”*** (I Peter 3:18). Because the just suffered for the unjust, He can bring us to God. Our sin has been judged. The debt is paid. We are accepted in Heaven because of our substitute and Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are sinners. We have all gone astray. Our sins are not a few. Our hearts are deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. We have been sinning since birth. All of our sins were laid on Jesus. He bore our sins in His own body. ***“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him***

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***the iniquity of us all.***” (Isaiah 53:6). ***“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.”*** (I Peter 2:24). The innocent became guilty. That is substitution. Jesus was smitten of God and afflicted. He took our judgment. We were healed by His stripes. The record is established.

God was pleased to judge Christ for our sins. ***“Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.”*** (Isaiah 53:10). When the sins of man were charged to Jesus, God did not turn His back on Christ. Instead, He judged Him until the judgment was complete. He saw the agony, or travail, of His soul. His wrath was appeased. (Isaiah 53:11) ***“He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied:....”*** Our sin made God angry. The sufferings of Christ satisfied the anger and wrath of God. The record is clear. Redemption is done. The

blood of Christ is the payment for all the sins of mankind.

When God’s judgment was complete, Christ dismissed His spirit. No man took His life. He gave it (John 10:18). He died for our sins. He died in our stead. It was planned before the foundation of the world. It was carried out before man and recorded in God’s Word. Salvation is of the Lord. The record is clear. You (mankind) have been redeemed.

The body of Jesus was buried. After three days and three nights, He arose from the dead. His blood, at that time, was not yet offered. He had died as our sacrifice. He arose as our High Priest. ***“But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this***

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***building;***” 12 ***“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”*** (Hebrews 9:11,12). At His resurrection He became our High Priest.

As High Priest, He took not the blood of goats and calves, but His own blood and offered that blood to God in Heaven as a permanent sacrifice for the sins of the world. ***“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:”*** (Hebrews 9: 24). ***“...and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.”*** (Ephesians 5:2b). According to Hebrews 9:14, the blood was offered to God. Redemption is complete. Man has been loosed from the penalty of sin by the sacrificial blood of the Lord Jesus. The record is established. The work is done. Man has been reconciled to God by Jesus Christ. It was done by the substitutionary work of Jesus Christ. The results are declared. Man's iniquities, or trespasses, are not charged to him. They have been charged to Christ (II Corinthians 5:18-19; Colossians (1:20-22). Peace has been made with God for mankind. Redemption is complete. Forgiveness is ours. To deny the record is to call God a liar. ***“He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.”*** (I John 5:10).

It is important to recognize the results of redemption. It is forgiveness. ***“In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:”*** (Colossians 1:14). ***“To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”*** 7 ***“In whom we have***

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***redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;***” (Ephesians 1:6-7). Where sin abounds, grace does much more abound. God is satisfied with the judgment. He extends to us a pardon (complete forgiveness). We are invited to go to Heaven and live with Him. It is because of Christ. The work is done. God is satisfied.

It is difficult to believe that God will actually send a person to hell who has invited Jesus into his heart, or committed his life to God. Our religious experiences blind our minds to our true sinful, hopeless condition. We need to repent of any hope that we have in a prayer, a change, or in the reason for our good works. True Bible repentance for salvation is turning from your hope in good works, and just believing God's record of the finished works of Christ. ***“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:”*** 39 ***“And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”*** (Acts 13:38-39). ***“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:”*** (Romans 5:1).

The work of redemption is done. Forgiveness is complete. The door to Heaven is open. God is satisfied with Christ's redemptive work for you. He invites you to come live with Him. Why not believe it, and join us in getting the message to others? We must explain or preach redemption to sinners until they believe. He that believeth is not condemned. Let us not grow ***“...weary in well doing:... ”*** In due season we will reap if we ***“...faint not.”*** It will be worth it all when we see Jesus.



# Salvation Or Assurance?

**M**ultitudes of people are urgently seeking counsel from spiritual leaders regarding personal salvation and assurance. Their ultimate desire is to learn that everything is all right concerning their spiritual condition. Some people go through the routine at regular intervals seeking what is commonly known as “the assurance of salvation.” A few questions are usually asked, counseling is given, and the conclusion is drawn. This type of counsel settles the matter for some. Others go through their lifetime requiring the same experience to be repeated again and again.

In Matthew chapter 7, Jesus teaches that many people who expect to go to Heaven will not. That is an extremely sad situation. Those people I just mentioned feel that they have the assurance that Heaven will be their home. Jesus said they do not have salvation and will miss Heaven.

We want to consider four passages of Scripture as a launching pad for this message.

***“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how***

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*that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"* (II Corinthians 13:5). The members of the Corinthian church were challenged to examine their position with God. Their spiritual credentials were to be proven. Their eternal destiny was at stake. Consider the words of Jesus: ***"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."*** 40 ***"And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."*** (John 5:39-40). This was said to a religious crowd. They had confidence in the Scriptures.

In Matthew 7:13-14, Jesus teaches that many people are on the broad road that leads to destruction. Only a few are on the narrow road which leads unto life. He further states, ***"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."*** 22 ***"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?"*** 23 ***"And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."*** (Matthew 7:21-23).

Many of these described are preachers. Some could be soul winners and miracle workers. Others are involved in all types of religious activity. They think that they are going to Heaven. Jesus declares otherwise. Their blindness is declared in His Word.

Jesus further states in Luke 12:24-27, ***"...for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."*** 25 ***"Lord, Lord, open unto us;"*** 27 ***"But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity."***

Titus 1:16 describes them as workers of iniquity who profess to know God, but in their works they

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deny Him. They are involved in good works. They think that those good works will help to get them to Heaven. The Bible makes it clear that many who expect to go to Heaven will be refused. They have been blinded and deceived concerning their spiritual relationship with the Lord.

As we look further into our subject, "Salvation or Assurance," let us next consider the definition of "assurance." (A.) It is the act of assuring; (B.) Something said or done to inspire confidence; (C.) Belief in one's abilities or self-confidence; (D.) Impudent forwardness or presumption. In the light of these definitions, assurance can result from the influence of another person. Satan would have every lost person to believe that his spiritual condition is all right (II Corinthians 4:4). He has the power to blind the minds of unbelievers. He appears as an angel of light to deceive and to destroy. ***"And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light."*** (II Corinthians 11:14).

According to the passages that we have read, he is very effective in his religious deception. ***"Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."*** (Revelation 12:12). The Apostle Paul writing to the church of Corinth stated, II Corinthians 2:17, ***"For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ."***

Again he said, ***"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."*** 4 ***"For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which***

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*ye have not received, or another gospel ...*” (II Corinthians 11:3-4). The Apostle Paul was troubled over the effectiveness of false teachers. In writing to the church at Corinth he used a phrase, “...*unless ye have believed in vain.*” (I Corinthians 15:2). He gave warning about vain or empty faith.

We are commanded to examine our faith. In the light of Matthew 7:13-23 and II Corinthians 4:3-4, every professing Christian should accept this challenge. The matter is serious. Eternity is long and hell is hot.

We have looked at the word “assurance.” Let us now look at the word “salvation.” Salvation is a person! Assurance can be contentment. As Simeon waited in the temple for the fulfillment of God’s promise that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ, Joseph and Mary brought in the child Jesus. Simeon took the baby in his arms and blessed God and said, “*Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:*” 30 “*For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,*” (Luke 2:29-30). He recognized the Lord Jesus Christ to be his salvation. The Lord Jesus Christ was his hope.

In I John 5:12 we are told, “*He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*” The person of the Lord Jesus Christ is salvation, or life. Jesus is not a plan, but a person. He made peace with God for us. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He that hath the Son hath life. It is very important that we examine ourselves as to whether we have the Son. Information about the Son is not sufficient for salvation.

Next, salvation is a possession. Assurance can be a state of mind. Though many agree that Jesus Christ was virgin-born, lived a sinless life, died on the cross of Calvary, was buried, and rose again it does not prove that they have

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received, or presently possess, salvation. “***But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:...***” (John 1:12). A person can agree with the reality of Jesus Christ and yet not possess Him. To have an understanding of man’s need, and to believe that God has made provision for that need, is not the new birth. One can agree with these truths and teach them to others and never come to the place of actually receiving Christ as personal Saviour.

A simple, but positive description of repentance and faith is found in Philippians 3:7-9. The Apostle Paul recognized that good works were not sufficient. He learned that they played no part in the salvation of his soul. Man’s works, as defined by God, are as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). In the light of that truth he said, “***...for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.***” (Philippians 3:8-9). He repented and renounced any hope of good deeds and classified them as but dung, and trusted, or received Christ by faith. He understood that Christ, and His performance, was the righteousness of God. He did not want his own righteousness which was of the law. However, he did want the righteousness of God which was available through the faith of Christ. “***Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:***” (Romans 3:22).

That truth is reflected in Romans 10:2-3. The Apostle Paul’s people had a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. “***For I bear them record that they have a zeal***

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*of God, but not according to knowledge.”* 3 *“For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”* they would not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God. His Jewish brethren were ignorant of God's classification of man's righteousness

They did not understand that the only righteousness that God would accept was provided in and through the Lord Jesus Christ and His work of redemption. They believed that God would receive them as they were. There is no true hope in people like that. They must repent and turn from their confidence in good works, and embrace and receive by faith, God's righteousness found only in the person and faithfulness of Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, salvation is peace. Assurance can be satisfaction. This peace is not an emotional satisfaction, but the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. *“For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;”* (Ephesians 2:14). Jesus entered into the holy place in Heaven to appear in the presence of God for us. *“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:”* (Hebrews 9:24). He offered Himself as a peace offering to God (Hebrews 9:14) and made peace through the blood of His cross (Colossians 1:20). That offering, or sacrifice, was to God a sweet smelling savour (Ephesians 5:2). We are instructed that God has set forth Christ to be a propitiation (place to meet God) through faith in His blood (Romans 3:25). We are healed with His stripes. His suffering satisfied the wrath of God that was kindled by our sin. God saw the

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travail of His soul and was satisfied (Isaiah 53:11).

There is rest and joy in the soul for the individual who receives the truth of redemption. We learn “...***that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;***...” (II Corinthians)5:19). God demanded a sacrifice. God accepted the sacrifice. Salvation is of the Lord. Because God has judged our sins in the person of Christ, He offers to us a pardon with no threat to ever raise the sin question again (John 5:24).

The believer’s sin has been charged to Jesus and judged sufficiently (Isaiah 53:4-11). God does not have to impute our sin to us. “***Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.***” (Romans 4:8). God has given to us a record about His Son. He is God in the flesh. He bore our sin in His own body on the tree. He was charged with every sin of mankind. It pleased the Lord to bruise Him. He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. With His stripes, mankind was healed. God saw the travail of His soul and was satisfied. He offers a pardon to whosoever will.

Multitudes do not believe. Many have never heard. Some have heard and rejected. Most have heard only bits and pieces mixed with false teaching and the works of man. They are confused. “***For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.***” (John 3:16)

“***Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.***”(Romans 5:1). “...***This is the work of God that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.***” (John 6:29). When the Holy Ghost is come, “...***he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:***” (John 16:8). “***He that believeth on him is not***

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***condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.***” (John 3:18). Jesus has made peace with God for mankind. Jesus is our peace. Our sin was judged sufficiently by God in Christ. He is our redemption, our peace, our life, our hope, our testimony, our message, our God. It is no wonder that Isaiah 32:17 records, ***“And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.”***

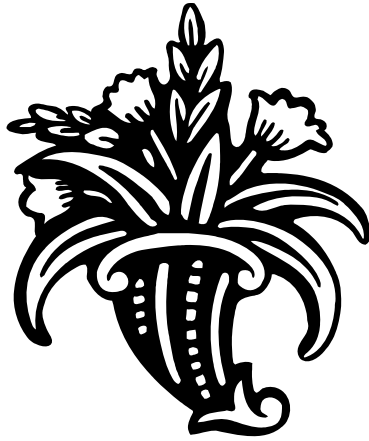
It is very important that we drink of the water offered by Jesus Who said, ***“... whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”*** (John 14:4). ***“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”*** (Galatians 4:5). ***“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:”*** (Romans 8:16). ***“...the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”*** (John 6:63). We must repent of unbelief and receive salvation (Jesus Christ) by faith. ***“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:”*** (Romans 5: 1). ***“He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself:...”*** (I John 5:10).

Do you have salvation or assurance? Can you say as I can say, “I have both. Jesus is mine. My destiny is Heaven.” If you cannot say, “Yes, I know Christ as my Saviour,” trust Him today. Thank God for taking care of your sin in Christ on the cross of Calvary. Accept His offering of forgiveness of sin and a home in Heaven with Him. We are made nigh by the blood and accepted in the beloved. He is our peace. He took our place in judgment. By faith, we have His place as a son in



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the family of God. Trust Him today and share the Truth with others.



# Teachers Of Doubt... Can They Be Trusted?

**T**here are multitudes who are following, without question, the leadership of individuals who are not qualified to lead. These leaders enjoy great followings because they have performed some great achievements, and are endowed with the ability in the powers of persuasion. These people are very dangerous.

It is important that we know who we follow and why we are following them. The Word of God clearly teaches us of the pride and selfishness related to the true character of fallen man. The natural man basically seeks his own. He is a selfish, sinful, self-seeking individual. His heart is deceitful above all things. ***“yea, let God be true, but every man a liar;...”*** (Romans 3:4).

It is not my intent to attack any particular personalities in this message. My purpose is to cause you to seriously consider what you believe and why you believe it. It is

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important to consider the idea that you may be wrong about what you believe, though you are very sincere.

We are taught in Matthew 7:13-23 that there are many who think that they are going to Heaven, but in reality, they're going to hell. This is a very serious problem. These people are blinded. They have been deceived by their own hearts, the influence of others, and the power of Satan. ***"...but if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:" 4 "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."*** (II Corinthians 4:3-4). The god of this world, which is Satan, has the power to blind the minds and hearts of unbelievers.

There are too many of our religious leaders today that follow the teachings of fallen man instead of studying and respecting the Word of God. When the leaders are wrong, so are the followers. ***"For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered."*** (Isaiah 29:10). Here the Lord gives us a description, or the condition, of blinded, false teachers. They are described in another place in the Scriptures as the blind leading the blind. The leaders and the followers both fall into the ditch.

It is my opinion that everyone has doubts and questions about various subjects and circumstances. We need to have some order for our study, or look, at teachers of doubt and their influence. Let us establish from Noah Webster's 1828 dictionary the definition of doubt: "1.) to waver or fluctuate in opinion; 2.) to be in uncertainty respecting truth or fact; 3.) to question or hold questionable; 4.) to hold assent from; 5.) to hesitate to believe; 6.) to fear or to suspect; 7.) to distrust or to withhold confidence from; 8.)

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to be in suspicion, in fear, or in apprehension.”

This type of thinking should not be a part of our attitude toward the Divine, inspired, eternal Word of God, given to us by God, Who cannot lie. Heaven and Earth will pass away, but Gods Word will never pass away. It is eternally settled and should be respected as such. It is our final authority on any religious subject.

In this message, we want to discuss teachers of doubt and their teachings concerning an individual’s personal salvation, or standing with God. We will not discuss doubt generally as related to the salvation of the life (influence) (Philippians 2:12), or the salvation of the body (Romans 13:11).

It is important that we establish order and direction. To do so, we will consider ten questions that will help us to think this subject through with order, care, and concern.

We will first list the questions, and then consider them in order:

1. Is it Scriptural for a saved person to examine his relationship with the Lord?
2. Do the Scriptures give us examples of saved people doubting their salvation? If so, how was it dealt with?
3. What is a person really doubting who doubts his salvation?
4. What is the traditional method of dealing with people who doubt their salvation?

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5. Can a human being know without a doubt that he or she is going to Heaven?
6. Why do so many preachers and teachers teach people to doubt?
7. Is it possible for those who doubt to go to Heaven?
8. Why do so many people doubt?
9. Does everyone, as taught by many teachers and soul winners, doubt their salvation?
10. What is the Scriptural method of dissolving or removing doubt?

Question number one can be answered in an absolute fashion. The answer is found in II Corinthians 13:5: “***Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?***” We are commanded to not only examine ourselves, but to prove the answer. One’s destiny is too important to take it for granted. All questions and doubts should be settled with the Scriptures, and must be settled in this lifetime. When we ask ourselves the question, “Am I really going to Heaven?” we should always have a positive answer. That answer is rather simple. It should be somewhat as follows: “Christ is my Saviour, He has taken care of my sin. Christ died for me. I have been redeemed. I am accepted in the beloved. As a result, I am going to Heaven.”

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The answer to question number two requires a reading of the entire Bible (Word of God). You will not find one example of a saved person doubting his salvation. There are those, however, who say that John the Baptist was doubting his salvation when he sent his disciples to question Jesus as recorded in Matthew 11:2-6 and Luke 7:19-23. John's disciples were questioning John, I think, about his credentials relative to his being the forerunner of Christ. They could not understand why, if Jesus was really the Saviour, that He did not get John out of jail. John's response to them was, "Go, ask Him yourself if He is really the Messiah and Saviour."

For one to use the example of John to justify his own personal doubt is very foolish. The Scriptures warn us of Satan's power to blind and to deceive unbelievers. The substitutionary work of Christ for every sinner is clear. Some even dare use II Peter 1:9 to say that saved people forget that they have been forgiven and thereby, naturally doubt. I admit that the teaching of that verse is somewhat vague.

Other Scriptures are clear. We should be seeking a basis for faith without doubt instead of promoting doubt. We have positive teachings of the redemptive work of Christ. He has been judged for our sins. God, in Christ, reconciled the world to Himself. The sin debt is paid. Why doubt it? We are healed by His stripes, and invited to go to Heaven because of Christ.

The answer to the third question is more difficult. It is difficult to always identify what a person is doubting who doubts his salvation. We would be safe to say that he is generally doubting his own works or commitment. A normal doubter has no problem believing the existence of Jesus Christ, and the story of His death, burial, and resurrection. He is usually doubting the sufficiency of his own involvement.

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“Have I really done all that there is to do? Has God really saved me? How can I know for sure.”

The basic problem is their lack of understanding about the time of redemption. Redemption does not take place when a person believes. It took place at Calvary. Sins are not taken care of when a person believes - they were taken care of when Jesus was “...*wounded for our transgressions*,...” and “...*bruised for our iniquities*...” (Isaiah 53:5). The sinner was healed with Jesus’ stripes. The benefits are appropriated when one believes. The sinner is not washed, or purged, when he believes, he was washed, or purged, when the blood was offered, as recorded in Hebrews 9:12,14 and Ephesians 5:2. The believer is not made sure by his feelings. He is made sure by his faith in God’s Word.

When one stops looking for a sign or feeling at conversion, and turns his attention to, or looks into the Word of God at Calvary, his confidence will be in the Word of God and not his commitment. You have been reconciled. Your sins have been canceled by the blood of Christ. Jesus has cleared the record with God for you. God is satisfied. You are the one in doubt. The record has been established. True believers are satisfied and sure. They are the ones in a position to help others.

The fourth question is extremely interesting. What is the traditional way of dealing with doubters? You would do well to analyze it carefully. The words of teachers or people of influence never settle doubt concerning one’s own salvation.

Their words may cause one to temporarily stop worrying about doubt. Faith does not come by the word of influential people. It comes by the eternal WORD OF GOD that settles doubt while giving the person assurance relative to



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truth.

The traditional method of dealing with a person's doubt varies considerably. It usually starts by asking the doubter his reason for thinking that he might be saved. His answer usually involves a time when he prayed, or made some sincere commitment that resulted in some type of definite change. If the prayer, commitment, or change has not removed the person's doubt, he is not in need of an examination, but in need of the GOSPEL.

He needs to hear of the substitutionary work of Christ and UNDERSTAND that Jesus took care of his sin at Calvary. He needs to UNDERSTAND that Jesus has gone before God in his behalf with a SATISFACTORY SACRIFICE. God is satisfied with the sacrifice of Christ for the doubter's sin. It is the doubter that is not satisfied. He is looking at his own WORKS instead of hearing God's declaration of His satisfaction with the sacrifice of Christ by which He is able to extend an invitation for the sinner, or doubter, to come to Heaven.

The answer to the fifth question can be given without question by all those who have truly trusted Christ to take them to Heaven. Because of the substitutionary work of Christ, they know without doubt, that the charges against them have been dropped. They were placed on Christ and judged by God. They have learned that Christ has made peace with God for them.

They know that even though they sin daily, all their sin, including past sins, present sins, and future sins, have been judged in Christ at Calvary, as God poured out His judgment on Christ. They have recognized their lost condition and accepted God's invitation to go to Heaven. The true believer has acknowledged that Jesus Christ was bruised for him.

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(Isaiah 53:10). As God poured His judgment for sin on Christ, He saw the travail, or agony, of Christ's soul, and was satisfied (Isaiah 53:11). There, sinful man was reconciled to God (II Corinthians 5:19). The blood of Christ is on the mercy seat in Heaven (Hebrews 9:12, 24). It is the only sacrifice that took away sin. The door of Heaven is open. Sinners are invited to come in. Those that have heard, understood, and believed know that they are going. Job knew (Job 19:25). John knew (I John 3:2). Paul knew (II Timothy 1:12). True believers know. ***"Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit."*** 6 ***"Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:"*** (II Corinthians 5:5-6). ***"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."*** (Romans 8:16). ***"He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son."*** (I John 5: 10).

Question number six is not so easy to answer. "Why do so many preachers and teachers teach doubt?" It would be easy to say that they teach doubt because they have never been saved. That may be true, but I think not. Surely, so many preachers and teachers are not lost, though they may be. Could it be that they are covering up for some loved one that they know to be doubting? Maybe they are following the teaching of some respected leader who taught them to teach doubt. It might be that they have never considered the seriousness of the subject.

In view of the Bible teaching that many who think they are going to Heaven are actually going to hell (Matthew 7:21-23), it would be reasonable, and I think important, that every

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teacher and instructor insist that a person settle for nothing less than knowing, without doubt.

The Lord has given us a clear, simple record of man's redemption. God's provisions are clearly stated. Though all men have sinned, God, in Christ, has reconciled the world to Himself (II Corinthians 5:19). All sin of all men was charged to, or transferred from sinful man's account to the account of the spotless Son of God. He bore our sin in His own body. The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all. ***"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."*** (Isaiah 53:6). The innocent was made guilty for us. He Who was without sin was made sin for us. ***"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."*** (II Corinthians 5:21)

The Just One (Christ) suffered for the unjust. I Peter 3:18: ***"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:..."*** He was ***"...smitten of God and afflicted."*** (Isaiah 53:4). ***"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."*** (Isaiah 53:5). Jesus suffered our judgment that we might have His place in God's family, and enjoy God's blessings. The Rich (Christ) was made poor (a man) that man might be made rich (child of God and go to Heaven). To better understand this, one should study II Corinthians 5:21; I Peter 3:18; II Corinthians 8:9; and Isaiah 53:4-6,10.

Heaven's door is open to every sinner. Only those who recognize the substitutionary work of Christ and believe (know) will go to Heaven. Those who hear and understand

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will be the only ones who will believe, or know. We must be precise and repetitious in our teaching. It is important that we continue to give the Gospel to unbelievers until they cease to doubt, but simply rest in, or believe, the truth of God's Word.

The answer to question number seven must be left to the Judge that we all must face. "Is it possible for those who doubt to go to Heaven?" We have the Word of God. When properly taught or preached, the Word of God dissolves or removes doubt. Our best approach, I think, is to present the Gospel which is the message of Christ and His provision, activity, or performance for man. In the light of positive revealed truth, a sinning, hell-deserving believer can know that the sin debt is paid and the door of Heaven is open to him.

Most teachers and preachers teach that a person can go to Heaven if he will quit sinning. No one has ever quit sinning though all saved people have probably stopped certain sins. The Scriptures teach that if we sin in one point, or if we commit one sin, we are guilty of all. "***For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.***" (James 2:10). We will name a few sins that everyone habitually commits. They are: the failure to pray without ceasing; not loving God with all of our heart; not loving our neighbor as ourselves; not being thankful for everything, and coveting. We are all habitually guilty of these.

We are all sinners all of the time. God refers to us as believers, or saints once we trust Christ as our own personal Saviour. Christ died for our sin. We can only please God through our Substitute and Saviour, Who kept the law for us. Jesus, our Saviour then died for us. We are free to go to Heaven. The door of Heaven is open. The invitation for sinners to come is given. Those who believe, or those who know, will go. Why doubt and take a chance when you can

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hear, understand, and believe, and be sure? Believe God. He cannot lie. Tell others. They must hear in order to understand and believe.

Question number eight is: “Why do so many doubt?” The answer to this is not so complicated. Teachers and preachers of doubt contribute much to this problem. The popular Romans Road soul-winning system usually includes teaching of doubt. As the sinner is instructed, he is told something like this: “If you doubt, just remember what you did and tell the devil to go away.” This, I think, is doing a great injustice to the person that we are trying to win to Christ.

It would be far better if we would take a little more time and explain the substitutionary work of Christ. Present the Gospel carefully. When the person seems to understand, then ask for a direct decision to accept God’s invitation to go to Heaven. Direct the person’s attention to the substitutionary, finished work of Calvary, and not to his/her prayer or decision. A person will never know if he/she has prayed properly or committed properly. He can know, however, that Jesus has taken care of his sin, and God invites him to come and live with Him in Heaven because of Christ’s substitutionary work.

God’s judgment is going to be awful for those who teach sinners to trust in a prayer or other good works, instead of trusting Christ and His work of redemption. Hell has been enlarged to accommodate the teachers and students of such teaching. Let us be careful and concerned as we give out the Word to doubting unbelievers.

The answer to question nine is easy. “Does everyone doubt his salvation?” The answer is “no.” You cannot find one example in the Word of God where saved people weren’t sure about going to Heaven. Every saved person has many

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questions. Some will not be answered in this lifetime.

Why should one doubt his salvation, when sinning saints are welcome in Heaven? In fact, the sinner is as welcome in Heaven as Christ. God receives us in Christ's stead.. This is taught in Philemon, verse 17: ***"If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself."*** The sin debt has been paid. It has been canceled. God has reconciled man to himself. Redemption is complete. Our sins are not charged to us, according to II Corinthians 5:19. They have been charged to Christ (Isaiah 53:6; 1 Peter 2:24). Christ has been judged for our sin until God was satisfied with the judgment (Isaiah 53:11). Doubt and you will face the consequences. Believe and you will go to Heaven.

The tenth and final question is probably the most important.

"What is the Scriptural method of dissolving, or removing doubt?" The answer is dealt with in Daniel 5:12,16.

***"Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation. 16 "And I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations, and dissolve doubts: now if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom."***

The king had his doubts. Truth, or fact, in the Word of God removes doubt. Truth is God's Word. People who refuse to believe God's Word should not be called believers. They are not believers. They are doubters, or unbeliever.

I lived the first 21 years of my church life (member of

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a church) as a doubter. I called myself a believer, but admitted my ignorance and doubt. My pastor said he had the same problem. So did most of my friends. We thought this to be the best available. We did not know enough about God's Word to doubt much. We had not examined ourselves (II Corinthians 13:5) or searched the Scriptures (Acts 17:11), or even studied to show ourselves approved as God commanded (II Timothy 2:15).

In 1965, a preacher challenged my spiritual position. I accused him of being a troublemaker and a false prophet. He continued to give me the facts concerning Christ and His redemptive work. As I studied the Gospel, it seemed so simple. In fact, it was so simple, I could not see why I didn't know for sure that I was going to Heaven. I thought that I loved the Lord. I enjoyed going to church. Teaching Sunday School was a pleasure. Tithing was a must. Why didn't I know that I was going to Heaven? That puzzled me.

The Scriptures teach that man can be blinded to truth. Note II Corinthians 4:3,4: ***"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:" 4 "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."*** Matthew 7:21-23, ***"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."*** 22 ***"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?"*** 23 ***"And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."***

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The Spirit of God used the Word of God to show me my problem. The problem I had was simple. I was lost and going to hell, and didn't know it until I was convicted and convinced by the Word of God. What a relief it was for me to learn what my problem was. I knew that Christ died for sinners, and that God would receive sinful man because of Christ. As a convinced, convicted, lost sinner, I trusted Christ as my Saviour to take me to Heaven.

I've had questions about many things since being saved, but there is one thing I know for certain. I'm going to Heaven because Christ died for my sins. He is my only Hope. In August, 1965, I trusted Christ to take me to Heaven. It is a joy to know that my sin debt is paid, and that the door of Heaven is open to me even though I sin every day of my life.

Teachers of doubt, hear me well. Had I listened to you my destiny would still be hell. Thank God for someone who challenged me in the Word of God. The Lord was good in His faithfulness to reveal to me my lost condition and allow me the privilege of trusting Christ as my Saviour to take me to Heaven.

Thank God for the Word of God. It is Truth - men are liars. ***“God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.”*** (Romans 3:4). Let us read the Word of God. Let us hear the Word of God. Let us learn the Word of God. Let us understand the Word of God. And let us believe the Word of God. Once we believe the Word of God, we can enjoy it and give it to others. The Word of God will do the work of God. We can be the vessels through which the Word of God flows. According to John 6:63, the Word of God is Spirit and Life. Remember ... the Word of God will do the work of God.



# Call His Name JESUS

**I**n this complex society, it is helpful to know people of importance. The expression, “It is not what you know, but who you know” is used frequently in today’s economy. It is my desire to introduce to you the greatest Friend you will ever know.

Let us begin our introduction by considering two passages of Scripture. They are Luke 1:26-33. *“And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,”* 27 *“To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary.”* 28 *“And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.”* 29 *“And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.”* 30 *“And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.”* 31 *“And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.”* 32 *“He shall be great, and shall be*

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*called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father.” 33 “And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.” Notice the last part of verse 31, for our title, “...and shall call his name JESUS.”*

We find the same words for our title in Matthew. *“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.” 19 “Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.” 20 “But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.” 21 “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.” 22 “Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,” 23 “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.”*

Let us notice the middle of verse 21, “...*thou shalt call his name JESUS...*”.

One will never know a greater Friend nor meet a more influential person. He is worthy of our consideration. Consider the following passages relative to this Friend.

*“But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.” 7 “All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,” 8 “He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.” 9*

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*“But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother’s breasts.” 10 “I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother’s belly.” 11 “Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help.” 12 “Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.” 13 “They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.” 14 “I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.” 15 “My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.” 16 “For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.” 17 “I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.” 18 “They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. (Psalm 22:6-18).*

In this passage, One is called a worm, and He is despised of people. He is compassed about with a mob, described as the bulls of Bashan. He is gaped upon with the open mouths of those as raving and roaring lions. He is in the assembly of the wicked, who pierced His hands and feet.

Who is this One? Call His name JESUS.

In Psalm 23:2-5, we find One Who maketh us to lie down in green pastures. *“He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.” 3 “He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.” 4 “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” 5 “Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup*

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*runneth over.*” He leads beside the still waters. He walks with us through the valley of the shadow of death. He prepares the table for us in the presence of our enemies. Who is this Friend Who shows such great interest? Call His name JESUS.

In the midst of conflict and stress, the following prophecy was given in Isaiah 7:14 “***Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.***” Isaiah 7:14. “Immanuel” means “God with us.”

Matthew 1:23: “***Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.***”

Isaiah wrote of One Who faced great trials, but was determined in His efforts. “***For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.***” 3 “***He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.***” 4 “***Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.***” (Isaiah 53:2-4).

Who is this unusual individual Who is acquainted with grief, and Who is despised and rejected of men? Who is this that is said to have borne our griefs and carried our sorrows? Who is this that was smitten of God and afflicted? Call His name JESUS.

Isaiah further describes this One with the following words in chapter 53 beginning with verse 7: “***He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a***

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*sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.” 8 “He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.” 9 “And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.” 10 “Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him;” (Isaiah 53:7-10).*

Who is this that faced death without question? Who is this that was willing to die that others might live? Who is this that brought the Lord pleasure when bruising Him? Call His name Jesus.

The Apostle John wrote of terrifying circumstance that seemed so unjust, but necessary. It was for you and me. *“And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!” 15 “But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.” (John 19:14-15).*

The angry mob cried out against this man with angry and vile words. *“Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away.” 17 “And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha:” 18 “Where they crucified him, and two other with him on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.” (John 19:16-18).*

The anger of the mob was evident. Their hatred was demonstrated in ruthless fashion. Who is this One that caused the religious crowd such anger and Who was crucified by angry hands? Call His name JESUS.

His personal interest for one individual is seen in the

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following passage: ***“Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.”*** (John 19:27).

Who is this Who, as He hung on the cross with a crown of thorns on His head and nails in His hands and feet - His body mutilated - had an interest in this woman? Who is this that always has time for an individual? Call His name JESUS.

The Apostle Matthew recorded something for us that is of great interest. ***“Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,”*** 63 ***“Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.”*** 64 ***“Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.”*** 65 ***“Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can.”*** 66 ***“So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.”*** (Matthew 27:62-66).

Who is this One Who promised to defy death? Who is this One that brought such fear to the religious crowd? Who is this that causes alarm to the religious and government leaders, even while His body is in a tomb? Call His name JESUS!

In Matthew 28:6-8, we are challenged, ***“He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.”*** 7 ***“And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.”*** 8 ***“And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear***

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***and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.”***

Who is this Who defied the grave? Who is this that has risen from the dead? Who is this that defied the grips of death? Call His name JESUS.

The greatest Friend that man has ever known is the subject of our present discussion. He has done for us what no one else could do. It is something we could not have done for ourselves. He died for our sins. He was buried and rose. again. He presently is involved in caring for our interests. ***“But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;”*** (Hebrews 10:12).

Who is this Man that offered such a wonderful and sufficient sacrifice? Who is this seated at the right hand of God? Call His name JESUS.

We should rejoice in such a wonderful Saviour. He has paid our sin debt! Presently, He is seated at the right hand of the Father. ***“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father,...”*** (I John 2:1).

Who is this individual at the right hand of the Father? Who is this Advocate, or Attorney, interceding for us? Who is this One that cares so much? Who is this Who is busy looking out for our interests? Call His name JESUS.

As we attempt to live our lives for Him, it is a joy to know that we have an Advocate Who not only has paid our sin debt, but is daily interceding to the Father for us. We should be careful to honour Him. ***“Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.”***<sup>10</sup> ***“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”***<sup>11</sup> ***“Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we***

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*persuade men;...*” (II Corinthians 5:9-11).

*“But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.”* 11 *“For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.”* 12 *“So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”* (Romans 14:10-12).

Who is this Judge? Who is this to Whom we Christians will give an account of our words and actions? Who is this, before Whom every knee shall bow? Call His name JESUS.

When the Christian life is over, and we have faced the Lord at the judgment seat, what are we to expect? *“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.”* 12 *“His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.”* 11 *“And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.”* 14 *“And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.”* (Revelation 19:11-14).

Who is this leader that leads His armies from Heaven back to this earth? Who is this One with such piercing eyes? Who is this One, Whose clothing is dipped in blood? Who is this One that is followed by the armies, clothed in linen, white and clean? Call His name JESUS.

All opposition will be put down, and the Lord will rule and reign on the earth for a thousand years. Then a strange and awesome transaction takes place, *“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the*



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***earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.***” (Revelation 20:11). We see a judge on a great white throne. This One has such power that the earth and heavens flee from Him. We see the dead (lost), brought before Him and judged according to their works. They are then cast into the lake of fire.

Who is this One seated on this white throne, with such authority? Call His name JESUS.

The heavens and Earth will melt with fervent heat. A new heaven and a new earth are eternally fixed in place. The Holy city comes down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ***“And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.”*** 24 ***“And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it:”*** (Revelation 21:23-24). ***“And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.”*** 5 ***“And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.”*** (Revelation 22:4-5).

Who is this One in this beautiful city? The city has walls of jasper. The city is of great beauty. Its gates are pearls, and the street is pure gold. There is no sun and no moon, yet there is sufficient light.

Who is this One Who is the Light of the city, Who is called the Bright and Morning Star: ***“...thou shalt call His name JESUS.”***

I encourage you to trust Him today as your Saviour; He is worthy of your honest representation. ***“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.”*** (II Corinthians 5:20). He is our Hope, our Life, and

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our Purpose. What is His name? Call His name **JESUS!**

We should be faithful ambassadors for this wonderful Saviour.

# Why Do People Doubt Their Salvation?

**I**t is not uncommon for soul winners to teach and to encourage doubt. Instead of explaining the substitutionary, redemptive work of Christ, many times the prospective convert is told that he will doubt.

What is it that people doubt? Is it the uncertainty about how sincere one is or was at the time of conversion? Is it the lack of sufficient change after conversion? Is the convert still being plagued by some sin that he expected to be removed? Is there lack of love for others, or for the Lord's work? As one seeks proof of his or her salvation, doubts seem to find a place in that individual's mind in a very plaguing fashion.

Sermons are preached on ways to check up and see if one is really saved. There are five proofs that are generally given. Not one of these five proofs normally given in these sermons can produce real proof that will always stand the test. The real proof is simple and positive. That proof is that Christ died for our sins. Real proof is that God was in Christ

reconciling us unto Himself, not imputing our trespasses unto us. That is all the proof that one will ever need. Jesus took care of our sin debt. His body was broken and His blood was shed. He made peace with God for us. Sinners are welcome in Heaven because of Christ.

According to the Scripture, everyone is to examine himself concerning personal faith in Christ for salvation. “***Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus***

***Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?***” (II Corinthians 13:5). Don’t be afraid to be honest. The Scriptures will not mislead you. Once the matter is scripturally settled, you can enjoy obeying I Peter 3:15, “***But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:***”

A proper examination should lead to positive proof of salvation. Anyone that is saved has previously considered the pros and cons of sin, salvation, and the method of appropriating forgiveness. Any serious questions relative to the matter must be settled in order for one to be saved. The unsaved may have considered the questions in a sincere manner, but still be uncertain or even deceived. The saved and lost alike should be ready to face examination in the Scriptures at any time.

Doubts and fears are results of a lack of confidence, and satisfaction concerning God’s presence, power, and provisions. Many people have trusted Christ to help them to be good enough to be accepted or to go to Heaven. One who is still working at salvation cannot be sure that he has done enough work. No man knows exactly how sincere one should be. We have no way of measuring how much change is

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required. It is not how sincere or how much change that makes one sure, but the finished work of Christ, and His eternal Word. The answer is found at one place and in one Person. The place is Calvary. The Person is Christ. The plan is redemption. The proof is faith. The promise is quietness and assurance forever. The true believer will never thirst again (John 4:14). ***“But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”***

In answer to the question before us, “Why do people doubt their salvation?”, we want to consider the question “WHY IS A PERSON LOST?” It is very essential that we understand this important question. The answer is given in simple and positive terms in John 3:18 and John 16:9. John 3:18 states: ***“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”*** John 16:9 says: ***“Of sin, because they believe not on me;... .”***

A person is lost because he has not believed. Notice it did not say because he is not believing. In I John 5:10, we learned that the believer has the witness in himself, but the unbeliever does not believe that record that God has given us of His Son. The record that God has given is declared in precise terms. II Corinthians 5:19 says: ***“To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;... .”*** John 3:17 says: ***“For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”***

The world has been reconciled to God. Sin is no longer imputed to the guilty. It has been imputed to the

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innocent and judged sufficiently. Jesus did not come to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He is the Saviour of all men, but it will only benefit those who believe, or the one who receives God's record. I Timothy 4:10 says, ***"For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe."***

A person is born into the family of God ***"...by the word of God,"*** (I Peter 1:23). Jesus taught that ***"...Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."*** (John 6:45). Many people hear the Word of God even with joy and appreciation, but are not willing to stand for Christ, and thereby are offended by the Word of God. Mark 4:16,17: ***"And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness;"*** 17 ***"They have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended."*** They want forgiveness, but they choose the world, rather than the denial of self and a surrender to God's plan for forgiveness. In order for the Word to bear fruit, there must be a hearing of the Word, a seeing or understanding of truth, and a childlike faith in God's record or Word. ***"And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."*** (John 6:40).

As we continue to answer the question "Why do people doubt their salvation?", let us consider another question. "WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A PERSON TRUSTS CHRIST AS SAVIOUR ?" When a person trusts Christ as Saviour, he or she is born into the family of God. This is

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called “getting saved.” At the moment of salvation God the Father orders the Holy Spirit into that person. “***And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.***” (Galatians 4:6). The Holy Spirit which comes in, bears witness with that person that he or she is a child of God. “***The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:***” (Romans 8:16).

The Holy Spirit that indwells the believer from the time of believing, or getting saved (Ephesians 1:13), causes the person to always be confident. “***Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:***” (II Corinthians 5:6). The Holy Spirit seals that individual until the day of redemption (of the body, Ephesians 1:14;4:30). It is the indwelling Holy Spirit that guarantees the saved person resurrection, or the new body. “***But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.***” 23 “***And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.***” (Romans 8:11,23).

As Jesus talked to the woman at the well in John 4:14, He said that anyone who drinks “***...of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst;... .***” The living water will satisfy the partaker forever. In Isaiah 32:17, the work of the Spirit is described as giving the person quietness and assurance forever. “***And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.***” Our sin has been judged. The debt is paid. Peace has been made. Sinners are invited to Heaven. Only believers will

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go.

It is important that the preacher, and the soul winner understand that Jesus has taken care of all sin. That includes past sins, present sins, and future sins. God has judged every sin of every man for all time in the person of Jesus Christ. ***“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and***

***afflicted.”*** 5 ***“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”*** (Isaiah 53:4,5).

God is satisfied with that judgment (Isaiah 53:11). It pleased the Lord to bruise His Son, Jesus Christ. (Isaiah 53:10). It was a joy for the Son to give Himself as a ransom for mankind, according to Hebrews 12:2: ***“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”***

The account is settled. The sin debt is paid. The wrath of God has been appeased. Man has been reconciled to God (II Corinthians 5:19). Peace has been made with God for man. ***“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.”*** (Colossians 11:20).

The record of redemption is established and completed. We should learn much from studying, memorizing, and believing. I John 5:10 tells us ***“He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.”***



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God is satisfied with the judgment of sin in Christ. It is man's responsibility to believe the record. Once man has believed the record, he has the witness in himself. Those who have the witness are Heaven-bound. He is satisfied with the redemptive work of Christ, and understands why he is going to Heaven.

If people truly trust Christ and His redemptive work to take them to heaven, why would they doubt? If they are doubting, what are they doubting? God has judged our sin. He is satisfied with that judgment. He has given us a clear record concerning the matter. The Holy Spirit is ready to teach the truth to anyone who dares to hear.

The problem is not with the record, or the redemptive work of Christ, but the misunderstanding that people have concerning being saved. There are those who think they are saved because they asked Jesus into their heart. There are those who think they are saved because their life has changed. There are those who think they are saved because they felt a sudden feeling of relief upon making some type of commitment to God. There are those who know they are saved because Jesus has taken care of their sin. The difference is the object of their faith.

Job knew that his Redeemer "...*liveth*,..." and that he would one day see Him face to face. "***For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:***" 26 "***And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:***" (Job 19:25,26).

John knew that Jesus was coming, and that he would some day be like Jesus. "***Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for***

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***we shall see him as he is.***” (I John 3:2). The Apostle Paul knew that he had trusted Christ and was going to Heaven. Those who have believed in Christ and His finished work also know that they, too, are going to Heaven. It is because Jesus has taken care of their sin. They have trusted Him and Him alone to take them to Heaven.

It would be a great day in our churches if pastors would be content to preach the Gospel and leave the results to the Lord. God has not called us to build a reputation. He has not promised us any particular type of results other than that He would bless His Word. The Word of God will do the work of God as the Holy Spirit empowers the listener to hear and to understand.

Let us take a careful look at John 7:17, Romans 14:23, and II Corinthians 3:16. ***“If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.”*** (John 7:17). ***“And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.”***(Romans 14:23). ***“Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.”*** (II Corinthians 3:16).

A careful study of these verses will reveal that God is ready and able to reveal the truth to any individual who has the right attitude.

If you have been doubting where you stand with God in the matter of your eternal destiny, study the Scriptures. Do not accept any assurance from your preacher, pastor, relative, or friend. The only assurance that you need is from the Holy Spirit of God directly related to the Word of God. ***“He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”*** (I John 5:12). Your sin (past, present, and future) has been judged in Christ. The account is settled.

## WHY DO PEOPLE DOUBT THEIR SALVATION

Heaven's door is open to you.

According to Matthew 7:13,14,21,23, most people are going to Hell. Many of those think they are going to Heaven. It is because the god of this world has blinded their minds (II Corinthians 4:4).

Refuse to be one of the deceived. Listen to God's Word. Quit trying to believe. Hear God speak in His Word, and believe what He says.

***"...God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son..."*** (John 3:16).

***"...God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself,"*** (II Corinthians 5:19).

***"...he was wounded for our transgressions, ...with his stripes we are healed."*** (Isaiah 53:5).

Trust him. Spend your life encouraging others to trust Christ. That wicked, rebellious sinner is welcome in Heaven. It is because Christ has taken care of his sin debt. The Just suffered for the unjust that He might bring them to God. ***"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:"*** (I Peter 3:18). Let us explain the Gospel to him until he believes it. It may take a long time.

***"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed ..."*** (John 3:18).

***"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:..."*** (Romans 5:10).

Your record is clear. You are invited to live with Jesus forever. Why not turn away from your doubt and unbelief, and trust Christ now to take you to Heaven when He is ready for you to go?



# The Glory Of Calvary

A word that inspires a chill in the bone marrow of those who hear it in its proper context is “glory”. We usually tie the concept to patriotism, pride, and even occasionally, to Heaven.

The word means “great honor and admiration; fame; renown; worship; adoration; the condition of the highest achievement; splendor; magnificence.”

We speak of “getting to Glory,” or “Oh! that will be glory for me” insofar as Heaven is concerned; and this is good, but many times we forget where the greatest “glory” was manifested - this was performed by Christ outside of Jerusalem on a skull-shaped hill called Calvary.

Let us turn our attention for the next few moments to the “Glory of Calvary,” and let the truth of the majesty, splendor, and significance permeate our minds.

Calvary is the hub of Christianity. There the world was reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. The hope of mankind is found at Calvary in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. When one learns of this great truth, and personally receives its benefits, his destiny is changed, and purpose in life

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is given.

This was true in the life of the Apostle Paul who testified of such in Galatians 6:14, “***But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.***”

He further stated in verse 17, “***From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.***” It was at Calvary that Jesus died for Paul’s sins. Therefore he readily testified, “***For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.***” (I Corinthians 2:2).

His deliverance was not by any of his own merits, but totally by the redemptive work of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Because of that great truth, he not only preached salvation by grace through faith, but he stood against false teachers who insisted on making works a part of one’s coming to Christ. Paul’s attitude toward false teachers is seen in Galatians 5:12, “***I would they were even cut off which trouble you.***”, and Galatians 2:5, “***To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.***” For Him to give false teachers consideration would be to turn from truth.

As we take a general look at the book of Galatians, we see that Paul’s convictions are recorded by the Holy Spirit. He was forgiven by grace and he refused to be brought into bondage by any false teaching. He demanded that Christians stand fast in their liberty that is experienced in the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul’s rejoicing in the glory of Calvary would be better appreciated if we understood the circumstances that were taking place at the church of Galatia. Not only did these false teachers teach salvation by works, they went on to teach that one had to keep the law in order to stay saved. This

erroneous teaching infuriated the Apostle Paul, and the book of Galatians was written by the inspiration of God to refute any teaching on salvation by works or by keeping salvation by works.

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In Galatians, chapter one, Paul states his authority. He was not an apostle of man, but of Jesus Christ and God the Father (1:1). The basis for his ministry and personal hope was the offering of Jesus Christ for his sins. ***“Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:”(1:4).*** Paul’s attitude toward anyone preaching any other gospel, though it be man or angel, was to ***“...let him be accursed.”*** ***“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”*** 9 ***“As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”*** (Galatians 1:8,9). Christ gave Himself an offering for our sins, and Paul had been called of God to reveal His Son. ***“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace,”*** 16 ***“To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:”*** (Galatians 1:15-16). His message was clear. His call was Divine.

In chapter two, he identifies his position. He had little tolerance for false brethren who were brought in (unawares) to spy out the liberty of the Christian. He knew their motive. They only wanted to bring the Christian into bondage. He was not willing to give them the time of day. ***“And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:”*** 5 ***“To***

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*whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.”* (Galatians 2:4-5). He knew that to tolerate or to sympathize with such teaching was to turn from the truth of the gospel.

He readily rebuked Peter for being a disobedient Christian concerning the Gospel of grace. Galatians 2:11 tells us, “***But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.***” Again, we see the basis for his rebuke was that the truth of the Gospel might be promoted. “***But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?***” (Galatians 2:14). He knew that a true Bible teacher must not tolerate a teacher, or teaching, that promotes salvation by grace plus works, or salvation by works.

His position concerning justification through the faith of Christ is clearly stated in Galatians 2:16. “***Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.***” We see his position clearly stated concerning false brethren, disobedient Christians, and justification by grace. He warned us that to teach salvation by works is to depart from the truth of the Gospel. “***...if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.***” (Galatians 2:21). All sin of all mankind has been paid. God does not overlook sin, but has judged it completely and sufficiently in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In chapter three, Paul’s critics are questioned and the



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purpose of the law defined. According to verse 1, we are taught that for one to follow such teaching is to be bewitched. (Galatians 3:1). ***“O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?”*** It is to be foolish (3:3). It is religion in vain (3:4). Though it makes sense to the carnal mind that if one is good

or attempts to be good, he is more deserving of Heaven than one who is very unrighteous. The Bible teaches differently. ***“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”*** (Proverbs 14:12). ***“Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”*** (Galatians 3:6). For one to add one work to salvation is to be put under the curse of the law (Galatians 3:10). James 2:10 states, ***“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”*** Thank God we have been delivered from the curse of the law (Galatians 3:13), and are redeemed by the blood and reconciled to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The law was added, or given, to the people because of their sin. God in mercy gave the people a written law. The law exposes sin, or causes sin to become exceedingly sinful in the mind of the sinner. It was given that every mouth may be stopped - and that all the world may become guilty before God. ***“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.”*** (Romans 3:19). The law is good if a man use it lawfully (I Timothy 1:8). It is our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith. ***“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.”*** 25 ***“But after that faith is***

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*come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.”* (Galatians 3:24,25). *“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”* (Romans 10:4). The question is asked and answered in Romans 3:31, *“Do we then make void the law through faith?...”* The reply is *“...God forbid: yea, we establish the law.”* It is important to understand that the purpose of the law was not to make people right with God, but to expose their sin that they might see their need for a Saviour.

Christ kept the law for us. He was then judged as a sinner suffering the judgment of every sin of every individual in the human race. God does not overlook sin, but has judged sin sufficiently. Therefore, when a person receives Christ, or trusts Christ, as his personal Saviour, he can enjoy God's benefits as if he had never sinned. These benefits are ours by faith. Without faith, it is impossible to please Him. *“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:”* (Romans 5:1).

In chapter four, the Apostle Paul challenged the spirituality of the church at Galatia. His reason for doubting their salvation or questioning their spiritual relationship is of great significance. Some were sympathizing and cooperating with the Judaisers. , *“But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?”* (Galatians 4:9). He had set the record straight in chapter two, in stating his attitude toward such people that the truth of the Gospel might continue. Again, his concern is seen in 4:11: *“I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.”* There are those who have a different attitude toward him and the Gospel which he preached. This change of attitude is seen in Galatians 4:15,16, *“Where is then the*

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*blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.”* 16 *“Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?”* Again he asks in verse 21, *“Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?”*

The Apostle Paul knew that for a person to be saved, he must understand that Christ has redeemed him from the curse of the law. A believer knows that it is not by any work that he does, but by the grace of God that he is forgiven. One who does not know that simple truth has not understood the grace of God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In chapter five, an exhortation is given for the believers to stand. This stand is in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. This liberty is from the curse of the law, from which we have been delivered by Jesus Christ. One who submits to one point of the law is responsible, or a debtor, to do the whole law. *“For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.”* (Galatians 5:3).

Not only were they exhorted to stand in the liberty, but also to stand against false teaching. The greatest opposition to the truth of the Gospel does not come from idol worshiper, but from those who would add works to the plan of salvation. To add one work is to turn away from the grace of God that is described in Galatians 5:4: *“...whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.”* To be set free from the penalty of sin is the longing of the soul. Every believer has learned that Jesus has set him free and is tempted to use that great liberty for an occasion to the flesh. *“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.”*

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(Galatians 5:13). In Galatians 2:16, we are told what the believer knows relative to being justified. ***“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”***

This knowledge precedes simple, but positive faith in the finished work of Christ. One who does not have that knowledge cannot trust the finished work of Christ. They do not understand it, and therefore, cannot accept it by faith. They either consciously or subconsciously trust in works, though they may trust Christ to help them perform the works.

In the last verses of chapter Five and chapter Six, we are exhorted to walk in the Spirit. In demonstrating spirituality, a strong brother is to be ready to help the weaker brother. This is important lest the stronger also be tempted. Many times we are prone to ridicule and discourage the weak brother, instead of offering a helping hand.

The law of the harvest is clearly set forth in Galatians 6:7,8; ***“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”*** 8 ***“For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”*** Many times the seasons are longer than we like. We are to wait for the time of harvest and not be weary and discouraged.

In James 5:7,8, we are challenged to be patient as a farmer waiting for his crop to be ready for harvest. We must be patient in our sowing of the seed of the Word of God, and being a good influence for the cause of Christ. Patience is important. ***“Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the***

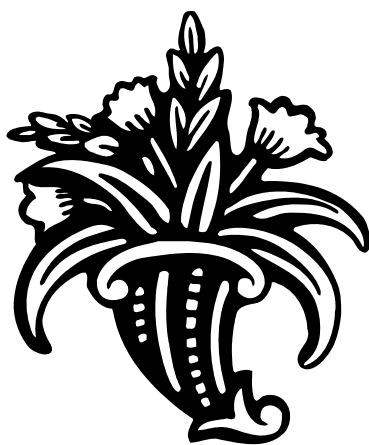
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***coming of the Lord draweth nigh.***” (James 5:8).

The future of the Christian is bright! To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. II Corinthians 5:8 says; “***We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.***” It is important that we keep before us the truth that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Romans 8:18: “***For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.***” As the Apostle Paul, let us bear in our bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ, and determine as he did, “***But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.***” (Galatians 6:14). In the cross we find redemption, forgiveness of sins, purpose in living, and a story to tell. “***And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.***” (Galatians 6:9). “***As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.***” (Galatians 6:10).

Today is the time given to us to serve Him. Tomorrow will be too late for many. “***Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.***” (I Corinthians 15:58).

We should say with Paul as recorded in II Corinthians 2:2, “***For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.***”, and we will enjoy the results of I Corinthians 2:5. “***That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.***”



# No Knob - No Truth

**I**n the matter of today's religious worship, there is very little truth. When analyzed, religion is found to be more mystery and superstition than truth. There is no knob on either side of the door of the heart. Children and adults are taught to ask Jesus to come into their hearts. For Him to do so, they are told to open the door from the inside, but there is no knob, nor door to open. The wordless book is used to teach young children. The Bible teaches that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Why the mystery, when the truth is much easier to teach?

The word "truth" is a vital word in Christianity. This was taught by Jesus. "***And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.***" (John 8:32). Without the truth, there is no freedom. The source of truth is the Word of God (John 17:17). "***Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.***" Those who ignore or reject the Word of God, ignore or reject truth, and will never know freedom.

In a meeting that I recently attended, a pastor pleaded for help. He wanted the new "positive action" teaching

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material removed from our public schools in Florida. The man passed out excerpts from the material. This material revealed that students are taught that self-esteem comes by thinking positively (not through study and hard work). They are encouraged to get a rock (pet) to do their worrying. The authority of the parents and the church is ridiculed.

Near the close of the program, he asked for questions and discussion. I raised a question which I think should be given careful consideration. The question is this: "Why shouldn't the school teach such mystery?" An even greater mystery is taught in our churches. This mystery is reflected in teaching kids from a wordless book and telling them that there is a knob on the inside of the heart's door (but no knob on the outside). Converts are told they must open the door so Jesus can come in. This question that I raised received no open discussion from the leader nor others present.

To further consider such mystery, people are taught to "pray through." They are taught to get into some kind of meditational trance until the Spirit overpowers them, and they begin to speak in what is called in modern society "tongues." These tongues are verbal commotions that are not understood by those present, nor by the person that is speaking. The individual is supposed to be under the control of the Holy Ghost, and is speaking a "heavenly language." Why?

In Paul's letter to the church in Corinth, we find a challenge from the Holy Spirit. ***"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."*** (II Corinthians 11:3). The truth of the Gospel is simple. For that reason and because of the blindness of the heart, people miss it.

If the challenge is going to be effective, you, the



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reader, must be honest with yourself and with the Lord. Do you really know what and who you are trusting for your hope of forgiveness and eternity in Heaven? Has there been a time in your life that you honestly considered what is error and what is truth, and let the Word of God decide for you? It is a necessity if one is to know Christ and to effectively serve the Lord. It is important that we be willing to hear the Word of God.

We do not need a knob upon our heart's door, nor a light to shine around us, nor some mystery voice to speak. It is not necessary to have some tingling sensation up and down the spine, nor the feeling of a load removed from one's shoulders. The need is simple. It is to know Christ and His provision.

Mankind is a sinner. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. ***"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."*** (Isaiah 53:6). There is not a just man upon the earth. James 2:10 teaches that though one keep the whole law and offend in one point, he is guilty of all. This means one sin makes an individual totally guilty. That individual is as guilty as one who has broken all the laws.

Such awful sinners (as we are) need a Saviour. We need help! God has provided that help. ***"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."*** (John 3:16). ***"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."*** 14 ***"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."*** ( John 1:1, 14).

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***“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”***

(Hebrews 2:9). God became flesh to offer that body a sacrifice for man's sin. Hebrews 10:5,10 says ***“Therefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:”*** 10 ***“By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”***

The reformation of man is useless in the matter of making him right with God. Isaiah 64:6 teaches that all of our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. This is further taught in Philippians 3:8 where Paul declared his good works as no better than dung. Man is hopeless in ridding himself of the penalty of even one sin. The soul that sinneth it shall die. The wages of sin is death. We have all sinned and need God's forgiveness.

Jesus was born of a virgin. He lived a sinless life. He was tempted in all points like as we are yet without sin. ***“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”*** (Hebrews 4:15). He was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. (II Corinthians 5:21). The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of all (Isaiah 53:6). He bore our sin in His own body on the tree (I Peter 2:24). It is important that we see the substitutionary judgment in order to understand why God forgives us.

The innocent Jesus was made guilty, therefore the just One Who had been made guilty was required to suffer for the unjust (I Peter 3:18). He (Jesus) was smitten of God (Isaiah

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53:4). ***“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”*** (Isaiah 53:5). It pleased the Lord to bruise Him (Isaiah 53:10). For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross (Hebrews 12:2). God judged Christ until He was satisfied (Isaiah 53:11). When the judgment was complete, Jesus dismissed His spirit, or gave up the ghost. He died for us, thereby paying the sin debt of mankind.

They buried the body of Jesus Christ. Three days and three nights later, Jesus arose from the dead. After His resurrection, Jesus instructed Mary not to touch Him. ***“Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.”*** (John 20:17), for He had not yet ascended to the Father to offer the sacrifice for sin (His blood). Jesus died as our sacrifice, yet arose as our High Priest. Hebrews 9:11 teaches that Christ became our High Priest.

After telling Mary not to touch Him, He ascended into Heaven and offered His blood on the mercy seat for our sins, not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world (I John 2:2). ***“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”*** 24 ***“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:”*** (Hebrews 9:12,24).

The sacrifice that Jesus made on the mercy seat was His blood. His blood represents the judgment of God, and His sufferings for our sins. That blood was God's offering to God for our sins as a sweet-smelling savour. ***“And walk in love, as***

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***Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.***

(Ephesians 5:2). It was by that offering that sinful man is sanctified, or justified. ***“By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”***

(Hebrews 10:10). The offering was sufficient to perfect the sinner, and give him a right, or perfect, standing with God (Hebrews 10:14). As a result, God remembers our sins no more.

***“And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.”***

(Hebrews 10:17). The sinner is accepted in the beloved (Ephesians 1:5). He is reconciled to God (II Corinthians 5:19), and stands before God holy and without blame (Ephesians 1:4).

The shame of religion is that preachers and teachers are presenting a mystery to children and adults alike. They should be teaching and explaining the reality of the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ. They substitute the Gospel with a salvation plan that is more superstition and mystery than reality. As a result, converts put their confidence in a profession, a prayer, a changed life, or the words of the soul-winner rather than in Christ and His finished work.

There is no knob on the inside nor outside of the heart's door. Sin is not taken care of at the time of conversion. It was taken care of at Calvary. The sinner receives forgiveness by faith. Mankind is not reconciled at the time of conversion, but he is reconciled at Calvary. Redemption or reconciliation is complete. We have God's receipt - His Word. The Gospel is the message of Christ and His ministry. It needs explaining to the sinner until he believes.

The parable of the sower gives us a system or explanation which should be given consideration. The seed is

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the Word of God. The sower is the soul-winner. The heart and mind is the soil which is described as: the wayside, the stony ground, the thorns, or the good ground. The good ground brought forth fruit. It is described as a good and honest heart that hears the Word of God, receives the Word of God, keeps the Word of God, and brings forth fruit with patience.

John 6:45 also gives us an insight to this truth. They that have heard and have learned of the Father come to Jesus. There must be a hearing and learning in order to understand to the point of trusting Jesus as Saviour. ***“It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.”*** (John 6:45).

Testimonies are given by many converts that have more superstition and mystery than truth. It is not unusual to hear one say that when he made his profession, it felt like a ton of bricks fell off his shoulders. Others say it felt like their feet at that point were no longer touching the floor. It is a wicked generation that seeks after a sign (Matthew 12:39). ***“But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:”***

The emphasis is put on the conversion, or the experience, of the convert instead of on Christ at Calvary where peace was made with God for the sinner. A careful look at these experiences reveal a lack of faith and puts emphasis on signs. We need to understand the subtle trap that we fall into because of our zeal and, therefore, attempt to be effective and truthful in our soul-winning.

The results are described in the twenty-third chapter of Matthew. Jesus said in verse 15, ***“Woe unto you, scribes and***

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***Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.***” In verse 13, He said, “...***for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.***”

He further says, “***Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.***” 27 “***Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness.***”(Matthew 23:25,27).

Another reason for the mystery, superstition, and confusion is the misunderstanding of Bible repentance, and the matter of getting saved, or trusting Christ as Saviour. Repentance is a change of mind or a “turning from.”

The Apostle Paul describes Bible repentance in Philippians 3:7-9, “***But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.***” 8 “***Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,***” 9 “***And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.***”

The change of mind spoken of above is concerning the person’s confidence or hope in good works. It is not a turning from bad to good, but a turning from one’s confidence in his good to Jesus Christ as Saviour.

When one trusts Christ as Saviour, or accepts God’s invitation to go to Heaven because of the redemptive work of

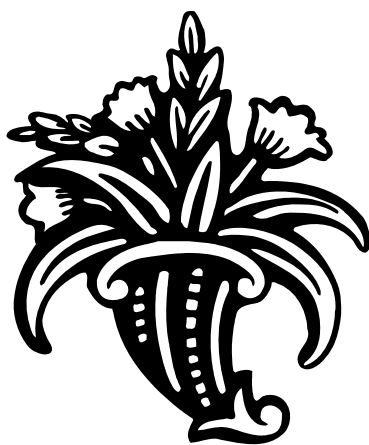
## NO KNOB - NO TRUTH

Christ, he experiences the new birth, or the salvation of the soul. When the Christian submits to the will of God, he/she experiences the salvation of his life or influence. At the rapture, one will experience the salvation of the body.

We can scripturally say that the Bible clearly teaches three salvations: (1) the salvation of the soul when one receives Christ as Saviour; (2) the salvation of the life or influence when one submits to the will of God; (3) and the salvation of the body (or adoption, Romans 8:23 ***“And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”***) at the rapture or coming of Christ to receive us in the air.

It is not necessary to teach mystery when the Gospel is clear and plain. Let us consider laying aside the wordless book, teaching about knobs on the door of the heart, and preach Jesus and His substitutionary work for mankind. The only proof of salvation that we need is that Christ died for our sin. Jesus has made peace with God for us (Colossians 1:20). The door of Heaven is open for sinners to come. He promises to receive those that come to Him by faith.

***“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:”*** (Romans 5:1). Salvation is simple and positive. ***“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”*** (John 8:32). ***“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:”*** 39 ***“And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”*** (Acts 13:38,39). Let us share the Gospel and encourage sinners to thank God for the work of Calvary as they receive Christ or believe the Gospel.





# The Seed Fell Where?

**T**he human mind is subject to deception. Wrong can seem right. The difference is important. We can learn much about an individual and his need from the parable of the sower. This is a parable taught by Jesus that is recorded in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The study of this parable can teach us much about the mind of the individual and why so few people actually know the difference between truth and error.

The parable of the sower is recorded and explained in three places: (Matthew 13:3-23; Luke 8:5-15; and Mark 4:3-20). In the book of Luke, we find these words:

*“A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.” 6 “And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.” 7 “And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it.” 8 “And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried,*

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***He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.***” (Luke 8:5-8).

As Jesus explained the parable of the sower, he identified the seed as the Word of God (Luke 8: 11. When the seed is sown, or the Word is preached, the seed falls on four types of soil or various conditions of the heart. The four soils are identified as (1) the way side, (2) the rocky or stony ground, (3) among thorns, and (4) on good ground. Only one of these four soils bears fruit.

Jesus makes it clear that the truth - or mysteries - of the kingdom of God are not opened to, or understood by, careless or rebellious individuals. In fact, we learn in I Corinthians 2:14, that the truth is spiritually discerned and cannot be understood by the natural man. We learn in Proverbs 1:23 that it is God Who makes His words known. Unless the mind is Divinely enlightened, it will never see or understand the truth. As Jesus talked to his disciples after the resurrection, their eyes were opened and they knew Him (Luke 24:31). It is the Holy Ghost that teaches us all things (John 14:26). ***“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”***

On the other hand, it is the desire of the devil, or the god of this world, to hide the truth from an individual. He has been empowered with the ability to blind an unbeliever’s mind (II Corinthians 4:4). ***“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”*** The Lord is ready, able, and willing to unlock the mind, or lift the veil, in order that an honest seeker might know the truth. For one to know the truth, he must have an honest desire to know and must give

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careful or serious attention to God's Word.

We learn from a study of the parable of the sower that only one-fourth of the soil on which the seed falls bears fruit. No doubt, that fact can teach us much about why we see so little results from the teaching and preaching of the Word of God today. The seed, or Word of God, falls by the way side or in the careless or indifferent mind, and is snatched away (Matthew 13:19).

Other seed falls on the rocky or stony ground where there is not enough interest or prepared soil to take root. There is enough interest for the seed to sprout, but because of the lack of moisture (Word of God) and depth, it withers away. Matthew 13:20,21 says, ***“But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;”*** 21 ***“Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.”*** Other seed falls among the thorns and, though it springs up, it is choked by the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, the lust of other things, and the pleasures of this life. Matthew 13:22: ***“He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.”***

Some of the seed falls on good ground, and brings forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, some one hundred. This good ground is described in Luke 8:15 as an honest and good heart; and in Mark 4:20 we learn that the good ground or receptive heart is one that hears and receives the Word.

The Bible clearly teaches us in the book of Matthew, Chapter Seven, that many preachers and religious workers are going to hell. They will say to the Lord, ***“Many will say to***

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***me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?"*** (Matthew 7:22). He will say unto them that He never knew them. They were unsaved, though they had been involved in hearing and even giving out the Word of God.

Religious, but unsaved people are described in Matthew 23:13-15. ***"But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in."*** 14 ***"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation."*** These religious, but unsaved people, make long prayers and proselyte or go after other people. The people that they win are said to be two-fold more a child of hell than the religious people themselves. What an awful indictment against religious people who are involved in religious work!

These people are blinded and deceived. They probably have made a false profession and are giving false hope to others concerning their eternal destiny. They are the children of the devil. They are hypocrites. Many are zealous in winning others to their religious practice.

We want to take a careful look at the types of soil where the seed falls. First, we will look at the seed that fell by the way side. ***"When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side."*** (Matthew 13:19).

***"The sower soweth the word."*** 15 ***"And these are they***

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***by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.***” (Mark 4:14,15).

When we examine these two verses, along with Luke 8:12, we can understand what happens to much of the Word of God that is preached.

***“Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.” 12 “Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.”*** (Luke 8:11,12).

Though the Word of God is given out, it is not understood. It is immediately snatched away by the devil. That is the result of much preaching. Many people make professions and/or go along with religious teachings that have no real meaning to them. They have never understood the real meaning of Christianity. They hope, or expect, but what will be their end?

Let us next consider the stony soil. It will be most enlightening. As the Word of God is sown or preached, it is received with joy and gladness (Matthew 13:20; Mark 4:16; and Luke 8:13). Because of the lack of interest, preparation, and understanding, the seed does not take root. It outwardly affects the hearer. He dureth (or endures) for awhile. In fact Luke 8: 13 says for awhile he believes. The Word had no root and bears no fruit. At a glance, it seemed to produce a believer. This describes so many people in our churches today. There is no reality in their religion.

Next, we want to look at the soil or condition of the heart described as among the thorns. The Word of God is preached. It has some root, but is choked out by the thorns.

It is important that you see that after the seeds were

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planted, they sprouted and produced a stalk. The stalk or plant was not allowed to bear fruit because of the competition of the thorns. To get the meaning, we must understand what the thorns represent. It is clearly defined in the three accounts of the parable of the sower.

The thorns are identified as the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches (Matthew 13:22). The thorns are further described or identified in Mark 4:18,19 as not only the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches, but the lust of other things. The pleasures of life are also added in Luke 8:14. Every time the Word is taught or preached, these four things compete for the mind; very little truth gets through to the mind; very little truth gets through to the understanding of the listener's heart or mind.

Take a careful look at what Jesus is teaching. When the Word of God is preached, the thorns compete for the mind. The thorns are the cares of the world or the busy-ness of life. The deceitfulness of riches could involve one's intentions to serve the Lord after certain financial responsibilities or accomplishments are met. The lust of other things could be a desire for any thing other than the will of God. Of course, the pleasures of life are a strong competitor in our modern day society. People take a greater interest in entertainment than the study of God's Word.

When we take a careful look at the three soils that we have examined so far, we see where most of the preaching, or seed, falls. Most of it is snatched away that fall on inattentive ears. Many times people receive the Word of God with joy and anticipate great things, but suddenly they are offended by the Word and the responsibilities of Christian living, and turn away. They even believe for awhile as described in Luke 8:13. ***“They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive***

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***the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.***” Of course, the care of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things, and the pleasures of life seem to be evident in most every life. The careless seeker will never understand the truth.

We need to be careful in our teaching and preaching, earnest in our praying that the Word might be more fruitful and effective. Too much of the time, I am afraid, we try to convince ourselves that people are sincere and honest while deep down we see their indifference and carelessness toward the Word of God and the Christian responsibilities. We refuse to admit to ourselves that they are empty, though the Spirit is faithful to impress upon us the truth.

Jesus teaches, ***“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.”*** (Isaiah 45:22). He told the woman at the well in John 4:10: ***“Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.”***

In talking to the scribes and Pharisees, He said to them, ***“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”*** (John 8:32).

The Scriptures teach that one finds the Lord when he seeks for Him with the whole heart. No one accidentally gets saved or serves the Lord. It is always on purpose. It is by faith and faith comes by the Word of God.

Let us now consider the fourth soil. When the seed, or Word of God, falls on good ground, it is described as one that heareth the Word and understandeth it (Matthew 13:23). ***“But he that received seed into the good ground is he that***

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***heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.***” The good soil is further described in Mark 4:20

as, one who hears the Word and receives it. It is his desire to hear and to know the Word of God. The best description is probably found in Luke 8:15 where the soil is described as one with an honest and good heart who, having heard the Word, kept it.

Let us summarize what we have learned in these three verses. Good soil is identified as one who hears the Word of God with an honest and good heart. They hear the Word with a desire to receive it, and a determination to learn, to understand, or keep it.

Consider Luke 8:15: ***“But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.”*** When we carefully consider this verse, we realize that so few people are really honest in the desire to know and do the will of God. Jesus said, in John 7:17, ***“If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine,...”*** The honest and good heart has not only an interest in hearing the Word, but keeping it. The Word brings forth fruit with patience. Patience involves a willingness to suffer without complaining. There is conflict in individuals as they hear, meditate upon, and digest, the Word of God.

In Mark 4:24, we are challenged to take heed to what we hear and are promised that unto one who hears, more shall be given. It is important to be serious and concerned about truth.

The Word of God is true. Though man is a sinner, God has reconciled man to Himself by Jesus Christ. The Lord laid on Christ the iniquities of us all. There, He was smitten of



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God and afflicted. There, He was wounded for our transgressions. There, He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him and with His stripes we are healed. The Just suffered for the unjust that He might bring us to God.

The substitutionary work of Christ is clear and simple. God made him to be sin for us Who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. The Rich became poor that we who are poor might be made rich through His poverty. God judged Christ for our sin and extends to us forgiveness. Though we are guilty, yet we are forgiven. It is all because of Christ. Romans 5:1: “***Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.***”

When we understand that though we are guilty, yet He bore our judgment, then we can understand why He forgives. It is not because of a prayer, a commitment, or a determination, but because of Christ that God extends to sinful man a pardon and forgiveness. We accept it or receive it by faith.

The just shall live by faith. It is our responsibility as Christians to learn about the message of Christ and share it with others. As we give out the Gospel, we will face conflict, rejection, and difficulty. We must not grow weary in well doing, knowing that in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. (Galatians 6:9). The Lord desires someone to come before Him on behalf of a lost and dying world. (Ezekiel 22:30). We need to understand Romans 5:20: “***...where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:...***”

God is looking for someone to go to others with the message of redemption and forgiveness. It is a simple, but positive message. The door of Heaven is open. God beckons sinners to come. It is all because of Christ.

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***“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:”***  
***39 “And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”*** (Acts 13:38,39).

Those who hear, understand, and believe are born into God’s family and have the assurance that Heaven is their home. They have a positive message for others. It is important that we give the truth to others. They truly need our help.

# The Work Of The Law

One of the most misunderstood subjects concerning the Scriptures and man's responsibility to the Lord is the Law and its work. If a dozen or more people were interviewed concerning the purpose of the Law, they would in some form answer that it was given to live by. There are many who teach man's responsibility to the Law, who have little understanding of the context of the Scriptures.

As the Apostle Paul was teaching Timothy the truth and his responsibility to Christ, the Law was one of the subjects. ***“But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully;”***<sup>9</sup> ***“Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners,...”*** (I Timothy 1:8,9a). In the same context, Paul instructed Timothy that there were those who desired to teach the Law, but did not understand what they were saying, nor why they were saying it.

If the Law is good, when used lawfully, according to I Timothy 1:7, the Law could be used unlawfully or wrongly. That is the case, according to this preacher, in

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many of our homes, churches, and Bible colleges. A person is not made right with God by giving up bad habits in exchange for good habits. The person who does right most of the time has no better relationship with God than the person who seldom does right. ***“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”***(James 2:10). The Law demands perfection and the penalty for breaking the Law is death. (The end of death is the lake of fire.)

In the letter to the Galatians we learn, ***“...Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”*** (Galatians 3:10). The Law was not given to give life, but to reveal sin. ***“...for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.”*** (Galatians 3:21). If a person could do right and get to Heaven, Christ died in vain. According to the law it is necessary for one to be right and always do right to have a right standing. One sin is enough to condemn a soul to an eternal damnation in hell.

Often we hear testimonies of people concerning their hope of Heaven. They tell how they had been very bad, even to disgust and despair. They prayed and their life changed. Instead of drinking, they sing hymns. Instead of going to taverns, they go to church. Instead of lying and cheating, they work hard and pay their debts. Instead of causing family disharmony, they encourage family peace and tranquility. Instead of cursing, they, pray. Such testimonies exalt self and promote salvation by works (humanism).

In Romans Chapter Seven, such testimonies are exposed. ***“For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.”*** 10 ***“And***

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***the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.***” (Romans 7:9,10).

When people are testifying of their good works, they are basically saying that they are keeping the Law, thereby gaining a good standing with the Lord. The real truth about such persons is that the Law has not done its work. When the Law is studied and understood, this person will testify that instead of finding life in doing good, he would find death for not being perfect. To see the demands of the Law is to see the need for the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ. God offers eternal forgiveness through the principle and provision of grace.

The Lord gave the Law because of the transgressions of the people. They ignored, denied, or were unconcerned with their transgressions. Therefore the Law was given that their sin might appear sin. They needed to see or understand that their sinful condition was exceedingly sinful. ***“Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come...”*** (Galatians 3:19). ***“Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:”*** (Romans 5:20). ***“Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.”*** (Romans 7:13). Man basically denies the sinfulness of his mind and heart. The Law was given to expose or reveal his sin that he might see his need for help (Christ).

In the first two chapters of Romans, we learn that mankind is basically sinful, including both Jew and Gentile. ***“...for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;”*** 10 ***“As it is written, There is none***

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***righteous, no, not one:...***” (Romans 3:9,10). As a person studies the demands of the Law, he realizes that the little good in his life does not count since the Law makes no provision for failure.

The Law was given as a standard. Its purpose is to produce guilt in the mind and heart of the individual. It is to cause his mouth to be shut. ***“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.”*** 20 ***“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”*** (Romans 3:19,20). The truth of the Law removes any hope that a person has concerning any good standing with God by good works.

There is no question that some people are nicer and more acceptable in their communities than others. What we fail to see, many times, is that all of our righteousnesses are as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). It is not man’s reform or good deeds that God demands. It is perfection in life or a satisfactory sacrifice. That sacrifice, of course, is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ and His shed blood as our sin offering.

The individual who thinks that he is good has not experienced the Law’s proper work in his mind. He finds security in comparing himself to those more wretched. He finds comfort in proclaiming his goodness. When the Law is properly administered, his sin will become exceedingly sinful in his mind. He will find himself dead in sin and without hope. The Law exposed the deceitful heart, the blinded mind, and the selfish spirit.

When the Law has done its work in the heart of the sinner, the Law can be recognized as a schoolmaster to bring the sinner to Christ. ***“Wherefore the law was our***

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***schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.***” (Galatians 3:24).

Once a person sees that he is sinful, damned, doomed, and without hope, then the need for Christ becomes important. Christ kept the Law for us. Christ then died as a sinner that forgiveness might be offered to the sinful. The Just was made unjust. The Righteous was made unrighteous. The Sinless was made sinful that sinners might be forgiven. God judged Christ for our sin.

Once a person sees himself lost and without hope, then free and full forgiveness is desired. It is experienced when a person accepts God’s forgiveness based on Christ and His finished work. The Law was added until Christ, Who is the Seed, should come. ***“But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.”*** (Galatians 3:25). ***“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”*** (Romans 10:4).

The change that takes place in the mind and heart of a person as the Law works could be described as repentance. He has a change of mind concerning his true standing before the Lord. He has a change of mind as to how one is made right with God. It could be described as a person discounting, or losing, all confidence in his good works.

The Scriptures identify good works in the life of an unbeliever as filthy rags or dung, which Paul describes in Philippians 3:8. Very few people have come to that place. It is because the work of the Law has not taken place.

As the Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Philippi, he described repentance very well, which is a result of the Law working. ***“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.”*** 8 ***“Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my***

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***Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,***” (Philippians 3:7,8). He once treasured his good life, or his understanding of a good life.

The truth of the Law magnified his sin in his mind and heart. Where he had once claimed life from his good works, the Law pronounced death. Sin revived and he died. And the commandment which was ordained to life he found to be unto death. He stood hopeless and helpless before God. The Law points to Christ as the One with no sin. Christ fulfilled the Law, yet Christ suffered the penalty of the Law that the sinner might be forgiven.

When this great truth was revealed to the Apostle Paul, he denounced any hope of his own righteousness. He trusted God’s righteousness (Christ) instead of his own righteousness (good works). He experienced true repentance, and described it in clear words. ***“And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:”*** (Philippians 3:9).

Where he once found comfort in his own abilities and dedication, the Law pronounced death. The only thing that he could find better than his good works was Christ. Therefore, he denounced his good works as but dung. He wanted deliverance through Christ and to be found in Him, not having his own righteousness which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.

The question today is “Have you come to that place? Has the Law done its work in your heart? Have you seen your good works as filthy rags or as dung? Have you recognized Christ’s dying for you?”



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Your sin was charged to Him. He suffered judgment in your stead. God extends to you forgiveness. Your record has been cleared through Christ. Have you by faith acknowledged that truth and thanked the Lord Jesus Christ for being your Friend, your Saviour, and your only Hope?

It would be fitting to acknowledge Christ as your Saviour and pray the prayer of thanksgiving. ***“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:”*** 13 ***“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:”*** 14 ***“In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:”*** (Colossians 1:12-14).

It was Christ Who made peace for you. ***“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross,...”*** (Colossians 1:20). He offered His blood to God as a peace offering that God may receive you. ***“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:”*** 14 ***“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”*** (Hebrews 9:24, 14).

The blood of Christ is a sweetsmelling savour. It was given to God as an offering and sacrifice for us. ***“And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.”*** (Ephesians 5:2). His blood was shed. The offering has been made. The account has been settled, and sinners who were afar off have been made nigh by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Sinners do not know. They need to hear until they believe. Let us be busy giving out the message of Christ

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while we have time on this earth. He will honor His Word. He will reward us for our faithfulness.

# Rooted And Growing

**I**t was my privilege to be reared on a country farm in South Georgia. As I think back on some of the many seasonal chores, I am reminded of the tedious transplanting of various plants connected to gardening, which in many instances, was connected to “survival.” These tiny plants would be taken from a seed box or a seed bed, and be transplanted (set out) in rows. We had to be very careful not to bruise or injure the fragile plants and their root systems. It was essential that the plants “take root” or they would die. To insure this process, we many times carefully poured water around the roots as we put them into the new soil.

On one occasion after transplanting several hundred sweet potato plants, someone asked us how the plants were doing. One of my parents spoke up and said, “They are doing well. They are rooted and growing.”

As a farmer, to prevent skips and wasted space in my fields, I would often transplant peanut plants, cotton plants, or even corn stalks. It would make the fields look much better, and would also add to the production.

## ROOTED AND GROWING

During those occasions of transplanting, many times the plants did not take root. When this happened, you could examine plants a few days later and they would be wilted and sometimes almost dried up completely. It was always encouraging when you saw that the plants were rooted and growing. The most encouraging part of all was to see those plants producing the harvest.

It is my privilege to share a devotional with our ladies during their Thursday evening prayer time. Recently, I shared a devotion from Colossians 2:6,7: ***“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:”*** <sup>7</sup> ***“Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.”*** While sharing this devotion, the Lord spoke to my heart relative to our subject today, "ROOTED AND GROWING." The thought came from the first part of Colossians 2:7, ***“Rooted and built up in him... .”*** Before one can, experience the built up or growing process, there must first be the rooting process.

It is assumed that a person who is, identified with an active local church ministry is rooted, or a member of Christ and His work. However, when we observe one's life, frequently we do not see that individual growing and producing for the cause of Christ. Instead, many times we see a wilted, bewildered, frustrated individual showing no signs of having been rooted or joined to the cleansing and saving power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As we further consider the relationship between rooting the plants in the garden and rooting the individual in Christ, let us draw strength and challenge for ourselves. The gardener who visits his garden and observes the plants that are rooted and growing anticipates a harvest. Likewise, when we

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observe a person active in church, we should expect that individual to be rejoicing in Jesus Christ, and challenging others to know and to serve Him. This, of course, is not the way it is much of the time. There seems to be a lot of activity in church life that does not center around Christ.

During my early school years, one of our grade school teachers brought a white petunia plant to school. She put the plant in a pot of black ink. The plant drew moisture from the ink, and in a short time, the white flower began to turn dark. The reason being, the source of its life and food value did not tend toward maintaining its color and normal reflection. That could be the reason so much activity in our lives does not reflect Christ. It might be that people are not rooted in Christ. Therefore, their outward influence is not for Him.

Let us identify and draw from two passages of Scripture for our further discussion of the subject "ROOTED AND GROWING." In Ephesians 3:16-18, we read, "***That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;***" 17 "***That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,***" 8 "***May be able...***" God - Christ - is love. For one to be rooted and grounded in love is to be rooted and grounded in Christ. For the plant or person to grow, there must be first the rooting process. This could be called the new birth, to be born again, or to be saved. It is absolutely essential for one to properly grow and produce the right harvest.

There is great controversy over the subject of being rooted, or born again, into the family of God. All the controversy could be related to the following questions: Is it by the "works of man," or by "the provision of Christ and man" or by "Christ alone"? If it is by "Christ alone," then it is

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“by grace.”

If it is by Christ, then our main emphasis in religious circles should be to get people to know Him and trust Him. If it is by works, then our main emphasis should be to get people to clean up their lives and do better toward their fellow man and their Creator.

Christ said of Himself, “...*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*” (John 14:6). The Apostle Paul, writing to young Timothy, stated, “*For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;*” (I Timothy 2:5). The Apostle John recorded the following: “*He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*” (I John 5:12).

In Colossians 2:6,7, we noted, “*As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:*” 7 “*Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.*” Of course, we receive Christ in childlike faith. Therefore, we should walk in childlike faith. In answer to the question, “*Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?*” Jesus said, (29) “...*This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.*” (John 6:28,29).

Jesus further taught in John 3:18, “*He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*” The method of being saved, or rooted, is to believe. “*He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.*” (I John

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5:10).

Believing God is man's responsibility, but he must believe the right thing. That, of course, is the record that God gave of His Son. This record is precisely stated in II Corinthians 5:19a, ***"To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."*** Sin separated man from God. God judged Christ for man's sin, thereby, reconciling mankind, or the world, unto Himself. The Lord laid on Christ all the charges of man and judged Him sufficiently. Jesus died, thereby, paying the sin debt. He offered Himself, without spot, to God, making peace with God for man. God can receive sinful man based on Christ and His work. To believe God is to be rooted in Christ.

Our subject is not only on "rooted," but also "growing." A plant grows as it draws substance from the earth. A Christian grows as he draws substance from Christ. That substance is basically the Word of God. ***"...the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."*** (John 6:63). ***"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."*** (Romans 10:17). As we learn more about Christ, we are better able to reflect Him, or reveal Him, to others. As others learn of Him and see Him through our lives, then they, too, will find that He is the answer for their problems. The individual who is rooted in Christ, or born into the family of God, is to reflect Him to others.

Peter declares ***"...that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:"*** (I Peter 2:9). ***"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:"*** 3 ***"If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious."*** (I Peter

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2:2,3).

Our growth reflects our root system. The plant placed in the ink bottle reflected the ink. A person placed in Christ will reflect Christ.

As we come back to Colossians 2:6,7, we want to emphasize four words as we further consider “ROOTED AND GROWING.” The first word is “rooted.” A person rooted in Christ is complete and forgiven: (Colossians 2:10a,13b). “*And ye are complete in him,...*” 13b “*...having forgiven you all trespasses;... .*” The next words are “built up.” These words reflect the thought of growing.

The building should be directly related to its foundation or root system. A small building is not placed on a big foundation nor is a big building placed on a small foundation. Our growth or building reflects upon the foundation or root system.

The next word we want to discuss is “abounding.” The Christian who has received Christ in childlike faith has no fear of going to hell. He has trusted Christ and His finished work. The same childlike attitude should be seen in the Christian as he trusts the Lord to provide his needs. Those needs many times are for help in difficulties and tribulations. There must be an understanding of God’s character, knowing that He would not send anything our way except that which we need.

The last word to consider is “thanksgiving.” It is important to realize that we all deserve hell. We have sinned. The wages of sin is death, but Christ died for our sins. We have been saved by Him. We are rooted in Him. We ought to be thankful that God has not only given to us life, but has counted us faithful by sending us trials and tribulations to mold and make us into stronger witnesses. As our faith is tried, we become stronger as we trust His word.



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As one of my parents described the potato plants by saying, “They are rooted and growing,” so every pastor would like to say of his people, “They are rooted and growing - they are rooted in Christ, and are reflecting Him in their daily living. They do not complain with hardships, but rejoice that they are counted faithful to suffer for His name.”

This can be true if we will each make sure that we are rooted in Christ, and remember His promise, “***For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.***” (Romans 8:18). Let us each live our lives in such a way that as others describe us they may say, “He/She is rooted and growing in the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.”



# Conspiracy Or Ignorance?

**I**n today's society there is a serious problem taking place that is more deadly and more horrifying than cancer or AIDS. It has gained inroads into the minds of the people of this generation. This problem should cause great alarm to any serious-minded individual. It carries with it eternal results, and should be given serious consideration by every person. Every living family is being touched by its duplicity. It involves the deception of the mind, and the desire of the heart.

There is a prophecy, or truth, revealed in God's Word that is almost ignored. Multitudes are going to hell who actually believe that they are going to Heaven. They have prayed the prayer, or made a commitment according to some religious leader. These people have been led to believe that they are going to Heaven. They are deceived. They will spend eternity in the torments of suffering forever. Is the reason conspiracy or ignorance?

Consider with us the following Scriptures: "***Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in***

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***thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?” 23 “And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”*** (Matthew 7:22,23). What a tragedy! What great damage to precious souls! It is too late for these people. They can do nothing about their situation. They cannot retrace their steps. They will suffer forever.

We find a similar truth revealed in the book of Luke Chapter 13: ***“Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them,” 24 “Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” 25 “When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are:” 26 “Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.” 27 “But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.”*** (Luke 13:23-27).

The Bible clearly teaches in detail the redemption of mankind. God has reconciled man to Himself by Jesus Christ. We are healed by His stripes (Isaiah 53:5). Christ came not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved (John 3:17). God has judged Christ for man's sin, and recorded it in His Word. Your redemption is complete. Yet people are confused. Is it conspiracy - or ignorance?

The Scriptures teach that the Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6). He was smitten of God and afflicted. It pleased the Lord to bruise Him (Isaiah 53:10). He shall see the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. God judged Christ for our sin. Yet there are men who say that

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when the sins were placed on Jesus that God turned His back.

Is it conspiracy - or ignorance?

In Romans we learn that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Without faith it is impossible to please Him (Hebrews 11:6). Whatsoever is not of faith is sin. We are born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible by the Word of God (I Peter 1:23). We enjoy all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him (II Peter 1:3). John teaches in John 6:45 that “...**Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father,**” comes to Jesus (John 6:45). In spite of the clear teaching of the Scriptures, there are those who say they were saved and knew nothing of the Word of God. They get amens from pastors, professors, and peers. Is it conspiracy - or ignorance?

Galatians 4:6 teaches that when a person is saved he is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. This Holy Spirit, according to Romans 8:16, bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. In II Corinthians 5:6 we learn that because of the indwelling Spirit, “...**we are always confident,**... .” John 4:14 states that “...**whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst;**...” When one learns of the redemptive work of Christ, and that he or she is accepted in the Beloved because of Christ, they understand why God forgives. They know that they are forgiven. There are those who teach that it is normal for truly born again people to lose their assurance of salvation. Is it conspiracy - or ignorance?

Modern day soul-winning is described in Matthew 23:15: “**Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.**”

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Verse 13 reveals their fate: ***“for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.”*** Neither the soul-winner nor the convert is going to Heaven. These passages, of course, get very little attention. Doubting people are asked several questions relative to what they have done and how they felt about it. If the answers please the so-called “soul-winner,” they are told that they are saved. Is it conspiracy - or ignorance?

We are taught in II Corinthians 4:4 that the god of this world has the power to blind the minds of unbelievers. The purpose of blinding an individual is to prevent him from seeing or knowing the truth. Satan has the power to transform himself into an angel of light, according to II Corinthians 11:14. This passage teaches that his ministers also are transformed as ministers of righteousness. (13) ***“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.”*** 14 ***“And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.”*** 15 ***“Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”*** (II Corinthians 11:13-15). If Satan has this power and determination, why would preachers tell someone that they are saved when the person himself is not sure? Is it conspiracy - or ignorance?

Several years ago after reading a sermon in a noted periodical, this writer wrote the author and questioned his Biblical honesty and scriptural reasoning. In the article, he ridiculed preachers who would go into churches and preach Bible salvation that resulted in church members getting saved. Sometimes many church leaders are among those getting saved. In this man’s reply he defended his position without using the Scriptures. His opinion was his authority. Was it

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### conspiracy - or ignorance?

This writer was unwilling to let the matter rest. In further correspondence with the author of the article, I shared my own personal testimony. I had made a profession as a young boy and was baptized. As a lad, I decided I did not want to go the way of the world. Going to church was a pleasure. As a young married man, I taught Sunday School, tithed my money, and studied my Sunday School quarterly. I enjoyed encouraging others to pray, go to church, and live clean lives. Many times I had called on the Lord to meet the need of my heart and life. If I wasn't saved, I wanted to be. After receiving my testimony, the author of the sermon wrote me his reply saying, "The first time you called on the Lord He

saved you, though it was several years before you believed it or accepted it." Is such a conclusion conspiracy or ignorance? No one had ever taught me about the substitutionary work of Christ. I had never been taught that God had judged Christ for my sin, and that God was satisfied with that judgment. I knew that Christ existed. I knew He lived a sinless life and died and was buried and rose again. When the Word was given to me clearly enough to understand, I became honest enough to listen and to study. The Lord showed me that I was lost.

At that time, I accepted Christ as my Saviour. When I shared my testimony with my pastor, he became very annoyed, and said, "You do not need anything like that, the first thing you know you'll be a fanatic." Was that conspiracy - or ignorance?

The order of salvation is taught in Ephesians 1:13: "***In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of***

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*promise,...”*

We further learn in John 6:45 that *“...Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.”*

In II Peter 1:2-4 we learn the necessity of knowledge in order to trust Christ and live for Him: *“Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,”* <sup>3</sup> *“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:”* <sup>4</sup> *“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”* With such clear teaching, why do preachers play down the need to learn about the Gospel in order to be saved? Is it conspiracy - or ignorance?

Preachers and so called “soul winners” are very bold to tell people who are having doubts about salvation to drive down a stake, or claim now as the time of salvation. Others teach that everybody has problems with their salvation. Others will say if you are not sure that you are saved, just ask God to save you now. They use these tactics when it would be much easier to give the Gospel. Teach the person the substitutionary work of Christ until he hears and understands to the point that he believes. My question is, “Why is it done like it is?” Is it conspiracy - or ignorance?

It is not unusual to hear preachers teach five ways how a person can know he is saved. Not one of the ways is the Gospel. They usually involve keeping the law; loving one’s brother; a changed life; or a new interest in God’s Word. The greatest proof anyone needs of his salvation is that Christ died for his sin. God was in Christ reconciling man unto Himself,



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not imputing their, trespasses unto them. Instead of teaching five ways one can know he is saved, why not teach just one way? Is it conspiracy - or ignorance?

There are those who teach that Christians do not practice sin. They are dogmatic in saying that anyone who practices sin has never been born again. That is untrue. Every Christian practices sin. We are taught in God's Word that we are to pray without ceasing; to give thanks in everything; to love God with all of our heart; to love our neighbors as ourselves and to not covet. No Christian goes one day without breaking most of these commands. We practice sin every day. God forgives us for Jesus' sake. He kept the law for us. He died for our sin. God does not impute our trespasses to us (II Corinthians 5:19). Why is it being taught as it is? Is it conspiracy - or ignorance?

Why should a Christian not sin? The answer is taught very clearly in I Corinthians 15:34. "***Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.***" There are those without the knowledge of redemption. That is shameful. The Christian is to glorify the Lord in his body. When we sin, our testimonies are weakened and our spiritual influence is hindered. We trust Christ to go to Heaven. We live for Christ to please Him, and

influence others to be saved. Why the confusion? Is it conspiracy - or ignorance?

Repentance is necessary for salvation. Repentance is changing, or turning. Most tracts today encourage people to quit their sinning, and make some commitment to God in order to be saved. The Apostle Paul writing to the church at Philippi clearly taught the truth about Bible repentance for salvation. He recognized that all of his good works were no better than dung. He repented of any hope that he had in his

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good works and trusted Christ, and Christ alone, to take Him to Heaven. Why is there so much unscriptural preaching on repentance for salvation? Is it conspiracy - or ignorance?

We have the Word of God for English-speaking people. It is recorded in the King James Bible. A multitude of translations have been made other than the King James Bible. They have all been copyrighted. Authors say they made these translations in order to help their generation. Could it be they are doing it for the money? If we have the Word of God in the King James Bible, why don't we read it, study it, and believe it? Is it conspiracy - or ignorance?

It is the will of God that every person be saved. God is “***...not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.***” (II Peter 3:9). Jesus paid man's sin debt, and made sinful man acceptable to God. Redemption is complete. God has reconciled man to Himself (II Corinthians 5:19). It is His desire that we believe Him, and enjoy the redemption that we have in Christ. We are to share the message of Christ with others. Why not think for yourself, study God's Word, believe it, and expect it to work in the lives of others as you share it?

The Word of the Lord will do the work of the Lord. It is our tool - our ammunition. The truth removes ignorance. Let us be honest with ourselves and bold for Christ. The truth works. Be patient. Be diligent. Be faithful until Jesus calls us home to be with Him.

# Seeking The Peace Of The City

**M**any substitutes have been provided in an attempt to replace or produce peace. Peace is not found in a capsule or bottle, but in a divine provision of the Lord. Those needing peace are usually crying the blues or hosting a pity party.

Happiness and joy are some things that we find along the pathway of duty as we attempt to introduce others to it. They are not things that we find for ourselves, but get as we are helping others to find it. Peace is Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:14).

God's people, the children of Israel, were taken from their homeland as prisoners to Babylon. As they remembered the blessings of the Lord back home, they hung their harps upon the willows. They refused to sing and make melody in their hearts. When challenged to sing, they said, "***How shall we sing the LORD's song in a strange land?***" (Psalm 137:4).

Their action was so different from that of the Apostle Paul and Silas, who were beaten and confined to jail in stocks. Though abused and placed in prison, they sang and offered praise to the Lord (Acts 16:25). The prisoners were

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challenged and encouraged. The jailer was saved. Instead of complaining, they sought the peace of the city or of the area where they were.

The Lord instructed the children of Israel to establish a testimony for the cause of Christ, even though they were in a strange land. Their attitude is seen in the following verses: “***By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.***” 2 “***We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.***” 3 “***For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.***” 4 “***How shall we sing the LORD’s song in a strange land?***” (Psalm 137:1-4). Their grief and self-pity are evident.

Their actions were not pleasing to the Lord. He instructed Jeremiah, in Jeremiah 29:4-7, to instruct them. “***Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, unto all that are carried away captives, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem unto Babylon;***” 5 “***Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them;***” 6 “***Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; that ye may be increased there, and not diminished.***” 7 “***And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.***”

The Lord instructed them, in verse seven, “***...seek the peace of the city...and pray...for it:...***” He concluded His instruction with a promise “***...for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.***” They would find peace for themselves as they

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sought peace for others.

Though the nation of Israel had been disobedient and delivered into the hand of Babylon for their disobedience, they were to establish a testimony in a strange land. That testimony was to be established immediately. We can learn a great lesson for ourselves.

We are to seek the peace of the city or establish a testimony: (a.) in the place where we are; (b.) with the people that we know; (c.) by the plan that we have; and (d.) for the purpose that we have heard.

It is important that we recognize that we find peace for ourselves in seeking peace for others. That truth is seen in the title of the message, "SEEKING THE PEACE OF THE CITY." We can do this as we consider the plan of God. According to Jeremiah 29:4, we learn that God is the One Who directs traffic. It was the Lord Who caused Israel to be carried away into Babylon because of their sins.

It is the Lord that appoints or ordains afflictions in our lives (I Thessalonians 3:3). "***That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.***" It is the Lord Who brings circumstances into our lives daily that can cause us to harden our hearts toward Him, or to be broken under conviction. The choice is ours. It is the Lord to Whom we must give an account on a regular basis. This includes Satan himself. "***Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD.***" (Job 2:1). Every created being is responsible to the Lord.

As individuals, we are commanded to glorify the Lord. To do this, we must establish a testimony for the cause of Christ before others. This was true with the children of Israel

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in the land of Babylon. It is true with us, regardless of the circumstances. It would help, however, if we understood the circumstances. This testimony must be established in a place or surroundings that could be described as: (a.) a difficult place; (b.) a temporary place; or (c.) a place primarily for others.

When we think of ourselves, we have a tendency to complain or to boast. When we think of others, we find an inner strength and drive to go on in the midst of difficulty, sacrifice, and opposition.

In seeking the peace of the city, let us first consider the plan of God. We learned in Jeremiah 29:4, that the Lord directs the traffic in the lives of His people. It is He Who judges the circumstances. The Lord directs according to what He sees in our lives. And it is in coordination with His will. It is the Lord Who gives the instructions.

The children of Israel had been taken captive. They were despondent and discouraged. They were, no doubt, guilty of their failure in the midst of the circumstances. The Lord instructed them to build houses, plant gardens, take wives, and beget sons and daughters as they sought the peace of the city. In the midst of seeking peace for others, they would find peace for themselves.

In seeking the peace of the city, let us next consider the privilege to build. In the midst of chastening and judgment in the land of Babylon, Israel was instructed to rise up and establish a testimony for the cause of Christ. Building must be considered a privilege. We are allowed to do so because of the mercy and grace of God.

This building is to be done in a difficult place. Many of life's circumstances are difficult. The building is to be done in a temporary place. Our lives are described as a vapor. We

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have so little time. It has been said that as we pass through the valleys of life we should dig a well that others following might enjoy it. Building is done in a difficult place, a temporary place, and is done for others to enjoy.

As we seek the peace of the city, consider the power to influence. Our lives are either encouraging or discouraging. Every deed and every word either contributes to the building or to the destruction of others. There is purpose in living. With the thought of the power to influence, let us live: (a.) with a life of purpose; (b.) with a will to prosper; and (c.) with a willingness to suffer.

The Apostle Paul, when faced with a decision to go to Jerusalem, stated, “***And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:***” 23 “***Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.***” 24 “***But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.***” (Acts 20:22-24). His testimony was more important to him than his comfort.

As we seek the peace of the city, let us consider the promise to deliver. The eternal home of a Christian is Heaven in the presence of the Lord. Jesus said that in this life we would face tribulation, but He said to be of good cheer, He has overcome the world (John 16:33). “***These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.***”

Let us keep several things before us as we are aware of God’s promise to deliver us (a.) from a place of temporary building, (b.) from a work of constant opposition, (c.) by a

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God of all power, and (d.) to a reward of eternal value.

Paul and Silas were accosted while preaching the Word of God. They were beaten and thrust into the innermost part of the jail. Their feet were placed in stocks. The circumstances were difficult. They were in a temporary place, but because they were willing to seek the peace of the city, they prayed and sang praises to the Lord. The jailer was saved. Paul and Silas enjoyed great peace of heart and mind.

When the Apostle Paul was advised not to go to Jerusalem for the sake of his life, he thought of others. He considered the testimony for Christ instead. “...***What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.***” (Acts 21:13). As he sought the peace of others in a difficult place, he enjoyed great peace for himself. This could be true in the life of every husband and wife, every young person, every employee and employer, and every church across this land today.

With others in mind, let us seek peace for them. To do so, we must live a life of purpose. It will be done in a difficult place. It will be done in a temporary place. And it must be done with others in mind.

The little maid is a great example to us. In II Kings 5, we find this little girl who had been taken captive - a servant in the house of Naaman. She could have been distressed, but she sought the peace of the city. Naaman was healed, and the little girl enjoyed great peace because she had lived a life of purpose. She willingly suffered while seeking peace for others. The greatest example of seeking the peace of others is found in the life of our Saviour Who was rich in His glory. He left His riches and came to this earth in poverty that we who are in poverty might be made rich through Him. Let us look



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around us on a daily basis and determine that we will seek the peace of the city. By doing so we will find that we will be greatly blessed and enjoy peace beyond measure for ourselves.



# Always Confident

**P**ositive and able leadership is quickly recognized in every level of our society. The success of businesses, institutions, and organizations depends upon qualified leadership. One who displays competence and ability in understanding the present circumstances, and what needs to be done is in great demand. There is a great need for competent leadership in homes, businesses, churches, and in every area of government.

According to the *American Dictionary of the English Language*, the word “confidence” carries the following meanings: “trusting without suspicion; having full belief; trusting; relying; positive and dogmatic.” It is “an assurance of mind or firm belief in the integrity, stability, or veracity of another, or in the truth of a reality or fact.” Confidence is also described as “boldness and courage.”

With these definitions in mind, let us emphasize or identify the meanings of “confidence” or “being confident.” For our present thoughts, we will use the attitude of having full belief, or trusting without suspicion. Confidence is being fully assured that our thinking, or direction, is correct.

The lack of evidence or understanding produces a lack of confidence or assurance, in the life of an individual. This is

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true in the matter of carrying out our responsibilities at home, at work, in school, or in church activities. Our activities in carrying out our responsibilities should be pleasing to our Creator.

***“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”*** (I Corinthians 10:31). ***“In all thy ways acknowledge him,...”*** (Proverbs 3:6).

If we are to be obedient and confident, we must know what pleases the Lord. We need His instructions to be confident. To be instructed, we must give careful attention to His Word, or to His “Instruction Manual” (the Old King James Bible - God’s Word).

We learn from I Corinthians 2:11 that a man does not have the ability to understand or know the thoughts of another man unless that man reveals himself by word or deed. That truth is emphasized greater in understanding God. We will never know the thoughts of a human man except that man reveals himself to us by his spirit. We will never know the thoughts and directions of God except that He reveals Himself to us by His Spirit. He has done just that.

According to II Peter 1:21, holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. God’s Word, in I Corinthians 2:10, declares that God has revealed Himself to us by His Spirit. That revelation is the Word of God. It is recorded for English-speaking people in the Old King James Bible. It has been revealed and recorded that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God (I Corinthians 2:12).

The Lord has revealed Himself and His will for us so completely that the Bible teaches that man is without excuse. The Lord has revealed Himself and His will through His Word, which is illuminated by the Holy Spirit. II Corinthians 5:6-8 records, ***“Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from***

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***the Lord:” 7 “(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)” 8 “We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”***

We must remember that the lack of evidence produces a lack of confidence. Facts received and understood as truth produce confidence. It is our responsibility as individuals, families, and church leaders, to get sufficient evidence from God’s Word. As we further consider our subject, “Always Confident,” we will examine the available evidence necessary to produce sufficient confidence in the matters of salvation and service.

We must understand that God is holy. He is all-knowing and all-powerful. He cannot lie. No error is found with the Lord. His revealed Word is absolute. We must learn what He says, or we will never be “always confident.” ***“...Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.”*** (John 6:45). Our learning is hampered by our sinful nature and much false teaching.

God created the heavens and the earth. He created man and gave him the responsibility of having dominion over His creation, the earth. God instructed man to subdue and have dominion over the earth. In all of man’s activity, he is to honor and please the Creator. As man enjoys the creation he is to always recognize and respect God’s will.

God formed man from the dust of the earth, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. Man was created in God’s own image. We are created with the ability to make a choice of doing right or wrong. Choosing right brings God’s blessings and protection. Choosing wrong brings death, or separation from God.

Without exception, mankind has made the wrong choice. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of

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God. There is not a just man on the earth. There is none righteous, no not one. All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned every one to his own way, and the Scriptures have proved both Jew and Gentile are all under sin.

The Word of God makes it clear that we are sinners. It should not be a matter of suspicion, but complete confidence, as declared in the Word of God. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The wages of sin is death. The end of death is the lake of fire. Man has a problem. That problem is sin.

Before the worlds were ever created, God provided, or foreordained, a provision for man's sin. ***"Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,"*** (I Peter 1:20). Redemption is not an afterthought, but a plan of God, mapped out before man was ever created. ***"...whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."*** (Revelation 13:8). In the mind of God, the Lamb was offered, slain, and accepted, even before the foundation of the world. The evidence is sufficient. We should be confident.

In the proper time, the Redeemer came forth. ***"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,"*** 5 ***"To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."*** (Galatians 4:4,5). A body was prepared, in which God the Son would live (Hebrews 10:5). ***"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."*** (Hebrews 2:9).

God became flesh, or we could say that God took

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upon Himself a body. ***“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”*** 14 ***“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,...”*** (John 1:1,14a). ***“For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.”*** (Hebrews 2:16). ***“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same;...”*** (Hebrews 2:14). Much more could be said, but the evidence is sufficient. We can be always confident that all mankind are sinners and that God became man (flesh) to redeem man from his sin.

It is important that we understand the substitutionary work of Christ and God’s personal interest and involvement in redemption. ***“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.”*** (II Corinthians 8:9). ***“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”*** 17 ***“For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”*** (John 3:16-17).

When Christ went to the cross, He bore the judgment of everyone’s sin. ***“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.”*** (I Peter 2:24).

When your sin and all the sin of the human race was charged to Christ, God poured out His wrath on Christ for all sin. ***“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”*** 10 ***“Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him;...”*** (Isaiah 53:5,10). His

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judgment lasted until God was satisfied. ***“He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied:...”*** (Isaiah 53:11).

***“To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;...”*** (II Corinthians 5:19). ***“And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled”*** 22 ***“In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:”*** (Colossians 1:21,22). ***“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.”*** (Ephesians 2:13). ***“For through him (Christ) we both (Jew and Gentile) have access by one Spirit unto the Father.”*** (Ephesians 2:18).

Jesus suffered the judgment of God on all sin that has been or ever will be committed by the human race. God has not, nor will He, overlook sin. All sin has been judged in Christ. Recognizing that truth is necessary in order to understand why God forgives us. We are guilty. The soul that sinneth shall die. The end of death is the lake of fire. Our doom is certain except for God's grace, made available through Christ.

Multitudes of people try to better their circumstances or escape Hell by praying a prayer, changing their lives, or by other means. These types of responses are usually encouraged by so-called “soul-winners” who are ignorant of the simple truth of Christ and His redemptive work, or who will not take the time to share the Gospel. The Gospel is the message of Christ. It concerns Who He is and His substitutionary, sacrificial offering for the sinner.

Jesus taught the parable of the sower that we might believe the importance of understanding in order to be saved or to serve the Lord. When a sinner hears the Gospel, but



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does not understand, Satan takes away the Word (seed), lest the sinner believe and be saved. ***“When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.”*** (Matthew 13:19).

***“Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.”*** (Luke 8:12).

The Word may be received joyfully by the sinner, but without understanding, or root system, sinners will not get saved. They may believe for a while, or endure for a time, but without understanding about the substitutionary work of Christ, they will not get saved. ***“They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.”*** (Luke 8:13). ***“And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.”*** (Mark 4:17). The sinner must desire forgiveness and Heaven more than he desires riches, pleasures, and other things.

***“And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word,”*** 19 ***“And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.”*** (Mark 4:18,19).

***“He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.”*** (Matthew 13:22).

***“And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to***

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***perfection.***” (Luke 8:14).

We are taught in both the Old and New Testament to seek or desire the Lord with all our heart. A halfhearted attitude about Heaven and Hell, or about getting saved or staying lost, will leave the individual lost and Hell will be his destiny. The Holy Spirit is ready and able to give understanding to the serious and attentive heart. It is important to remember, ***“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”*** (Romans 10:17).

***“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”*** (I Peter 1:23). ***“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”*** (Romans 1:16). ***“...and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.”***(James 1:21).

Christ has made peace with God for you. Your sin debt has been paid. The account has been settled by the blood of Christ. He was charged with all your sin. God did not turn His back on Christ as some teach. He judged and/or smote Christ as He poured out His wrath against your sins (even before you committed them - God knows the end from the beginning). He was smitten of God and afflicted, He was wounded for our transgressions. It pleased the Lord to bruise Him. For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross. The innocent was judged as the guilty, that the guilty might be treated as the innocent. We believe it and go to Heaven. We deny it, or live in a state of doubt or suspicion, and go to Hell. ***“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:”*** (Romans 5:1).

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The attitude and purpose of Christ is seen in Philemon 1: 17,18. ***“If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself.”*** 18 ***“If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account;... .”*** Jesus acknowledged and received the charges against us. He then paid the bill in full and made peace with God. That peace He made was for US. Our faith is not in some mysterious, spooky unknown. It is firmly anchored in the revealed Word of God.

Because of Christ, sinners are as welcome in Heaven as Christ Himself. Christ will present those who believe faultless, or without blame, to the Father (Jude 24; Ephesians 1:4). The Godhead rejected and judged the innocent Christ that He might receive you, the sinning sinner, for all eternity. ***“He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.”*** (I John 5: 10). God is just and the justifier of those that believe (Romans 3:26).

When the Gospel is heard without understanding, Satan takes away the seed (Matthew 13:19). When the message of Christ and His redemption is heard with understanding, it is kept and bringeth forth fruit with an honest and understanding heart (Luke 8:15). The hearer acts upon the Gospel message.

A person is lost because he has never believed the record that God has given of His Son. That record is seen in a few words in II Corinthians 5:19. ***“To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.”*** The sinner has been reconciled. The debt has been paid. The wrath of God has been appeased by the offering of the body and blood of Christ.

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Since God has judged Christ for all sin, it is reasonable that He forgive the sinning saint. It is difficult to get people to understand and believe. Those who can understand and believe enjoy the privilege of being always confident. ***“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:”*** 39 ***“And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”*** (Acts 13:38,39).

Jesus has paid man's sin debt. Peace has been made with God for all sinners. Any efforts on man's part to make peace with God are described as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). God does not receive sinners because they pray or change. He receives them because Christ paid their sin debt as He took their place in judgment. Repentance or faith does not make us right. It is the blood of Christ that was shed some two thousand years ago at Calvary that makes us right. That blood is on the mercy seat in Heaven (Hebrews 9:12,24,14). It is a satisfactory sacrifice for all sin for all time. He that believeth is confident that God will receive him in Heaven. The Spirit of God bears witness with our spirit that (because of Christ) we are the children of God (Romans 8:16). ***“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”*** (Galatians 4:6). ***“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:”*** (Romans 5:1). ***“He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.”*** (I John 5:10).

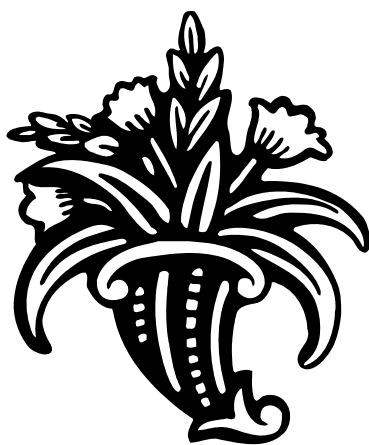
***“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also***

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***after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,” (Ephesians 1:13). “And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:” 9 “Of sin, because they believe not on me;” (John 16:8,9).***

The Spirit of God reveals to us in the Word of God what the Son of God has done for us. When we believe on Christ “***...as the Scripture hath said.***” (John 7:38), the Holy Spirit seals the believer until the day the body is redeemed (at the Rapture). The Spirit through the revealed truth of the Word gives us confidence. “***Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:” 7 “(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)” 8 “We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.***” (II Corinthians 5:6-8).

The unsettled person should not be called a believer. Such a person is not always confident. When they receive the truth, they will help us get the truth to others.



# Winning Souls

**T**he greatest responsibility of the church membership is to glorify the Lord. Their most important business and the most effective way to glorify the Saviour is to share the Gospel of Christ with sinful men. “...*and he that winneth souls is wise.*” (Proverbs 11:30).

As the Apostle Paul was instructing the church at Corinth, he made it clear that his main business was to see people saved. “*To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.*” (I Corinthians 9:22). “*For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.*” (I Corinthians 9:19). Relative to the questions and complications of life, he further stated. “*For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*” (I Corinthians 2:2).

Paul’s attitude and action toward the winning of souls should be a challenge to each of us. Hardships did not turn him aside. “*But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.*” (Acts 20:24).

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If we are to be steadfast in the midst of afflictions and conflicts, we need to be convinced of God's attitude toward the winning of souls. "***The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.***" (II Peter 3:9). "***For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;***" 4 "***Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.***" (I Timothy 2:3,4).

It is the will of God that sinners be saved. He gave Himself for all. "***Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.***" (I Timothy 2:6). It is important that we not be turned aside by the misguided, and confused people who believe in limited atonement, or that Christ only died for a chosen few.

The basic tools for soul winning are a copy of the Word of God, a dependence on the leadership of the Holy Spirit, and conscientious prayer for the Lord to work with all parties involved. The soul winner should be convinced of the need of sinners and the provision of the Lord Jesus Christ. The element of faith is essential for one to speak with authority, boldness, and expectancy.

## CONSIDER THE MINISTRY OF SOUL WINNING

Let us consider the ministry of soul winning and related areas that should be a challenge to us. To be an effective soul winner, it is important that we understand the condition of man. Jesus said, "***Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.***" This includes the religious, as well as the heathen. Jesus said, "...***That except***



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***your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.***” (Matthew 5:20). The scribes and Pharisees were very religious and separated people, but were without Jesus Christ. We must be convinced that the condition of man leaves him in need of the new birth.

## THE COMPASSION OF CHRIST

An understanding of the compassion of Christ will challenge and encourage us in the matter of soul winning. This compassion is seen in the prophecy of Christ and His redemption. ***“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”*** (Revelation 13:8). ***“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;”*** 18 ***“But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:”*** 19 ***“Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,”*** 20 (I Peter 1:18-20). The compassion of Christ is seen in His plan of God to redeem the world.

The compassion of Christ is also recognized in His incarnation. ***“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.”*** (Hebrews 2:9). ***“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.”*** (II Corinthians 8:9). His compassion is seen

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in His laying aside of His glory to take upon Himself a body in which to offer a sacrifice for our sins.

The compassion of Christ is clearly revealed in His Word uttered while hanging on the cross. “***Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do...***” (Luke 23:34).

## THE COMMISSION TO TELL OTHERS

To be effective in the matter of soul winning, we must understand the commission to tell others. “***Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.***” (John 20:21). “***But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.***” (Acts 1:8). “***And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.***” (Mark 16:15). The commission to go is clear, and our responsibility is great. “***Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.***” (II Corinthians 5:20).

## THE CONTENT OF THE GOSPEL

An understanding of the content of the Gospel is essential in winning souls. The Gospel is the message of Christ and His ministry or accomplishments for sinners. It involves His person; His provision; His promise. “***For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.***” 17 “***For therein is the***

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***righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith:...***” (Romans 1:16,17).

A careful look at the Gospel reveals the Lord Jesus Christ as our substitute relative to the judgment of God on sin. ***“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”*** (II Corinthians 5:21). ***“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.”*** (I Peter 2:24).

***“...and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”***  
4 ***“smitten of God, and afflicted.”*** 5 ***“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”*** (Isaiah 53:6,4,5). Because Christ has been judged sufficiently for our sin, we are offered a pardon. The wrath of God was poured out on Him, and the gift of God is offered to us.

## THE CONVERSION OF THE SINNER

In the process of winning souls one, should be concerned with the conversion of the sinner. Sinners are converted after being convicted of the truth. This truth is relative to their sinful condition, the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ, and the availability of salvation through faith in the finished work of Christ. ***“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”*** (John 8:32). ***“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,”*** (Ephesians 1:13). When a sinner is converted, his destiny is

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changed from Hell to Heaven. It is the greatest transaction available to mankind.

### THE CONTENTMENT OF THE SAINT

The business of winning souls is encouraged as we consider the contentment of the saint. It is a joy to know that we have passed from death unto life and are predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son. ***"...for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."*** (II Timothy 1:12). ***"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."*** (Philippians 1:21). Because Christ has been judged sufficiently for our sin, we are offered a pardon. The wrath of God was poured out on Him, and the gift of God is offered to us. ***"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."*** I John 3:2). The peace and contentment of the saint are a great encouragement in the matter of winning souls.

***"Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit."*** 7 ***"Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:"*** (II Corinthians 5:5,6).

The Christian, or saint of God, faces many hardships, but the promises of the future bring contentment. ***"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."*** (Romans 8:18). One of the greatest advertisements for the cause of Christ and the winning of souls is a Christian who is contented with Jesus Christ and His

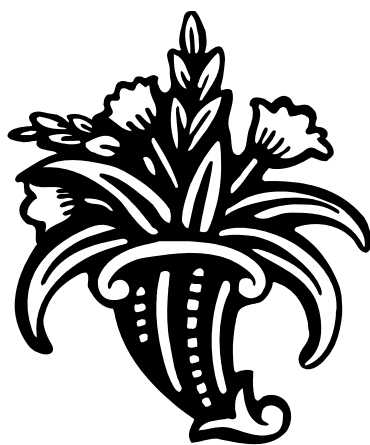
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work.

We must repeat the Gospel of Christ to the lost until they understand and believe. “***He that believeth on him is not condemned:***” (John 3:18). “***Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:***” (Romans 5:1). “***And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.***” (Galatians 6:9). It will be worth it all when we see Jesus.

## THE COMFORT FOR THE FUTURE

The best is yet to come. We are housed in these old bodies. II Corinthians 4:7 assures us: “***And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation.***” Christians are provided a new body. The future is as exciting for us as it was for the Apostle John. I John 3:2 says, “***Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.***”



# Faith That Counts

**T**he human mind has a difficult time comprehending Bible faith. The role that it plays is of extreme importance. Without faith it is impossible to please God. The object of faith in Christianity is Christ. The source of faith is the eternal settled Word of God. Faith is believing God.

We learn in Hebrews 11:6 that without faith it is impossible to please God. ***“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”*** For a person to believe God, or to trust Christ as Saviour, that person must believe that God is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. It is very important that one be able to identify the Word of God since Bible faith comes only by the Word of God.

When the Apostle Paul was writing to the church at Thessalonica, he commended them for receiving the Word of God, not as the word of men, but ***“...as it is in truth, the word of God,...”*** (I Thessalonians 2:13). The many translations that have been given the name “Bible,” or “Scriptures” has brought about a decline in respect or knowledge of the true Word of God.

These translations are provided by man to make a

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profit. They copyright them to protect their investment. As a result, the Word of God has been laid aside. In many places it is even rejected in order that man's tradition might be promoted (Mark 7). We must have the Word of God in order to believe the Word of God.

As we keep in mind the title of the message, "Faith That Counts," let us consider the possibility and probability that much of religious faith today does not count! In Romans 4:3, God states, "***For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.***" Notice it did not say that Abraham believed in God, but that Abraham believed God. It would be impossible for one to believe God who did not first know what God has to say.

A person is born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the Word of God (I Peter 1:23). God speaks through creation, (Romans 1:20), through conscience, (Romans 2:15), and through His Word. For a person to have Bible faith, one must first know where to find the Word of God. This is a very controversial issue in our society today. It is a question which should be settled in the hearts and minds of every person who desires to know and to serve the Lord. The subject is critical in the matter of "Faith That Counts."

We will consider the following Scriptures as a basis to launch our discussion on "Faith That Counts": "***For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.***" 4 "***Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.***" 5 "***But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.***" 6 "***Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth***



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*righteousness without works,”* 7 *“Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.”* 8 *“Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.”* (Romans 4:3-8).

Let us give special consideration to verse five. The last part of the verse states: “...*his faith is counted for righteousness.*” It is the person who not only believes the Lord Jesus Christ justifies the ungodly, but also to the one who has quit working for his salvation. When one quits working for his salvation, he turns from any hope that he has in good works, recognizing they are only as filthy rags and believes on, or rests in, Christ and His finished work. It is important to see the first part of the verse, “*But to him that worketh not,...* .” The person who trusts Christ and His finished work must cease from his own labors, and rest in God’s provision, found only in the person and performance of Jesus Christ. “*For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.*” (Hebrews 4:10).

One can believe that Jesus died for his sin and be convinced that there is no chance to go to Heaven without Christ, and still be active in trying to hold out to the end or carry out some type of inward or outward performance in order to gain God’s favor. In simple words, the person can be working to obtain his or her salvation while trusting Christ to help them to perform. That person has faith, but his faith does not count.

As an assignment in a Christian correspondence course, a businessman in Atlanta, Georgia was writing a tract entitled, “Faith That Counts,” based on Romans 4:5. While studying the verse, he realized that true Bible repentance was turning from any hope in, or change of mind toward his own

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good works. Then he could trust Christ and His finished work to take him to Heaven. He trusted Christ as his Saviour and rejoiced with his wife in the simplicity of the new birth. He and his wife flew to Milton, Florida to share with us the good news that he had trusted Christ as his Saviour. He rejoiced in the assurance that comes from turning from any hope in good works and trusting Christ and Him alone.

Peace and salvation are enjoyed by those who enter into God's rest. It is made available to mankind through the principle of grace, and is received by faith. God's grace allows sinners to have that which they have not earned. Faith acknowledges and rests in God's record for that which is offered through the Lord Jesus Christ. We would do well to study Romans 4:5 along with Hebrews 4:10, which states, "***For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.***"

David understood that God imputed righteousness without works (Romans 4:7). He realized that a person's iniquities were forgiven, and their sins were covered because of the principle of grace. He further understood the blessedness of a man to whom the Lord will not impute sin (charge to his account) (Romans 4:8). This is possible because God charged man's sin to the Lord Jesus Christ. He then judged the Lord Jesus for all the sins of all mankind until the judgment was complete. The innocent was judged for the guilty that the guilty might be declared innocent. It is a benefit that was enjoyed by Old and New Testament characters alike. It can be enjoyed by a person who is willing to repent of any hope he has in his own good works, cease from his own labors, and rest in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A person that is very religious will certainly believe in God. The order of the universe necessitates a Designer and

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Sustainer. Only God could perform such tasks. It is those who are religious that the Scriptures teach will one day cry for mercy, but there will be no mercy. ***“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?”*** 23 ***“And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”*** (Matthew 7:22,23). They have faith, but their faith does not count.

The Apostle Paul described such people in Romans 10:2,3: ***“For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.”*** 3 ***“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”*** They believed in God. They had a zeal of God. However, they were ignorant of the meaning of the finished work of Christ and the method of appropriating God’s salvation to man. It is essential to have faith that counts in order to go to Heaven.

A misunderstanding of repentance tends to lead a person to trust God for good works, but not to have faith that counts. An unscriptural viewpoint of repentance encourages a person to believe, teach, and practice salvation by works, or reformation. In studying the word “repent” or “repentance” in the dictionary, the definition or emphasis is on “the change of one’s mind.” Repentance plays a vital role in one becoming a Christian. In Luke 13:3 and 5, we are told ***“...except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”***

A study of John’s baptism will help us understand the importance of repentance. John’s baptism is also called “The Baptism of Repentance.” ***“John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the***

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**remission of sins.**” (Mark 1:4). Every truly born-again person has changed his mind about the value of good works needed to go to Heaven.

Baptism is total immersion, or to be “put into.” The baptism of repentance is to be totally immersed in the change of mind. It is described in Philippians 3:7-9: “***But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.***” 8 “***Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,***” 9 “***And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:...***”

The Apostle Paul had gained recognition and prestige in carrying out some Biblical principles and many traditions of man. He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews. He was a Pharisee, or separatist. He had strong religious credentials. In the light of the truth of Christ and His provision, Paul counted all of his good deeds but loss (verse 7). He compared all of his good deeds to dung (verse 8). He renounced any and all hope in good works, and rested in the RIGHTEOUSNESS of God. God’s RIGHTEOUSNESS is the faith, or faithfulness, of Jesus Christ. Paul’s repentance is clearly portrayed in his renouncing of any and all hope in his good works. His only hope was Christ and His redemptive work. Paul had faith that counts.

It is traditional to attempt to prove that one is saved by a changed life. The only proof one needs to know that he is saved is that Christ died for his sin. Christ made peace with God for each and every individual (Colossians 1:20). However, it is more traditional to try to prove one’s salvation

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by his love for the brethren, the changed life, and his willingness to try to keep the commandments of God. This stems from trying to balance salvation by works and salvation by grace. Most books today present both and let the reader make his choice. This allows the publishers and retailers to sell their books to people with entirely different viewpoints. They, I believe, are more interested in selling their books than presenting the truth of salvation by grace alone.

Because of ignorance, tradition is predominant in the study and teaching of the Scriptures. It is normal for a person to think that good people go to Heaven, and that bad people go to Hell. It is natural to try to correct one's sin problem by turning from wrong doing, and getting involved in good works. This is done in order to gain God's favor. When one turns from bad works he automatically turns to good works. This makes him feel good about himself. That, however, is not being born into the family of God. Even though turning from bad works to good works is a form of repentance, it is not true Bible repentance for salvation. True Bible repentance for salvation is turning from confidence in their own good works to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is Christ Who provided the only work that allows God to receive sinners.

Most preaching encourages people to quit their meanness and evil habits, and become active in church and other good works. Unless they first trust Christ to take them to Heaven, this creates Pharisees instead of born-again Christians. Good people think that they are too good to go to Hell. God's Word teaches that there is none good, and except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.

God took a body of flesh in which to reconcile the world unto Himself. He was born of a virgin. He lived a sinless life. The sins of the world were placed on Him. He

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was judged by God for all the sins of mankind. God judged Himself. He died for all the sins of all mankind. He arose and as our High Priest, ascended into Heaven and placed His blood on the Mercy Seat. That sacrifice was offered once for all. Those who trust Him and the sacrificial offering of His blood in order to go to Heaven have faith that counts.

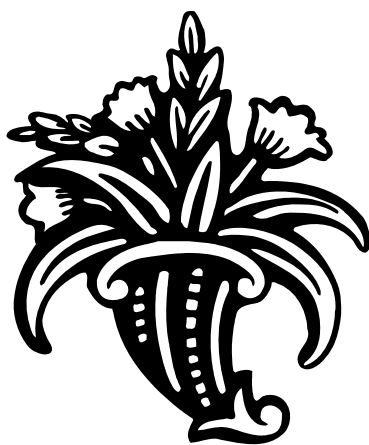
In order to get a person to turn from their confidence in their own good works and trust the finished work of Christ, it will take the preaching and teaching of the Word of God. The law demands perfection or death. It is the law that reveals to man his sinful and condemned condition. In most cases, people will have to hear the truth again and again before seriously considering their lost condition. It does not take much truth to cause a person to want to go to Heaven or escape hell. It is not uncommon for a person to make a profession of faith before realizing his or her lost condition.

These people need our help. We should consider Matthew 7:21-23. ***“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”*** 22 ***“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?”*** 23 ***“And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”*** These people are victim’s of Satan’s plan. II Corinthians 4:3,4: ***“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:”*** 4 ***“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”*** II Corinthians 11:3: ***“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds***

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***should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”***

We are responsible to continue preaching and teaching the Gospel of Christ to them. They must hear until they understand and believe. We should not grow weary in well doing. If we are faithful to preach and teach the redemptive story of Christ and encourage true Bible repentance, it will result in many trusting Christ as Saviour or having faith that counts.





# Heaven Awaits The Sinner

**H**eaven” is a subject of interest to everyone, though the average man’s concept of “Heaven” is not based on truth. The word “Heaven” is a peaceful, but an intriguing word to the average American person. The word “Heaven” suggests hope. In the average mind, it is shrouded with mystery.

The first verse in the Bible states: “***In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.***” (Genesis 1:1). In Ecclesiastes 5:2, we learn that “...***God is in heaven,***...” The Word of God in Psalm 119:89 declares, “...***thy word is settled in heaven.***” Heaven is not a myth. It is a real place created by God, and the Third Heaven is God’s dwelling place.

The time that mankind spends on this earth is temporary and is compared to a vapor that appeareth for a short time and is gone. It is different with man’s existence. He will exist for all eternity. Mankind was created as an eternal being. Where one spends eternity will be determined by each individual in this life on earth.

As we consider the eternal state of man’s being, and the subject of “Heaven,” let us read the following passage of

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Scripture: ***“If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.”*** 10 ***“He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.”*** 11 ***“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.”*** 12 ***“He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”*** 13 ***“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”*** 14 ***“And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:”*** 15 ***“And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.”*** (I John 5:9-15).

God has three positive witnesses to mankind. They are creation, the Scriptures, and man’s conscience. Yet, many attempt to deny the existence of God and our responsibility to Him. To deny the Word of God is to make God a liar.

The Apostle John testified the following relative to the future: ***“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”*** 3 ***“And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”***(I John 3:2,3). John was confident of his position with the Lord God, and his future existence with the Lord. We can be just as confident.

The Apostle Paul was a man of confidence and determination relative to Heaven and his identification with it. ***“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not***

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*made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*” (II Corinthians 5:1).

His present dwelling was in his body. However, he knew that his future dwelling would be eternal in the heavens.

In communicating with the church at Corinth, he further stated, *“For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.”* 3 *“If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.”* 4 *“For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.”* 5 *“Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.”* 6 *“Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.”* 7 *“(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)* (II Corinthians 5:2-7).

Bible faith is derived from the Word of God. The Word of God is given to us through the ministry of the Holy Spirit (II Peter 1:20,21). The Holy Spirit bears witness with our minds of the truth. When we embrace the truth, the Holy Spirit gives great confidence relative to spiritual and eternal things.

One of the greatest truths found in the Scriptures relative to the availability of Heaven to the sinner is found in the following passages: *“And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;”* 19 *“To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.”* 20 *“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”* 21 *“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we*

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***might be made the righteousness of God in him.”***

This passage probably contains the most concise record that God hath given of His Son. We were told in I John 5:10, that the individual who did not believe God has made Him a liar, the reason being that he did not believe the record that God gave of His Son. That record is seen in II Corinthians 5:19. ***“To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;... .”*** Mankind has been reconciled to God. God has dealt with man’s sin thoroughly in Christ and is willing to receive sinful man based on the merit of the finished work of Christ.

Heaven awaits the sinner who believes that one can know for certain that he is going to Heaven. Many people do not believe anyone can know for certain that he is going to Heaven. That is contrary to Scripture. It reveals man’s ignorance of the simplicity of the Gospel. Since God has judged man’s sin in the person of Christ, He can receive sinful man. Man can know that God will receive him because of the work of Christ.

Heaven awaits the sinner who believes that God does not impute sin to mankind. This, no doubt, is one of the greatest truths recorded in the Word of God. God does not overlook one sin. He does not ignore or wink at one sin. He has judged every sin in Christ. ***“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.”*** (I Peter 2:24). Isaiah 53:6 says, ***“...he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”*** (Isaiah 53:5).

God does not impute man’s sin to him because they

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have been imputed to Christ. They have been judged. The wrath of God has been appeased. Man's slate is clean. Yet, he ignores the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Heaven awaits the sinner who believes that Heaven's door is open now to the sinner. The door of Heaven opened when the blood of Jesus Christ was offered on the mercy seat in Heaven as we're told here, "***For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:***" 14 "***How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?***" (Hebrews 9:24,14). Ephesians 5:2 teaches us that the blood of Christ is a sweetsmelling savour to a holy God relative to man's sin.

The truth of the door of Heaven being open is taught in the book of Philemon. The Apostle Paul writing to Philemon relative to Onesimus stated, "***If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself.***" In truth, Philemon represents the person of God. The Apostle Paul represents the person of Jesus Christ. Onesimus represents the sinner, or mankind. Paul, representing Christ, writing to Philemon, representing the Father, said, "***If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him (Onesimus) as myself.***"

Onesimus was to be as welcome at the home of Philemon as the Apostle Paul. Jesus states to the Father, "If thou count me as a partner, receive the sinner as Myself." Heaven's door is open to the sinner. "***He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.***" (John 3:18). "***Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God***

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***through our Lord Jesus Christ:***” (Romans 5:1). “...***This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.***” (John 6:29). “***He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.***” (I John 5:10).

Heaven awaits the sinner. It is because of the blood of Jesus Christ. Salvation is of the Lord. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. It is His desire to beg sinners to look to Jesus and come to God by faith. Salvation is simple, but positive. Our sin separated us from God, or shut the door. Christ died for our sins, and the door was opened. God extends an invitation to you and me saying, “Come because of Christ. Heaven awaits the sinner.” Believe or receive the truth and go to Heaven. We honor the Lord when we trust Him.

# Really Converted

**W**hile reading a sermon recently, a statement by the author caught my attention in a special way. He had expressed himself with much concern of the false religion he had witnessed in his ministry. Veneered Christianity that did not reach to the heart caused him much frustration. His frustration was evident in the statement, “Oh, I’d love to see somebody really converted in our day.” He longed for reality in Christian circles. I was reminded of my religious, but unconverted life during my first 21 years as a Baptist church member.

The faith that is spoken of in Colossians chapter one was the faith of those who are really converted. ***“We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,”*** <sup>4</sup> ***“Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints,”*** <sup>5</sup> ***“For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;”*** <sup>6</sup> ***“Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:”*** (Colossians 1:3-6).

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The faith of the Colossian Christians was genuine. It was a result of the teaching and preaching of the Word of God, as described in I Thessalonians 2:13, “***For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.***” The truth of the Gospel had come to these people, and they had trusted Christ as their Saviour. Hope was laid up for them in Heaven. They were really converted.

Those who are religious, but not converted are spoken of and described throughout the Word of God. “***When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.***” 44 “***Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished.***” 45 “***Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.***” (Matthew 12:43-45).

The unclean spirit, or particular sin, was laid aside by the man. It could have been drinking or gambling, or some other sin. He turned from that way of life, and could have well become an active member in the church. When that unclean spirit returned unto the man, he found that his house (the body and life of the man) had been swept and garnished. The former gambler or drunkard could have been teaching a Sunday School class, or actively involved in Training Union work. His life was filled with good works (good neighbor material).

The demon, whose intention was to destroy the man,



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gathered seven other spirits more wicked than himself which could well be the demons of good works apart from, or without, Jesus Christ. The Bible describes the state of that man, who may be at that time the most active member in that church, as being worse than his first state. It could have been said that the man was converted or had changed his ways. He was not what the author described or termed as being really converted. Jesus Christ was missing.

Again, a religious, but unconverted person is described in, Matthew 23:13-15. ***“But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.”*** 14 ***“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows’ houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.”*** 15 ***“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.”*** These religious people are praying people. Not only does their activity involve prayers, but it also involves soul winning or proselyting. They are converting people to their way of life, but not to Christ. It could be said that they are changed, but not really converted.

The methods and effectiveness of Satan and his demons are described, or exposed, in the following passages of Scripture: ***“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.”*** 4 ***“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”*** (II Corinthians 4:3,4).

One of Satan’s effective methods is to blind the minds of unbelievers. He is able to gain the confidence of people

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through his subtle and deceptive ways as described in the following passage: ***“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.”*** 14 ***“And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.”*** 15 ***“Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”*** (II Corinthians 11:13-15). His methods are very fruitful and effective as he presents himself as an angel of light. He outwardly appears to be trustworthy and honorable.

His effectiveness is somewhat revealed in Matthew 7:13: ***“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:... .”*** Again, in verses 22-23, we learn that many preachers, soul winners, and church workers are going to hell. ***“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?”*** 23 ***“And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”*** These people described were converted to religious activity, but never really converted in Christ.

Each of us would be wise to follow the admonition found in II Corinthians 13:5, ***“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?”*** Also, we are told to make our calling and election sure. ***“For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.”*** (I Corinthians 11:31). We should examine ourselves in the light of the Scriptures, and be willing for God to show us the truth. ***“If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I***

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*“speak of myself.”* (John 7:17).

We have seen in the Scriptures that the god of this world has the power to blind the minds of those which believe not. We have learned that Satan has the ability to transform himself into an angel of light, and his effectiveness and fruitfulness is as a roaring lion. Eternity is long, and hell is too awful to play games with our eternal souls. There needs to be honesty and humility in our thinking. We must recognize that we are created beings that will give an account to the Creator. We should desire the will of God. We should be ready and willing to follow God’s Word as we hunger and thirst after righteousness. Our souls should long to be used of the Lord as we see Christ on His throne and yield to His rule of us and our families.

His preeminence is declared in Colossians 1:15-19. *“Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:”* 16 *“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:”* 17 *“And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”* 18 *“And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.”* 19 *“For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;... .”*

His provision for man is seen in the following verses: *“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.”* 21 *“And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled”* 22

## REALLY CONVERTED

***“In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:... .”***

Peace has been made with God for you. This transaction took place at Calvary and immediately after the resurrection of Christ. He entered into the holy place in Heaven to appear in the presence of God for us (Hebrews 9:24). There He offered His blood on the mercy seat as sufficient payment and sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Your sin debt has been paid. The doors of Heaven are open to you. God extends outstretched arms to each of us, saying, “Come.”

We are invited because Christ paid our sin debt in full. All charges have been removed. They were transferred to Jesus. He took the judgment of God on Himself. Jesus Christ wants you to live with Him forever. He truly loves you.

We accept His invitation by faith, knowing that the sin debt is paid, and that we are welcome in Heaven. The wrath of God has been appeased. He extends to us a free pardon because of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. As we see our unworthiness and observe the Person and Work of Calvary, we can understand how God receives sinful man. We are accepted in the beloved, and made nigh by the blood. The provisions are ours through faith. Trust Him as your personal Saviour, acknowledging Him as your only Hope of Heaven, and you can enjoy being really converted and Heaven-bound.

# True Worship

**S**uccess in life is a goal of every person and is measured by different standards. Everyone would like to be counted among those that are successful. Few ever see their excuses fade into the shadow of true success. The stories of those that are successful are in great demand. People listen to stories of the success of others with hope that the challenge will enhance their personal success.

In the following passage of Scripture, we find a woman successfully worshipping the Lord in the midst of extreme obstacles. *“Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.”* 22 *“And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.”* 23 *“But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.”* 24 *“But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”* 25 *“Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.”* 26 *“But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast it to dogs.”* 27 *“And she said, Truth,*

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***Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.***” 28 ***“Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.”*** (Matthew 15:21-28).

The woman had a definite need. She came to the right place to get that need met, but she faced unusual obstacles. (1.) She was ignored by the Lord (Matthew 15:23); (2.) she was rejected by the disciples (those closest to Jesus); and (3.) she was compared to a dog (Matthew 15:26); (4.) she was rewarded by the Lord. In the midst of such an atmosphere, verse 25 records that she worshipped the Lord. After being compared to a dog, in verse 27, we find her saying, ***“...Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.”*** She had the character and steadfastness to overcome obstacles. Her performance led to success. She was commended by the Lord, and her problem was solved: her daughter was made whole (as recorded in verse 28).

We all have certain talents, and we are commanded to honor the Lord with that which we have. ***“Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.”*** (I Corinthians 4:2) We are created beings. We are to glorify our Creator in everything that we say and do. Regardless of who we are and where we go, we will meet obstacles. We are to be patient and steadfast. ***“Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.”*** 8 ***“Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.”*** (James 5:7,8).

The woman who worshipped the Lord amidst rejection and humiliation was looking ahead. The following passage

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should challenge each of us to do the same. ***“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”*** 11 ***“Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,”*** (11 Peter 3:10,11). Our material wealth and gains that are not used to glorify the Lord will all burn. Many times, we use pitiful excuses that relate to hardships or the activities of those around us to justify ourselves for not serving and worshipping the Lord.

Another example in the Bible is the faithful service and worship of a woman recorded in Mark 14:3-9. ***“And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head.”*** 4 ***“And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made?”*** 5 ***“For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her.”*** 6 ***“And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me.”*** 7 ***“For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always.”*** 8 ***“She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.”*** 9 ***“Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.”***

This woman had an expensive box of ointment. She broke the box and poured the ointment on the head of the

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Lord Jesus Christ. This caused indignation and ridicule from those around her as they described the incident as waste. Jesus said in verse 6, “...***Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me.***” He further said, “***She hath done what she could:...***” (verse 8). To offset any weakness that she might have to hold back part of the ointment, she broke the box. If she had not broken the box, she might have responded as we do today. When we are ridiculed and accused of wasting our time and money on the church and the work of the Lord, we draw back, and withdraw our possessions

David realized that his best was to be given to the Lord. “***And David spake unto the LORD the words of this song in the day that the LORD had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul:***” 2 “***And he said, The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer;***” 3 “***The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence.***” 4 “***I will call on the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.***” 20 “***He brought me forth also into a large place: he delivered me, because he delighted in me.***” (11 Samuel 22:1-4,20). David appreciated the Lord’s interest in him.

Again we see his expression of appreciation recorded in Psalm 40:1-4,17, “***I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.***” 2 “***He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.***” 3 “***And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.***” 4 “***Blessed is that man that maketh the LORD his***



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***trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.***” David rejoiced in the Lord. Regardless of the obstacles around him, he saw significant reasons to praise the Lord and worship Him. Let us inventory ourselves in our worship that it might be said of us as it was said of the woman,  
***“...she...worshipped him,...”***

As we give of ourselves and our material wealth in worship, we should recognize that it is given to God. Even though we work and give through the local church, it is given to God.

As we involve ourselves in personal worship, let us take inventory. First, consider your talents. What talents has the Lord given to you with which you may worship Him? Are you personally involved in manifesting them in the service of the Lord.

Next, what are your desires? Do you desire to honor Him, and to be used to encourage and assist others along life’s way? Further consider your visions. Do you see yourself instrumental in an effective ministry where the Saviour is glorified, and others are challenged? This will require ignoring obstacles that usually turn people aside who have a determination to worship the Lord in a personal way.

Our next consideration will be concerning that of our weaknesses. They must be recognized. As we recognize them, we can then draw from God’s resources to offset our weaknesses. Then we will be steadfast and fruitful. Our tendency is to hide, or disregard, our weaknesses as though they were not present. This, of course, will lead to failure.

If we are to move ahead to a successful and fruitful ministry, we should evaluate our background. Where have we been? What has been our environment and heritage? Many times, things have happened to us in the past that make us shy

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and unwilling to step out and move toward success.

This leads us to our next thought - progress. What type of progress are we making? Are we using our talents to fulfill our visions in a useful and fruitful life? Have we analyzed our weaknesses and background and taken the necessary steps to move forward. Until we cross the finish line, we need to keep our minds on our goals. We should be honest in monitoring our progress that it might be said of us as it was said of the woman,

***“...she...worshipped him,...”***

We have a Saviour to honor. He is worthy of our praise and service. We have a ministry to carry out. The Apostle Paul refused to let afflictions turn him aside. ***“But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”*** (Acts 20:24)

The cause of our Saviour is sufficient cause for which to live and die. Judgment is ahead. Let us worship Him in the midst of the ridicule and obstacles around us. It will require patience, determination, and diligence.

True worship is to a Person and not to a cause. That Person is the One Who created us, and has provided us with everything that we have. We are created for His glory. He desires that our lives honor, and bring honor to Him. His name is Jesus.

Serving the Lord is actually giving ourselves and that which we have in our service for Him. The following story of a little girl relates to this truth:

The family was poor. Her daddy was sick. She and her mother had passed a store on the way to get groceries where a doll was displayed in a showcase. The little girl asked the mother if it was possible that she might have the doll.

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Because of the lack of funds, the mother had to say no. Several months passed. At every opportunity the little girl would stand in front of the window as she longed to own the doll, and to hold it close to her.

Some circumstances changed, and one day her parents were able to get the little girl the doll. She was so thrilled. At every opportunity she played with her doll. At night she slept with it close to her.

One day as she sat in church listening to the preacher preach a message about giving your best for Christ, she was longing for something to give. After a couple of services, she realized that the most treasured thing that she had was her doll. In the next service the ushers were surprised. As they passed by her, she placed the doll in the collection plate. For several days she demonstrated her longing for the doll. One day the preacher brought the doll to her house, and offered to give it back to her. The little girl emphatically stated: "You cannot give the doll back to me."

"Why?" asked the preacher.

She replied emphatically, "Because I did not give the doll to you. I gave it to God."

If we, as adults, could learn that lesson, we would not be prone to be turned aside when people do not understand. When we are liberal and sacrificial in our worship and giving to the Saviour, we will be accused of wasting or giving to a church, a man, or an unnecessary cause. In the midst of difficulties, and many times rejection, let us be generous in the giving of ourselves, understanding that we are giving to Him as we worship Him.

Giving to the Lord will never be in vain. The Bible teaches us to give and it shall be given unto us. ***"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and***

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***shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.***” ( Luke 6:38). This includes anything that we give that the Lord can use.

# Doomed With Doubt

**T**he world of religion is in much trouble. It is a result of ignorance and indifference toward Biblical truth. There is little respect for absolutes in this age of philosophy and personal opinions.

Bookstore shelves are lined with various books that carry the name “Bible.” Some are even called “Holy Bible.” Many of these so-called Bibles are no more than religious devotional books, written and promoted to sell and make money.

The only hope of mankind is the eternal divinely inspired Word of God. This is true because faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). The Scriptures teach that whatsoever is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:23). It takes the Word of God to produce faith. Faith is essential to be pleasing to God. Therefore, without the Word of God there cannot be Bible faith. Without faith man cannot please God.

In the minds of most people the Word of God is no

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more than a figure of speech. In other words, the Word of God is lost to the minds of most people. They do not know how to identify or recognize God's Word. The many books that are marked "Bible" have contributed much to this dilemma. Which of these books is the true Word of God? In answer to the question, most people would say, "I really do not know." Man is in trouble. Because of the lack of truth, he is doomed with doubt.

In the first thirteen verses of Mark, chapter seven, a truth is revealed that will help identify the problem. We do have the Word of God, but it is made of none effect through man's tradition.

***"Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye."***

(Mark 7:13). It came about when at first both the Word of God and man's tradition were taught. Next, the Word of God was laid aside for man's tradition. Then, the Word of God was rejected in order that man might hold to his own tradition. Finally, the Word of God was made of none effect through the tradition of man. When people quit respecting the Word of God, they no longer considered it as the Word of God. This leaves man in a state of indifference, self-exalting, and doomed with doubt.

God has revealed to us His Word (I Corinthians 2:10). ***"But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."*** This revelation came about through holy men of God who were moved by the Holy Ghost. ***"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."*** (II Peter 1:21). We have God's Word for English-speaking people recorded in the Old King James Bible. It is not copyrighted. The King James Bible may be reproduced. God wants His Word to be printed,

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taught, heard, and believed. ***“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”*** (Romans 10:17).

It is in the Word of God that we learn about man’s origin, purpose, and destiny. Man was created by God. It is God Who upholds the universe by the Word of His power (Hebrews 1:3). God spoke the world into existence. He molded man out of the clay or dust of the earth, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. It is man’s responsibility to subdue the earth and enjoy the benefits of God’s creation.

This is never to be done in disrespect to man’s Creator and God. In Matthew 13 Mark 4, and Luke 8, we have recorded the parable of the sower. We can learn much from that parable. It reveals the attitude of Satan toward the Word of God, and several influences that hinder man from hearing, understanding, and obeying the Word of God.

When the Word of God is taught, it is Satan’s desire to come immediately and remove the Word of God from the man’s mind lest he believe and be saved (Luke 8:12). In Matthew 13, we learn that it is because man does not understand (13:19). Man will not understand unless aided by the ministry of the Holy Spirit Who illuminates or enlightens the mind of man.

A person may hear the Word of God with joy and even have a real desire to be used of God, and yet not have enough character to stand for truth when a choice is given. He or she is offended by the Word of God. If the person is to understand the Word of God, he must desire to know the truth and be willing to respond to it properly.

The parable further teaches that the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things (Matthew 13:22; Mark 4:19) stand in the way of the person

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hearing, understanding, and receiving the Word of God.

The pleasures of this life are also listed in the parable as one of the enemies to the mind of man in hearing and understanding the Word of God. ***“And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.”*** (Luke 8:14).

A careful examination of the parable will reveal that a person will not know the truth unless he desires to know. There must be an interest and longing for truth if the hearer is to understand and to keep the truth. It will be with an honest and good heart. ***“But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.”*** (Luke 8:15). Then, and then only, does the Word bear fruit, even though, in many cases, the Word is received with joy.

It is interesting to note that the Word of God is received with joy, and the hearer even believed for awhile, but when the test comes, he is offended by the Word of God. Matthew tells of individuals who endure for a while (or believed for a while, Luke 8:13), but in time of testing choose the world and is offended by the Word. That kind of person will never enjoy the benefits of truth. He will live a life that is doomed with doubt.

It is important to understand that a person is not tricked into getting saved or into serving the Lord. We are taught in Matthew 6:33 that we are to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness. ***“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”*** (Matthew 6:33). In Matthew 7, we are taught to ask, seek, and knock. To know and to serve the Lord requires interest, discipline, and purpose. It must be a



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deliberate move. If not, the person will be unstable, unlearned, and will continue to be doomed with doubt.

The Apostle Paul wanted his influence to count for Christ. It was his desire that people around him might have Bible faith. To have Bible faith they must be taught the Word of God. His interest is stated in the first few verses of I Corinthians chapter 2. ***“For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”*** 3 ***“And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.”*** 4 ***“And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:”*** 5 ***“That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”*** He was living with purpose. He had confidence in the Word of God and was not plagued with ignorance nor was he doomed with doubt.

The professing Christians in Galatia were having problems. They were faced with the influence of those who believed a person is saved by works and those who believed a person was saved by grace. They were further influenced by those who believed that after being saved one is kept by works. Paul asked them a question that we should consider: ***“O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?”*** 2 ***“This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?”*** 3 ***“Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?”*** (Galatians 3:1-3). They knew enough to know that Christ was necessary for life. Some promoted good works and some promoted grace. Some knew the truth and some did not. Those who were influenced by the teachers

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of works for salvation were doomed with doubt.

The question was no problem to the Apostle Paul. He stated clearly that anyone who preached anything other than what he preached should be cut off (Galatians 5:12). He even said that one who would preach any other gospel or message should be accursed (Galatians 1:8,9). He knew that Christ had paid the sin debt for every man. He further knew that sinners must **receive forgiveness** by grace through faith. God judged the sins of the world in the person of Christ, and extended forgiveness to all men. It is a shame that only a few people will receive the truth by faith. Others, who are speculating on man's opinion and relying on the natural reason of man, will continue to be doomed with doubt.

The way a person is saved is not a matter that a believer learns after being saved. It is an issue that must be considered before he can trust Christ and Christ alone for eternal salvation. Those who are still arguing about this subject may be listed among the unbelievers. A careful study will reveal that they too are doomed with doubt.

We should not kid ourselves into thinking that people are saved who show little or no interest in Christ. We are told in Isaiah 55:6 to seek the Lord while He may be found. We learn in Deuteronomy 4:29 that God will be found when sought with all one's heart. In II Chronicles 15:15, we learn that when one seeks the Lord with the whole desire, the Lord is found. The natural man is blinded to spiritual truth, but the veil is lifted when the heart turns to the Lord: ***“Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.”*** (II Corinthians 3:16). Those who make flippant, casual professions will be constantly plagued with ignorance and spiritual darkness. It will be obvious that they are doomed with doubt.

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The devil has the power to blind unbelievers. The truth is hidden. ***“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:”*** 4 ***“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”*** (II Corinthians 4:3,4). Some of the tools that Satan works with are identified in the parable of the sower. They include trials and afflictions, the cares of the world, deceitfulness of riches, lust of other things, and the pleasures of life. He is very fruitful and effective as he transforms himself into an angel of light. ***“And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.”*** (II Corinthians 11:14). People think they are serving the Lord when they are actually following the devil. They live lives of uncertainty. They are plagued with fear, and doomed with doubt.

It is not necessary to be doomed with doubt. We have a Saviour! God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. ***“To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.”*** (II Corinthians 5:19). The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all: ***“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”*** (Isaiah 53:6). He was smitten of God and afflicted. ***“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.”*** (Isaiah 53:4). He was wounded for our transgressions. With His stripes we are healed (Isaiah 53:5; I Peter 2:24). Christ made peace with God for us. ***“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.”*** (Colossians 1:20).

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We are invited to live with the Lord. We do not have to be plagued with uncertainty or doomed with doubt.

We are not saved because of our actions. We are not saved because we pray or have a changed life. We are saved because Christ died for our sin. The Just suffered for the unjust. ***“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:”*** (I Peter 3:18). He Who was without sin was made sin. ***“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”*** (II Corinthians 5:21). God extends to us a pardon. He declares us redeemed and reconciled. He that believeth is not condemned (John 3:18). He that believeth hath the witness in himself. ***“He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.”*** (I John 5:10). The person who does not believe has made God a liar because he believed not the record that God gave of His Son. When we consider our state of being, we find ourselves bankrupt and lost.

When we consider Jesus, we find ourselves redeemed and welcome in Heaven. Let us thank the Lord, and spend our lives sharing the message of redemption with others that they might be sure of Heaven, and not be doomed with doubt.

## Building On The Foundation

**T**here are basic procedures in properly building a building. The location is determined, the plans are drawn, and the foundation is dug. Due to loose or unstable soil, sometimes heavy equipment must be brought in to dig deep in order to provide a proper foundation. It is extremely important that the foundation be properly laid. It is the basic strength of the building. The same is true in the life of an individual.

The importance of the foundation and the necessity to sometimes dig deep is expressed in Luke 6:47-49: “*Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like:*” 48 “*He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock.*” 49 “*But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.*”

### Building On The Foundation

In the lives of most people they fail to dig deep into the truth of redemption. They attempt to build a Christian life on a shallow profession with no understanding of the redemptive work of Christ. Verse 48 states: “...**and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock:**...” Because of digging deep and laying the foundation on a rock, when the storm came, it could not shake the house. The sad part of the passage is revealed in verse 49. The man built the house without a foundation. The house fell, and great was the fall of it.

The same truth is taught in Matthew 7:23-27. The wise man built his house upon a rock. 25 “**And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not:**... .” The reason “...**it fell not**...” was because it was founded upon a rock, or, was built on a solid foundation. The man who built his house on the sand was called foolish. His house fell when the storm, or test, came.

The winds could represent the Holy Spirit. The floods (much water, Ephesians 5:26) could represent intense teaching and preaching of the Word of God. The intent of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God is not to destroy the house, or the life, but to reveal the lack of a proper foundation. . The house, or life, may be damaged or destroyed in the process. It can be rebuilt once the foundation is laid (I Corinthians 3:11). “**For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.**” The house on the Rock, Jesus, can stand all the tests.

The basic text for our thought for this message is found in I Corinthians 3:9-14: “**For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building.**” 10 “**According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and**

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*another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.”* 11 *“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”* 12 *“Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;”* 13 *“Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.”* 14 *“If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.”*

This passage clearly reveals that Jesus Christ is the foundation. The Christian life begins after one receives Christ as Saviour. A person must be born again before beginning a Christian life. It is important to dig deep into the Word of God to learn of redemption. One is born again by the Word of God that liveth and abideth forever. *“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”* (I Peter 1:23). The Gospel is *“...the power of God unto salvation... ”* One is made wise through the Scriptures. Then, and then only can he trust Christ, or receive Christ as personal Saviour.

The order is seen in Ephesians 1:13: *“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,... ”* This verse teaches that one believes after hearing the Word of truth and Gospel of His salvation. The foundation is laid after digging. Sometimes it takes a lot of digging to dig through one’s religious tradition. One must have a measure of understanding of the substitutionary work of Christ before he can be saved. He must hear God’s invitation to come by grace through faith in the finished work of Christ.

For one to trust Christ, or to receive Christ, is to

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believe the Word of God relative to the finished work of Christ. It is God's declaration of man's redemption, or reconciliation. Sin has been judged. God's wrath has been appeased. He accepts sinful men into His presence and fellowship because of the redemptive work of Christ. When one believes according to the Scripture, he is saved, or born into the family of God. Then, and then only, is the foundation laid.

After the foundation is laid, it is time for the building. We are not talking about building a building with brick, mortar, or lumber. We are talking about building a life that is influential for Christ, built on the foundation of Jesus Christ.

According to I Corinthians 3:12, our thoughts, deeds, and acts are identified as gold, silver, precious stone; or wood, hay, and stubble. The gold, silver, and precious stone is that which is done in the will of God. The wood, hay, and stubble is that which is done outside the will of God, according to man's own selfish lusts or personal ambitions.

These works shall be tried by the Word of God (John 12:48). The Word of God will be our judge. We are told in I Corinthians 11:31 that “***...if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.***”

The works that we do after receiving Christ will not only be judged, but we will be rewarded for those deeds that were in accordance to the will of God. “***If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.***” (I Corinthians 3:14). Those works not in accordance with the will of God will be burned, but the individual will be saved because of the foundation, or personal faith in Jesus Christ.

In Romans 1:17 we find a phrase that is relative to our subject of building on the foundation. “***For therein is the***



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*righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.*” Notice the prepositional phrases, “...*from faith to faith.*” Those phrases point not only to the foundation of the first faith, but also the building on the foundation represented by the second faith. Understand that “...*from faith to faith.*” is faith in Christ as our Saviour to take us to Heaven, to faith in Christ to guide us in our daily walk, and accept that which we do because of the finished work of Christ. Not only is one saved by faith, but he also is to walk by faith in his Christian life.

Even when we abide in the will of God, no deed that we do will be accepted by God except through the substitutionary work of Christ. He not only cancels our bad because of Jesus, but it’s because of Jesus that He accepts our good. We owe everything to Christ.



# After A While

**L**ife itself is a challenge. Stress is not unusual. We respond or react to various circumstances every day. It is possible to sacrifice the future on the altar of the present. This is usually done when we react instead of submitting to difficulties. Careful consideration should be given to the outcome or results of our activities and attitudes. Our present action or conduct should be influenced by our knowledge of the future. This is especially true when hardships are faced and suffering is experienced.

Our message entitled “After a While,” indicates that something is going on presently, but will change in the future. The thought is taken from the following passage of Scripture, “*And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.*”<sup>5</sup> “*Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*”<sup>6</sup> “*Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:*”<sup>7</sup> “*Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*”<sup>8</sup> “*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring*

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*lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:” 9 “Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.” 10 “But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.” 11 “To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” (I Peter 5:4-11). Notice the phrase in verse ten: “...after that ye have suffered a while,...” Suffering is being experienced in the present setting. In the future, there is a promise of perfection, stability, and strength. In both, Christ is glorified.*

Jesus said to His disciples, *“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.” 19 “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” 20 “Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you;...”* (John 15:18-20).

He further stated, *“These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.” 2 “They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.” 3 “And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.” 4 “But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them.”* (John 16:1-4). The words of the Lord clearly state that the Christian can expect hardships, ridicule, and persecution in this life.

The Apostle Paul suffered great persecution. As he neared the end of his life of fruitfulness and conflict, he

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challenged the young preacher, Timothy to endure hardness as a good soldier (II Timothy 2:3). He warned him to watch in all things and to endure afflictions as he went about doing the work of an evangelist (II Timothy 4:5). He further stated, ***“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”*** (II Timothy 3:12).

This message is directed to the Christian who has recognized his Hell-bound condition and trusted Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour. The Christian has an inheritance reserved in Heaven (I Peter 1:4), kept by the power of God. The Christian is one who is spending a while on this earth before going to Heaven to live with Jesus forever.

The Apostle Peter described the time spent on this earth as a time of suffering for a while. ***“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect,...”*** This time of suffering afflictions and conflict is appointed by God. ***“That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.”*** (I Thessalonians 3:3).

This time of suffering is our experience as we follow the example of Christ. ***“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:”*** (I Peter 2:21). I Peter 4:1 says, ***“Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;...”*** I Peter 2:19-20 reads, ***“For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.”*** 20 ***“For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this***

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***is acceptable with God.***” Suffering is part of the lot for the Christian, but it will change after a while.

For encouragement, the Christian has a history that should be considered. (1.) We have been begotten by the Father (I Peter 1:3). He has birthed us into His family by the Spirit of God. (2.) We have been redeemed by the Son (I Peter 1:18-19). Christ has paid the price. Our sin debt has been canceled by His blood. The redemptive price was the shedding of His precious blood. (3.) We have purified our souls in obeying the truth (I Peter 1:22).

Christians have received Christ as their Saviour. It is a historical event in the life of every Christian. (4.) We have tasted that the Lord is gracious (I Peter 2:3). The benefits of redemption are ours by faith. We have heard, understood, and experienced the simple truth that Jesus died for our sin. We are children of God by faith in Him. After a while, we will see Him face to face. We will dwell with Him for all eternity.

During our time of pilgrimage and sojourning on this earth, we will be tried. Our faith will be tested. Often, “***...if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:***” 7 “***That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:***” (I Peter 1:6-7).

“Subjection” is a key word to the fruitful Christian. This is emphasized in the book of First Peter. (1.) The citizen is to be in subjection to the ordinances of man (I Peter 2:13). We are to be good citizens in our communities. (2.) The servant or employee is to be in subjection to the master or employer (I Peter 2:18). We are to be responsible workers in carrying out our responsibilities. Christians should be the

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hardest workers. (3.) Wives are to be in subjection to their husbands (I Peter 3:1). Notice, these commands are given in the setting of Christian suffering. It will not be easy, but fruitful. (4.) Younger people are to be in subjection to the older people (I Peter 5:5). There should always be an attitude of respect. Children should obey their parents. Students should follow the leadership of their teachers.

A life of submission to the principles of God will lead to a life of fruitfulness. The difficulties are real. After a while, the rewards will be given. It will be worth it all when we see Jesus.

The Christian life could be described as one that begins at the cross (I Peter 1:3), and ends with the crowns (I Peter 5:4). In between the cross and the crowns, the Christian life consists of conflicts (I Peter 1:6,7). To face these conflicts, one must have Scriptural thinking. ***“Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;”*** 14 ***“As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:”*** 15 ***“But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;”*** (I Peter 1:13-15). As we gird up the loins of our minds, we will think of our history. It records our redemption and positive faith in the finished work of Christ. He is our hope of Heaven.

We will then reflect to our future at the revelation of Christ (I Peter 1:13) or the day of visitation (I Peter 2:12). After a while, rewards will be given, and we will live with Jesus forever.

As we further think right, we will consider the value of good works or well doing: ***“Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak***

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*against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.”* 15 *“For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:”* (I Peter 2:12,15).

As we submit ourselves to the will of God, which definitely involves suffering for well doing, we must refrain our tongue from evil, *“For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:”* (I Peter 3:10). Though trials press us on every side, love must characterize our speaking. *“And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.”* 9 *“Use hospitality one to another without grudging.”* 10 *“As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”* (I Peter 4:8-10). After a while, we will see Jesus.

With the cross behind us, and the crowns before us, we should bravely face, with expectation, our conflicts. *“But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.”* (I Peter 4:13). *“Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.”* (I Peter 4:19). *“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”* (Romans 8:18).

We face misunderstandings. Unexpected trials confront us almost daily. There is weariness of the flesh. Little or no cooperation in the lives of others frustrates us, and many times causes us to falter in our faith. Our attitude



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should be as the Apostle Paul, ***“For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.”***<sup>17</sup> ***“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;”***<sup>18</sup> ***“While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”*** (II Corinthians 4:16-18).

We sometimes believe that God should protect us from so many difficulties. That kind of thinking is loose thinking. When we gird up our minds, and seek instruction from the Scriptures, we learn, ***“We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;”***<sup>9</sup> ***“Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;”*** (II Corinthians 4:8,9). We can be confident that the Lord will never put on us more than we can bear. He will be with us every step of the way. ***“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”***<sup>6</sup> ***“So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.”***(Hebrews 13:5,6).

Let us arm ourselves with the mind of Christ Who gave Himself that others might live. Satan’s method is to tell us that others do not face difficulties like those we face. He reminds us of our sins and failures. He attempts to frustrate our purpose. Let us not succumb to his influence, but focus our attention on God’s promise, ***“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.”***<sup>11</sup> ***“To him be***

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***glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.***” (I Peter 5:10,11).

We must tell others of the saving grace of God. If we fail, their suffering will not be for a while. It will be for eternity.

Christ died for sin. Salvation is free. The sin debt is paid.

Heaven’s doors are open. Sinners are invited. They need to know.

After a while, it will be too late.

# He That Doubteth Is Damned

**T**he eternal destiny of man is of the utmost importance. He has two choices of where to spend eternity: either in the fiery pits of hell, or in the presence of Christ, enjoying His eternal presence and blessings. It is God's desire that none perish or go to hell: "***The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.***" (II Peter 3:9).

The Lord has been very detailed in revealing Himself and the redemption of mankind. It is through this redemption that men have the privilege of missing hell and living with Christ. God's revelation of Himself in redemption is so thorough that the Word of God says that man is without excuse. It is sad that man has so little time, and even less interest, in knowing the simple but positive truth that produces quietness and assurance forever. "***And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.***" (Isaiah 32:17).

It is commonly reported among religious leaders that doubt about one's eternal destiny is necessary, and some even

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say that it is healthy. An evangelist once said, "If you do not doubt your salvation, I doubt that you are saved." That is not scriptural, but is pleasing to Satan, the master deceiver.

The Scriptures teach the necessity of knowing (II Corinthians 5:5). We are to make our calling and election sure (II Peter 1:10). When we drink of the Living Water, we will never thirst again: "***But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.***" (John 4:14). Professions are what we do. Redemption is what Christ did. He declares it so. We benefit when we quit doubting, and believe. He that believeth is not condemned: "***He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.***" John 3:18).

We are told in Romans 14:23 that doubt is damning. "***And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.***" The Scriptures further declare in Hebrews 11:6, "***But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.***" Faith is believing God. Doubt, for our consideration in this sermon, is not fleeting thoughts of uncertainty. It is uncertainty of one's destiny when faced with the question, "Are you sure that you are going to Heaven?"

There is a remarkable statement recorded in Isaiah 32:17: "***And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.***" Two words are seen in this verse that are little known by multitudes of religious people. Those words are "peace"

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and “assurance.” Christ is peace (Ephesians 1:14), and the Word of God is the only source of eternal assurance. Many participants in religious leadership and activity do not have the foggiest idea of the meaning of true peace and eternal assurance.

Assurance forever is a blessed assurance that God delights to impart to all who come to Him by faith. It will be enjoyed only by those who trust Christ, and are willing to rest in the authority of the revealed Word of God. God has made a declaration about our redemption. We need to learn what it is, and believe it. An absolute know-so salvation is offered to sinners. It will be enjoyed by those who believe. Those without assurance suggest, or even insist, that everyone has the same problem of doubt as they have.

No one will enjoy peace and eternal assurance without first recognizing that the Word of God is true. God cannot lie. ***“Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.”*** (Proverbs 30:5). ***“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”*** (Matthew 24:35). ***“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”*** (Romans 10:17). God’s Word clearly states that your sin has been judged in Christ. The sin debt has been paid. Jesus wants you to live with Him. Your unbelief or doubt prevents you from enjoying the blessings of being a child of God, both now and in eternity.

We cannot overemphasize the importance of faith, and the role it plays in knowing and serving Christ. ***“...whatsoever is not of faith is sin.”*** (Romans 14:23). ***“...without faith it is impossible to please him:”*** (Hebrews 11:6). Faith, or believing God, is the key in the matter of receiving our Saviour and having assurance forever. It is also the key to living for Christ. ***“...by grace are ye saved through faith;...”***

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(Ephesians 2:8), and “...***The just shall live by faith.***” (Romans 1:17). I will repeat: “Faith is believing God.” Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness (Romans 4:3). To believe God, we must first learn what He says.

Because so much is being said about dealing with doubt, I think it is important that we consider again the definition of doubt. It is defined in the dictionary as “to waver or fluctuate in opinion, to be in suspense, to be in uncertainty, to fear, to suspect, to distrust, to withhold confidence from; a fluctuation of mind respecting truth or priority, arising from defect of knowledge or evidence; uncertainty of condition, suspicion, fear, lack of (conviction, truth, confidence); an unsettled point or matter, not settled in opinion, not confident.”

It is certainly unnecessary for a person to live, in a state of fear, suspicion, and uncertainty about his eternal destiny, daily service, and provision. We have the completed, revealed Word of God. Mankind has been redeemed. The sin debt has been paid. It is carefully described in the Word of God. Reconciliation has been made for all men. (II Corinthians 5:19). It is not a future process. The Word of God is sufficient evidence.

God has revealed man's condition to us in His Word. At man's best, he is without hope. “***For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.***” (James 2:10). All of our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. “***But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.***” (Isaiah 64:6). Our righteousness is described in Philippians 3:8 as being no better than dung. However, man continues to

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rely on what he has said, done, or hopes to do in order to gain favor with God. Christ has made peace with God for us. God is satisfied. It is ignorance or unbelief that causes fear and uncertainty (doubt).

God's plan of redemption, in the person of Jesus Christ, is clear and absolute. The method of appropriating God's forgiveness to the sinful, condemned individual is by grace through faith. Man does not deserve forgiveness; neither can he earn it. It is offered to us by grace (undeserved favor), because of Christ and His sacrificial death. Christ took our sin upon Himself. "***Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.***" (I Peter 2:24). He was judged by an angry God. He suffered in our place. He died for our sin. He made peace for us. All things that pertain unto life and godliness are ours through the knowledge of Him (II Peter 1:2-4). "***...the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;... .***" (Ephesians 1:7).

Several years ago we had a young man attending our Mission Conference who actually believed it was healthy to doubt. He had been influenced by a book entitled *In Two Minds (The Dilemma of Doubt and How to Dissolve It.)*. He was also strongly influenced by his lack of knowledge concerning God's positive and clear redemption of mankind. When he was confronted with the absolute and simple Gospel, he became extremely irritated, and insisted on others being as ignorant as he. He sent to me the book *In Two Minds*. I read the book with interest and disgust. Human reasoning was evident. It was one of the most ridiculous books that I have ever bothered to read. The author did not understand the authority of the Scriptures and the positive revelation of God,

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and His provision for mankind. He reasoned from the viewpoint that there are no absolutes. He was wrong. The Bible is absolute.

There are so many in the world today who have been taught that doubt is normal and that everyone is a victim concerning personal salvation of the soul. They have been deceived, and their minds corrupted from the simplicity that is

in Christ. ***“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”*** (II Corinthians 11:3). Peace with God has been made (for you). The wrath of God has been appeased and the Lord receives sinful man (even you). Your Substitute and your Saviour has kept the Law for you. He took your place in the judgment of sin. You can take His place in God’s family. Believe and then you can rejoice in His benefits.

The Word of God is true. ***“Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.”*** 6 ***“Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.”*** (Proverbs 30:5,6). ***“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”*** (Matthew 24:35). The Apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote to the church at Thessalonica and commended them for receiving the Word of God, as ***“...when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.”*** (I Thessalonians 2:13). They knew that the Word was divinely given. It offered eternal instruction and comfort.

We could learn a lesson from Mark 7:6-13 that could help us to understand why people doubt so much. They have been programmed to **not believe** the authority of the Word of



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God. Confidence in the Word of God has been eroded by the many translations that are the work of men for personal gain. Instead of getting instructions from the Word of God, people have accepted man's traditions. It is not hard to find people who will honor the Lord with their lips, but whose hearts are far from the Lord. This is evidenced in our bookstores. Many various translations are placed alongside the Word of God (the old King James Bible) that are only commandments of men written for personal gain. When these people are confronted with the truth, they lay aside the commandment of God (the Word of God, old King James Version), and hold to their traditions of men (various translations written and published for profit - copyrighted).

When some few people dare to insist on the identification of the Word of God, it is not unusual for church leaders to reject the commandment of God (old king James Version - without copyright) that they may keep their own traditions (translations). As a result, the subconscious mind of the general population sees the Bible as the work of man, and not the divinely inspired, pure Word of God. Such influence makes the Word of God of none effect. When it is read or heard, respect and reverence are missing. ***"...This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me."*** 7 ***"Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."*** 8 ***"For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do."*** 9 ***"And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition."*** 13 ***"Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye."*** (Mark 7:6-9; 13).

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It is essential to believe the Bible to be the Word of God in order to be delivered from the damnation of doubt and uncertainty. We have a revealed Word of God that is pure and holy. It tells us of our sinful, hell-deserving condition and God's provision in Christ. When it is heard and believed, godly results are enjoyed. Christ is the Saviour of all men (I Timothy 4:10; John 3:17). Only those who believe will enjoy the benefits. Doubters who refuse to believe are damned.

The Bible records a number of testimonies of men who knew where they stood with God. ***"For I know that my redeemer liveth,"*** (Job 19:25). Paul asserted that ***"...for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."*** (II Timothy 1:12). ***"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."*** 23 ***"For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:"*** (Philippians 1:21,23). The Apostle Paul was not living in doubt concerning his standing with Christ and his eternal destiny. The same is true of the Apostle John who wrote, ***"...but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."*** (I John 3:2).

These men knew that God's provision for sin was Christ. Before the foundation of the world, God purposed to judge sin in the promised Messiah, our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Jesus said, ***"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad."*** (John 8:56).

As we hear and heed the Word of God, which declares the substitutionary work of Christ, we can be delivered from doubt. The Apostle Paul wrote the following to the church in Corinth: ***"Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:"*** (II Corinthians 5:6). This confidence is ours through

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the witness of the Spirit concerning the inspired Word of God relative to Christ taking our place in judgment. The Holy Spirit is the Author of the Word of God. He instructs and convicts unbelievers. He lives within the believer. ***“Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.”*** 6 ***“Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:”*** (II Corinthians 5:5-6). A person must be convicted, or convinced, of the substitutionary work of Christ before he can trust Christ as Saviour.

The person who doubts the inspiration of the Scriptures is damned. The Word of God is essential for saving faith. To deny or doubt the sinful and lost condition of mankind is to be damned. Christ came to this earth in human form (God in the flesh) to suffer the judgment of God for all sin. He took our place in judgment. Sinners can take his place in the family of God. It is by faith, or believing God. Those who doubt are damned.

Let us consider an important question: How can a person be absolutely confident concerning his or her spiritual standing with a holy, righteous God? To help remove doubt, let us consider the reason that a person is lost. We will find an answer that is easy to understand in John 16:8,9 and 3:18. ***“And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:”*** 9 ***“Of sin, because they believe not on me;”*** 18 ***“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”*** It is obvious that a person is lost because he has not believed (not because he is not believing).

There is something that a person can believe that

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removes condemnation and settles forever his eternal destiny with Christ. That something is to believe the record that God has given of His Son. That record is found in concise words in II Corinthians 5:19: ***“To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.”*** Sin has been judged. The sinner’s record has been cleared. The wrath of God has been appeased. God

accepts sinners because of Christ. It is wicked people who doubt God or seek after signs. It is believers who believe God and are willing to let God take them to Heaven because of what Christ has done for them.

It is important to weigh carefully the plans that are available to help a person to believe the right things. Most of them are wrong. Among such plans are praying through, holding out to the end, asking Jesus into your heart, being baptized, speaking in tongues, or simply doing the best that you can. It is not what we can do, but what Jesus has done, that causes or allows God to receive sinful men. He purchased our redemption. He paid our sin debt. We are forgiven by God and enjoy it by faith. He that doubteth is damned.

It has been said that a person cannot keep a bird from flying over his head, but he can prevent him from building a nest in his hair. To have negative thoughts in times of stress relative to our eternal destiny is not to be considered as doubt. Doubt about salvation is when we ask ourselves the question, “Am I truly going to Heaven?” and are unable to give a positive, absolute “Yes.” Since salvation, or the privilege of being in God’s family, is not something we can earn, but is given to us as a gift, we can know for certain that it is ours. We do not have to wonder when we have worked enough, or

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believed enough. Peace has already been made. Our account has already been cleared. Our sin has been put on Jesus, and He was judged for each and every person until God was satisfied. He placed us in a right standing with God. Believe and enjoy it. Doubt and be damned.

When a person properly believes, he has the eternal witness within. The truth of redemption, as recorded in the pages of the Bible, finds its lodging place and witness in the heart of the true believer. ***“He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.”*** (I John 5:10). God hath reconciled sinful man to Himself and emphatically declares it to be so. ***“And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;”*** 19 ***“To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;...”*** (II Corinthians 5:18:19).

Man's reconciliation is a completed process as far as God is concerned. It is our business to hear it (over and over) until we believe, and then tell it to others until they believe. It is not what they say or do, but what they believe. We must tell them right (Gospel). ***“He that believeth on him is not condemned:”*** (John 3:18). ***“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:”*** (Romans 5:1).

As long as an individual withholds his confidence from the truth of redemption, he is an unbeliever. He lives in doubt, which is fear, suspicion, and distrust. It is essential that reconciliation and Bible redemption be understood and believed to the point that the individual is not unsettled in opinion relative to God's finished work at Calvary, and the

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individual's eternal destiny. Sin brings death. Christ died for us, or died in our place. His provision leaves us in good standing. He that believeth enjoys peace. He that doubteth is damned.

We do not have to live in fear or withhold confidence from the established account of God judging Christ in our stead. He judged Christ until the judgment was complete.

***“He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied:”*** (Isaiah 53:11). ***“Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him;”*** (Isaiah 53:10) ***“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”*** (Isaiah 53:5). The evidence (Word of God) is sufficient. It is not an unsettled point. Redemption is complete. ***“He that believeth on him is not condemned:”*** (John 3:18).

He Who was without sin was made sin for us, ***“...that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”*** (II Corinthians 5:21). He Who was rich was made poor, that we might be made rich through His poverty (II Corinthians 8:9). The Just suffered for the unjust that He might bring us to God (I Peter 3:18). Though we stand guilty before almighty God in the matter of sinning, God says, “Fear not, for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jesus’ sake.” (as David said to Mephibosheth in II Samuel 9). Jesus was faithful. We enjoy the benefits. God said it. That settles it. He that believeth has life, peace, and joy. He that doubteth is damned.

We, as sinners, are accepted in the Beloved (Ephesians 1:5), made nigh by the blood, and are welcome in Heaven. As long as we live in a state of suspicion, suspense, and fear; or are unsettled in opinion, we have not believed the Word of God. We are guilty sinners declared righteous through the

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substitutionary work of Christ. Our faith is accepted as a token. That faith must be in the blood of Christ alone, and not accompanied by some self-effort added to what Jesus has done.

***“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”*** (Romans 4:5). He that insists on working to make things right with God is doubting that Christ has made peace with God for him. He that doubteth is damned.

The sin and rebellion of mankind kindled the wrath of God against us. That wrath was appeased when He judged Christ for every sin of all mankind throughout the human race. Jesus bore our sin in His own body (I Peter 2:24).. The “...***Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.***” (Isaiah 53:6). He judged Christ in our stead. That judgment is complete, and God extends to us total forgiveness because all our sins have been judged. Sin is not ignored, but has been judged. Believe God and go to Heaven. Continue in an unsettled state or opinion and go to Hell. The Word is true. Your sin has been judged in Christ. Heaven’s door is open to you.

The evidence is sufficient. Knowledge of redemption is available. It is pictured and described in the Old Testament. It was carried out in the New Testament. It was recorded for our benefit. ***“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”*** (Romans 10:17). When we hear enough, our minds will rest in the promise and declaration of the Scriptures. Instead of trying to believe, we will find ourselves simply hearing God say what Christ has done for us and rejoice. Our hearts will then express an attitude of thanksgiving and joy for what Jesus has done. ***“He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”*** (John 7:38),

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When a sinner sees himself lost and understands that Christ has paid for every sin that he has committed, is committing, or ever shall commit, he will be able to enjoy seeing Christ as his Saviour, Redeemer, and Hope. Faith lays hold on the Word of God, and rests in the completed work of Jesus Christ. Doubt withholds confidence from the person and leaves him in a state of uncertainty. Doubt usually stems from such questions as, "Have I done the right thing, or said, believed, or changed enough?" God receives sinners because of what Christ has done.

Our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, was innocent of any sin. All mankind is guilty. Christ was made sin for us. He redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, judged Jesus Christ, God the Son, completely for all sin. Every sin was judged individually in the body of Jesus Christ. The sacrifice was sufficient. The wrath of God was appeased. Peace was made with God for all mankind. The blood of Christ is on the mercy seat. The wrath of God was removed by the sacrificial death of Christ, yet men are seeking peace with God when it has already been made for us by Christ.

It is not the prayer of a weeping sinner, nor the changed life of a repentant one, but the stripes and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ that satisfies the wrath of God. God accepts sinners through the substitutionary work of Jesus Christ. That acceptance is complete and readily available, as described in Philemon 17: "***If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself.***" Though Paul is writing to Philemon in behalf of Onesimus, the truth brought out is that Jesus says to the Father in behalf of the sinner, "If we have fellowship, if Thou count Me a Partner, Father, I want You to receive the sinner as readily as You would receive Me." What



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a beautiful picture, clearly stated, that should cause the hearts of doubting and unbelieving sinners to look at Calvary and rest in the Person and finished work of Christ. The evidence is sufficient. Doubt is unnecessary. He that believeth can rejoice in the finished work of Christ and God's acceptance of the sinner. He that doubteth is damned.

Millions who are striving for assurance will find the answer in the Word of God. It will not come from dedication, surrender, or insistence on the part of the seeker. It will come from hearing God declare a sinner made right by and through the Person and work of Jesus Christ. He is our Saviour. He is our Substitute. He is our Hope. He is our Way. The work is complete. God accepts you as you are because of Christ and His payment for your sin.

Most doubters today have accepted the vague and humanistic teaching that there is nothing better than doubting. Though we have mentioned this previously, it is important to understand that you do not have to go through this life doubting your position before God. Because we are sinners and will continue sinning as long as we are in this flesh, we can never make ourselves right. We are accepted in the Beloved because Christ paid our sin debt. We are made nigh by the blood because His sacrifice was sufficient. God is satisfied. It is the doubting unbeliever that lives in a state of suspicion and frustration. Even the sin of doubt has been judged on Calvary. Man has been made right. He refuses to enjoy it by faith, though God's Word states it's so.

The very best that we have to offer to God is no better than filthy rags. There are those who say that once we are saved, we do not continue to practice sin. That creates real confusion in the mind of an individual who truly wants to be rid of the influence of sin. One who says that believers do not

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habitually practice sin is a liar (Romans 3:4), and does not understand the truth of sinful man. Not one of us loves the Lord with all of our heart (except through our Substitute and Saviour, Jesus Christ). Not one of us loves our neighbor as ourselves. Not one of us prays without ceasing. Not one of us gives thanks in all things. Not one of us goes a day without some form of coveting. Not one of us stops having bad thoughts.

We are sinful and hell deserving every day of our lives, yet Christ paid for all of our sins. God receives us because the innocent was made guilty and judged for our sin, that we who are guilty might be declared innocent through Him. It is Christ that satisfied God. We are accepted in His behalf, though we sin every day. Those who deny this do despite to the Spirit of grace (Hebrews 10:29). When we sin willfully or ignorantly, our sin has been dealt with in Christ. Christ took our judgment and shed His blood that God might receive sinful, sinning believers. We need no other (or more) sacrifice (Hebrews 10:26). Christ is sufficient.

It is important that we settle for nothing less than assurance forever. We will look at several verses to challenge us in this area. ***“And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.”*** (Isaiah 32:17). This would be impossible if we had to quit sinning to get to Heaven. Because we are sinners, we need a Saviour, and Christ is our Saviour. He has paid for every sin that anyone will ever commit. That payment was His lifeblood. It is a joy to know that God enjoys accepting us in behalf of His Son. Christ gets the glory. Sinners enjoy the benefits.

The next passage is found in I Thessalonians 1:2-5. ***“We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention***

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*of you in our prayers;” 3 “Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;” 4 “Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.” 5 “For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.”* The Apostle Paul wanted the believers at Thessalonica to understand God’s ability and willingness to give much assurance. The assurance comes from God’s Word. God said it. That settles it. Those who refuse to believe it are damned.

The third passage deals with full assurance that is ours forever. Not only can a hell-deserving sinner be saved, but he can enjoy the comfort of full assurance through faith in the finished work of Christ. *“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,” 20 “By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;” 21 “And having an high priest over the house of God;” 22 “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”* (Hebrews 10:19-22). We can have this assurance because Christ has been judged for our sin. God is satisfied with that judgment. When the doubter becomes satisfied with Christ and a redemption that is complete, he can and will enjoy full assurance forever. Those who insist on doubt should remember that doubters are damned.

Colossians is the setting for the next passage. It is found in the first few verses of Chapter 2. *“For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at*

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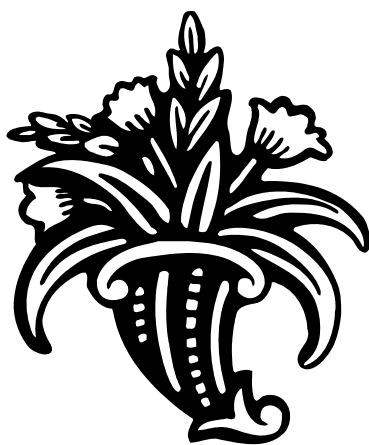
*Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;*” 2 “*That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding,...* .” Christ has paid the sin debt. He has suffered the judgment of the wrathful hand of God for your sin. God’s wrath has been appeased. The door of Heaven is open to you. God welcomes sinners. Only those who believe will go in. There is a full assurance of understanding that God receives us because of our Substitute and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Through the knowledge of Him, we can enjoy this assurance.

We have all sinned. “...*There is none righteous, no, not one:... .*” “...*we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;... .*” “...*all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;... .*” “*For the wages of sin is death;... .*” “*The soul that sinneth, it shall die.... .*” We deserve hell, yet “...*God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,...*”, Jesus Christ. He bore our sin in His own body. He Who was without sin was treated like a sinner so that we who do habitually sin could be treated as if we did not sin. Redemption is understandable. It is reasonable. It is ours. Believe and enjoy eternal joy and blessings with Christ forever.

It is my prayer that if you have been plagued with doubt, you will look to God’s Word, which invites you, a condemned, hell-deserving sinner, to live with Him for all eternity. It is not because of your repentant attitude or seeking disposition. It is because Christ has paid for every sin that you have committed. Because of Him, God extends to you a personal invitation to enjoy full and free forgiveness. You are DAMNED if you DOUBT. You are saved forever by simply believing God’s record, and receiving the truth of

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redemption for yourself. Thank God for Jesus' provision, and spend your life sharing the truth with others. When we face the Lord on that glorious day, we will wish that we had done more.



# Then Shall We Know

**T**he will of God concerning the way of salvation and Christian service is available to everyone. There are many questions concerning both the subject of being saved and the place of service.

There are those who believe that no one can actually know. Others believe that it is possible to know, but that it is not important. Then there are those who believe it is essential to know in order to be saved or to be in the will of God.

The Lord instructed the children of Israel in Hosea 6:3 with the following words: “***Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD:...***” Mark 4:24 says we learn, “***...and unto you that hear shall more be given.***” It is important to have a seeking spirit or a learning attitude. The Holy Spirit is ready and able to give us the answers. “***And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.***” (John 8:32). Jesus taught His disciples concerning the coming Comforter, or Holy Ghost: “***...he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.***” (John 14:26). It is God’s will that everyone be

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saved and serve faithfully. It is the Holy Spirit's responsibility to teach. "***But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.***" 12 "***Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.***" (I Corinthians 2:10,12).

Many questions gender strife. Answers encourage stability, strength, faith, and courage. We are told in Proverbs 8:17, "***...and those that seek me early shall find me.***" We can know the Lord if we truly care, as we see in Deuteronomy 4:29, "***...thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.***" Because a person has some truth does not mean that he knows the Lord. We are promised in the text, "***Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD:***" (Hosea 6:3).

We have an example in the life of Samuel. The child ministered unto the Lord. He was involved in religious service (I Samuel 3:1). Yet he did not know the Lord (I Samuel 3:7). The Lord was not yet revealed unto him. We learn in I Samuel 3:4-6 that the Lord called Samuel. Again in verse 6, the Lord called him. In verse 7, the Lord called him again a third time.

Even then Samuel did not know the Lord. The same situation is not uncommon to those who are unwilling to stay in the Scriptures or to continue hearing the preaching of God's Word. They refuse to follow on. The Lord promises that if we do follow on, then shall we know.

There are many predominant questions today, but many people never really bother to learn the answers. One of them is: "Is Bible salvation for everyone?" The answer is evident in the Scriptures. From II Peter 3:9, we learn, "***The***



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***Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.***

Again in I Timothy 2:4-6, we learn that there is one God and one Mediator Who gave Himself a ransom for all. God so loved the world that He gave His, only begotten Son. He sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but the world through Him might be saved (John 3:17).

The answer is clearly given in the Scriptures, but it is controversial in many circles today. Another question we might consider is, (2.) Are saved people supposed to be involved in self-examination? That answer is given in II Corinthians 13:5. We are to not only examine ourselves, but to prove ourselves. When the question arises, "Am I really saved?" the answer should be a positive "Yes! Christ died for my sin. I have trusted Him as my Saviour. It is Him and His work in which I am trusting to take me to Heaven."

Another question might be, (3.) Do saved people sin? That answer is clearly given in I John 1:8,10: ***"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."*** 10 ***"If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."*** However, many declare themselves to be living without sin. In I John 3:9, we are told that he that is born of God does not commit sin. I John 5:8 teaches that the Christian does sin. That is not a conflict or contradiction.

The new man, Christ in you, does not sin. None of the sin in the lives of Christians is committed by the inner, or new man. We have some explanation of that in Romans 7:15-24. Some believe that it means that a Christian does not practice sin. For one to not practice sin, he would have to pray

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without ceasing, be thankful for all things, love his neighbor as himself, not covet, etc.

Another question we might ask is, (4.) Can a saved person get lost again? It has been and is being propagated that we get people saved, then teach them that they are eternally saved. To do so, we must teach that salvation is the act of man. We teach them that they get saved by saying some prayer. That, of course, is not Bible salvation. A person is saved when he trusts Christ and His finished work as his hope, and only hope, of Heaven. ***“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”***(John 5:24).

As we follow on to know Christ, then shall we know. In studying the condition of mankind we learn that we have all sinned. ***“...There is none righteous, no, not one:... .”*** (Romans 3:10). ***“...Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”*** (John 3:3). The need is universal, as well a personal.

Then shall we know Christ when we learn of and receive the provisions made by Christ. In II Corinthians 5:19, we learn that Christ has reconciled the world to Himself. As a result of Christ and His death on the cross, God does not charge man's sin to him. All sin has been charged to Christ, and sufficiently judged by God.

Jesus died for the sins of the entire world. He is the only mediator between God and man. He gave Himself a ransom for all (I Timothy 2:4-6).

Then shall we know when we make the proper appropriation of the provision of Christ. The sin debt has been paid. The wrath of God has been appeased. Forgiveness

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is received by faith. ***“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:”*** (Romans 5:1). ***“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”*** (John 3:18).

Christ’s righteousness is imputed to us when we believe. The man who is undecided is one who is not believing. The man who is uncertain is demonstrating a lack of faith in God’s declaration, promise, and provision.

Then shall we know as we recognize Bible salvation as a know-so salvation. It is not only something we can know, but something we must know. God’s record is complete. God’s record is positive concerning Christ dying for our sin. The wrath of God has been appeased through the suffering of Christ. When we believe the record that God has given of His Son, we have the witness in ourselves (I John 5:10). Bible salvation is a know-so salvation.

Then shall we know as we see Bible salvation as eternal. Man is not lost because he is sinning. He is lost because he has not believed the record. Man is lost because he has not believed on Christ as Saviour (John 16:9). He is lost because he has not believed the record that God has given of His Son Jesus Christ (I John 5:10).

In Ephesians 1:13, we learn the order of salvation. When a person hears the Gospel, the Word of Truth relative to sin, salvation, and the Saviour, and truly believes, he is sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise.

As taught in Hosea, ***“Then shall we know...”*** if we follow on to know the Lord.

The Samaritan woman at the well in John, chapter 4 verse 9, recognized Jesus as a Jew. That was not sufficient to

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be saved. She further recognized Him as a prophet. (4:19)  
Even that additional information was not enough to be saved. She finally recognized Him as her Messiah, as her Saviour, and was saved. She followed on to learn and to know the truth of Christ.

***“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”*** (Romans 10:17). ***“But without faith it is impossible to please him.”*** (Hebrews 11:6). That is, God.

It is important to hear, to understand, and to believe in order to be saved. Man has sinned. God has judged Christ on Calvary for our sin. The sin debt is paid. The door to Heaven is open. God bids sinners to come. Christ’s blood has settled the account. ***“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:”*** (Romans 5:1). With Paul, we can say, ***“...I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”*** (II Timothy 1:12). ***“He that hath the Son hath life;...”*** (I John 5:12). If you are not sure, follow on, learn the truth and ***“Then shall we know...”!!***

# Darkness And Not Light

**I**n this age of extensive academic and technical achievement our society is plagued by deception and profound ignorance of true moral values. This growing blight is spread by those who ignore Divine revelation, and exalt human reasoning.

The general public demonstrates little fear of God, and is making little preparation to face Him. The Bible says, “***Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness.***” 10 “***We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noonday as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men.***” (Isaiah 59:9,10).

The basis for our thinking for this message is found in the following verses: Amos 5:18 and Isaiah 3:24. “***Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! to what end is it for you? the day of the LORD is darkness, and not light.***” (Amos 5:18). “***And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a***

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*stomacher a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty.*” (Isaiah 3:24).

It is evident in these verses that the people expected one thing, but were promised another. They had misjudged. Their analysis of the situation was false, and their thoughts were misguided.

Religious activity is outlined in Titus 1:16. ***“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.”*** They claim to know the Lord. They are involved in good works. Their good works are described as being reprobate acts. It is because they expected their good works to commend them to the Lord apart from the redeeming work of Jesus Christ.

Their activities are further described in detail in Amos 5:21-23. ***“I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies.”*** 22 ***“Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts.”*** 23 ***“Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.”*** We readily see that they were involved in religious worship which was not acceptable to the Lord.

The religious activity of these people is also described in Isaiah 1:15. The multitude of their actions was performing a duty and not that of worshiping the Lord. They felt contented and deserving as they carried out systemic responsibilities. They were offering their best and doing it with consistency. The Lord defined it as iniquity. He refused to hear and consider their prayers, though many were being offered.

Their “darkness instead of light” is further described in

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Romans 10:2,3. ***“For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.”*** <sup>3</sup> ***“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”***

These verses expose a blindness in the midst of much action. The people were busy doing what they thought to be right. While shunning those things considered to be evil, they were still ignorant of God’s righteousness. They were finding contentment in staying busy offering their sacrifices, praying their prayers, and assisting others, with little regard to their eternal destiny. They were blindly groping in the dark in the noon day, or when the lights were on. They were expecting beauty but were receiving burning. While looking for light, they were experiencing darkness. Their spiritual eyes were blinded concerning their eternal destiny.

***“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:”*** <sup>4</sup> ***“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”*** (II Corinthians 4:3,4). The god of this world is very effective as he transforms himself into an angel of light. ***“And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.”*** (II Corinthians 11:14). He appears as a wolf in sheep’s clothing (Matthew 7:15). He encourages people to be involved in religious activity.

***“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?”*** (Matthew 7:22). Their judgment is declared in the next verse. ***“And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”*** (Matthew 7:23).

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Judgment is further described and declared in Luke 13:25-27. ***“When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are:”*** 26 ***“Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.”*** 27 ***“But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.”***

Let us now consider the cause of “...***darkness, and not light.***” or “...***burning instead of beauty.***” People face their circumstances as they are blinded by the god of this world. We want to emphasize that they are blinded by the god of this world. Satan is very effective in blinding people concerning the value of good works to get one to Heaven. They are sacrificing and praying. They are consistent in their religious activity, and feel contentment in doing such things. They do not believe that God will send them to hell.

People are not only blinded concerning the value of their good works, but also concerning the true condition of mankind. We are clearly taught that ***“There is none righteous, no, not one:”*** and ***“All we like sheep have gone astray;... .”*** We have turned every one to his own way. Because of the true condition of man, Jesus said, ***“...Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”*** (John 3:3). Good people need to be born again.

Notice that “...***darkness, and not light.***” or “...***burning instead of beauty.***” is true as people go about in religious activity. This is seen in Isaiah, chapter 1, as they offered the fat of fed beasts. They were singing their songs and going about to establish their own righteousness. Again,



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we see their contentment in doing good works, not recognizing that God describes these good works as iniquity. Only in Jesus Christ are good works accepted. “...**but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.**” (Titus 1:15). Jesus said, “...**without me ye can do nothing.**” (John 15:5). “**He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.**” (I John 5:12).

The people faced “...**darkness, and not light.**” and “...**burning instead of beauty.**” as they ignored their eternal fate. This is seen or described in Romans 1:21-22: “**Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.**” 22 “**Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,...**” They did not believe that God would send them to hell. They considered certain requirements of the law, but ignored the principle of grace.

The condition of the people discussed in the many verses that we have considered should be a challenge for us to examine ourselves carefully. “**Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?**” (II Corinthians 13:5). We should make our calling and election sure. If we examine ourselves, or judge ourselves, we should not be judged: I Corinthians 11:31 “**For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.**”

The righteousness of God is Jesus Christ and His ministry. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He is the only Mediator between God and men. No amount of good works will commend us to God. It is our faith, and faith alone, in Christ and His shed blood, that merits God’s

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approval.

As we examine our good works, let us join with the Apostle Paul as described in Philippians 3:7-9. “***But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.***”<sup>8</sup> “***Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,***”<sup>9</sup> “***And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:...***”

The Apostle Paul recognized that his good works were only as dung, and declared them as such and embraced and received the truth of Jesus Christ and His shed blood. This truth is also seen in Romans 3:21-22. “***But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;***”<sup>22</sup> “***Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:***”

God’s righteousness is witnessed by the law and the prophets, or the Old Testament. Man has been, and shall be, saved by faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. “***Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins...***” (Romans 3:25)

You will not have to experience “***...darkness, and not light.***” or “***...burning instead of beauty.***” if you will renounce any hope in good works, and trust the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour. He is your only hope to go to Heaven. I encourage you, today, to accept Him as your Saviour.

Recognize that Jesus Christ Who was just, was made

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unjust. He, Who was without sin, was made sin for you, that you might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Receive Him today, and share Him with others as you enjoy beauty instead of burning, and light instead of darkness. The lost world needs your help. Take advantage of the opportunity to tell others.



# Corrupted Minds

**T**he mind of an individual is a delicate part that should be protected. A person with a deranged mind is pathetic. This type of mind can come about because of the lack of maturity, or a mental breakdown. Such an individual is unable to accept and carry out responsibility as a normal, organized, mentally alert person, and must be given special attention.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, “...*I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtle, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*” (II Corinthians 11:3). According to that verse, the enemy of mankind, Satan, has the ability and desire to deceive and beguile. He is a master in his work that results in the deranging of the minds of people relative to the truth of the Gospel. His work leads to a corrupted mind. One with a corrupted mind cannot be trusted in making sane decisions relative to truth.

Careless living can cause a person to digress mentally. It is important to treasure knowledge concerning the truth. “*And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth,*

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*that they might be saved.”* 11 *“And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:”* 12 *“That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”* Thessalonians 2:10-12). God sends strong delusions to the individual that does not love the truth of how to be saved. The Creator of the mind, God Himself, shorts out the mental circuits. This delusion, or mental short circuit, causes the individual to believe a lie instead of the truth. It ultimately leads a person to be damned forever. Ignoring the Word of God is dangerous and leads to a corrupt mind.

In God’s creation, He put within every individual a conscience that allows sinful man to receive communication from a Holy God. The conscience bears witness with the individual by excusing or accusing. *“Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;”* (Romans 2:15). According to John 1:9, God lights every man that comes into the world. That, no doubt, has some reference to the conscience, or spirit, that is part of God’s creation in man.

When man ignores his conscience, or disregards the light that God has given, the individual becomes unthankful. An unthankful person becomes bitter, arrogant, and critical. *“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”* 22 *“Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,”* (Romans 1:21,22). We could say that an unthankful person is basically a fool, and will change toward having a corrupted mind.

What does it mean to have the “heart darkened”? God

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does something to the mind. Again, we can see the mental circuits shorting out as “...***their foolish heart was darkened.***” The unbeliever who professes to be wise is a fool. The digression is further described in the first chapter of Romans. The corrupted mind changes the glory of the incorruptible God from God to man, to birds, to four-footed beasts, and finally to creeping things (Romans 1:23). When man ceases to recognize God as God, man becomes his own god at which time he may choose to worship any thing to appease his conscience. As God releases the individual to do his thing, man changes the truth of God into a lie, and worships the creature more than the Creator (verse 25).

The next downward step is described in verse 26. God gives the individual over to vile affections and perversions. Homosexuality is the result. It all started when man did not respect God as God. He refused to be thankful. “***For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:***” 27 “***And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.***” (Romans 1:26,27). The Creator Who is being ignored continues to short circuit the brain circuits which will result in corrupted minds.

The delusion of the mind, or its corruption, is finalized in verse 28. “***And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;***” (Romans 1:28). This digression is in direct proportion to one’s unwillingness to retain God in their knowledge. God is, and will always be, God. When man fails to recognize God as

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Creator, he exalts himself as the one capable of making decisions and the one in authority.

Man was created for God's glory. He was created in the image of God, and is commissioned and allowed to subdue the earth. Man can bring the earth into subjection for his own use, but must always honor the Lord. When he fails to do so, it will result in a deceived, corrupted mind.

In Proverbs 1:23, God said He will make known His words to mankind as man turns to hear His instructions and reproof.

***"Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;"*** 25 ***"But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof:"*** 26 ***"I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;"*** (Proverbs 1:24-26). When man refuses to recognize God as God and ignores His counsel, he begins to experience a corrupted mind.

In man's corrupt condition, as he faces fear and distress, he calls out for help, but God may refuse to answer. ***"When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you."*** 28

***"Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:"*** (Proverbs 1:27:28).

When man is not interested in honoring the Lord, but only in getting out of a tight situation, his mind is shorted out and his thinking scrambled. ***"Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices."*** (Proverbs 1:31).

It is a dangerous thing to ignore or reject God's Word.

In the Old Testament, we find the same teaching: ***"Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink."*** 10 ***"For the LORD hath poured out***



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***upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.***” (Isaiah 29:9-10). The spirit of deep sleep was poured out by the Lord on the religious leaders. Their inability to understand was compared to that of a drunk. The problem was not strong drink, but corrupted minds.

It is important for us to be thankful and appreciative of God’s creation. We are a part of it, and should honor the Creator. We will each give an account. For one to ignore or reject the Lord is fatal.

The Lord gives to mankind a choice. Any person who serves the Lord must choose to do so. ***“See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil;”*** 19 ***“I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:”*** (Deuteronomy 30:15,19).

In every step and every day of our lives, we have set before us life and good, and death and evil. It is God’s will that we choose life. Those who do choose life not only enjoy spiritual blessings, but also their mind is protected. Their children are greatly advantaged by the decision of the parents.

It is important that we understand that we are created beings. God has taken the initiative so that each of us may know Him. He placed within each of us a conscience or spirit. It causes a tendency or desire to worship a supreme being. ***“That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”*** (John 1:9). ***“Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)”*** (Romans 2:15).

In creation, God has begun the process by which and

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through which man can know Him. The Word of God is necessary for the process to be completed. This is revealed in Hebrews 11:6 and Romans 10:17. ***“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”***<sup>17</sup> ***“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”***

Faith is necessary for one to please God. We receive faith by the Word of God. A person is also born again by the Word of God (I Peter 1:23). It is God’s will that no one perish or go to hell, but all come to repentance. ***“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”*** (II Peter 3:9).

We must understand that only the Creator can correct the short circuit in the human mind. To ignore the Creator is to reject any possibility of the mind being healed. Honoring the Lord not only helps to protect the mind, but also helps heal the mind.

One of Satan’s play houses is the mind of individuals. He has the power to blind the mind of an unbeliever. ***“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:”***<sup>4</sup> ***“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”*** (II Corinthians 4:3,4). His motive is clear. He blinds the individual lest he should know the truth and trust Christ and be born into the family of God.

The results of a blinded or deceived mind is seen in Matthew 7:21,22. ***“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that***

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*doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”* 22 *“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?”* These people were deceived and actually thought they were going to Heaven. They were busy in religious activity. This activity involved preaching, casting out devils, and many wonderful works.

Jesus described their end in verse 23. *“And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”* Why is their activity called iniquity? They were preaching, casting out devils, and busy helping others. The reason is simple. They thought those good works were helping them to be made right with God. Christ makes us right. Works can not do what has already been done.

This truth is also taught in Isaiah, chapter one. The people were busy offering multitudes of sacrifices. They were offering to the Lord the fat of fed beasts. They were busy in His courts. God’s reply was: *“To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.”* 12 *“When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?”* 13 *“Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.”* (Isaiah 1:11-13, emphasis added). Their sacrifices, solemn meetings, and other religious activities are called iniquity. Their minds were corrupted.

They may have been sincere, but they were wrong. Their confidence was in their service and not in the Lord and

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His grace. Because of their lack of knowledge, they assumed God was satisfied with them and what they were doing. This, no doubt, is true in most of the modern day religious activity. As we consider this subject, I am reminded of a question once asked, “Do you love the Lord more than you love serving the Lord?” It is easy to get so involved in work that we forget the Lord Himself.

Ignorance can lead to corrupted minds or superstition. This is revealed in Romans 10:2,3, “*For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.*” 3 “*For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*” They were not seeking God’s righteousness because they assumed God was accepting their righteousness or good works. God’s righteousness is Christ and His work. Man’s righteousness is that which he does in accordance to the Law.

These people were ignorant of Christ and His simple, but positive, redemptive plan. They were busy with their religious activity expecting the end results to be Heaven. They were attempting to keep the Law and were busy doing right, but were blinded to the fact that God called this iniquity. Their minds were corrupted.

The natural mind, or the unsaved person, is not capable of discerning the spiritual truth of redemption. God must reveal His truth by His Spirit. “*But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*” 10 “*But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.*” (I Corinthians 2:14,10).

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Man's unregenerate mind must be illuminated or enlightened by the Spirit of God. Remember, it is God Who created the human mind. He is able to give understanding to His creation. We need His help.

God's truth is revealed through holy men (II Peter 1:21) in order that we might know what God has to offer us through Christ. ***"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."*** (I Corinthians 2:12). He is ready and willing to reveal His Word to the receptive mind.

According to Isaiah 26:3, the Lord will protect the mind of a person who will honor and trust Him. ***"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."*** We say once again, that it is important that man, the creature, recognize God, the Creator. He loves us and has reconciled us unto Himself by Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 5:18).

According to Proverbs 20:7, the spirit of man is the candle of the Lord. It is God that lights the candle or enlightens our spirit. ***"The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly."*** (Proverbs 20:27). ***"For thou wilt light my candle: the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness."*** (Psalm 18:28). See yourself as the candle that needs to be lit. Only God can light your candle. Those who ignore the Lord will remain in the dark.

It is God's Word, empowered by God's Spirit, that gives light to the natural mind. ***"The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple."*** (Psalm 119:130). We are dependent upon Him, not only in our creation, but also in the maintaining or stabilizing of our

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faculties. To dishonor the Creator is to face destruction.

Peter said we are born again, not by corruptible seed, but incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever (I Peter 1:23). Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Hebrews 10:17). Without faith it is impossible to please the Lord (Hebrews 11:6). Man should love the Lord and seek to know Him and to honor Him. He is our Creator and Protector.

Scripture declares that mankind has been redeemed and is reconciled to God through Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 5:18-19). The sin debt is paid. The wrath of God has been appeased. Mankind has been set free from the penalty of his sin. The door of Heaven is open. God invites sinners to come because of the redemptive work of Christ. The work of Christ has made sinners fit for Heaven.

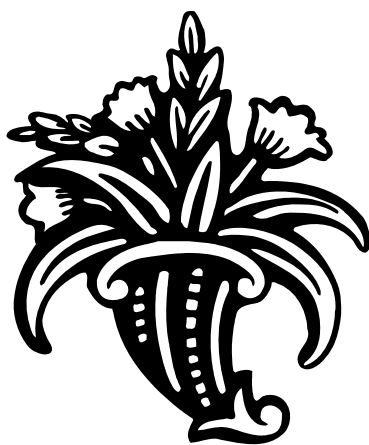
Unbelievers call God a liar. To prevent this, one must know the Word of God relative to the substitutionary work of Christ or His dying for man's sin. ***“He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.”*** (I John 5:10). God has judged Christ for our sin until the judgment was complete. He is satisfied (Isaiah 53:11). It pleased the Lord to bruise Christ (Isaiah 53:10), and with Christ's stripes, we are healed (Isaiah 53:5). God invites us to come and live with Him.

We learn a lesson from Philemon, verse 17, that we are as welcome in Heaven as Jesus Christ Himself. It is because the Just suffered for the unjust that a sinner can go to Heaven. The record is clear. The door of Heaven is open. You are welcome.

Do not be trapped in Satan's web. Accept God's invitation to live with Him. Christ paid the price. It is by faith

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(believing God) that we can know that Heaven is our eternal dwelling place. Your sin debt has been canceled. You have good standing with God because of Christ. God declares it! You believe it, and enjoy the eternal benefits.





# The Pain and Pleasure of Forgiveness

**T**he Bible commands us to forgive. Ephesians 4:32 says, “*And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.*” We have the ability and provisions to forgive in every situation. God has forgiven us for Christ’s sake. We can never be deserving of such pleasure and profit as to be forgiven. We have all sinned. Anyone who sins deserves Hell. Because of Calvary, we can enjoy forgiveness. Jesus Christ is the reason that we have this joy. Christ is also the reason that we forgive others. He died for their sins as well as our sin.

It is important to understand the definition of “forgiveness.” According to Noah Webster’s 1928 Dictionary, to forgive is “*to pardon; to treat the offender as not guilty.*” Forgiveness is to pardon the offender, to stop the coming blow. As we forgive a person, it requires action on our part. Many times, we will never experience true

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forgiveness until we have first thanked God for the difficulty caused by others. When God forgave us, it required action on His part. Words are cheap. To say that we forgive does not produce forgiveness. Real forgiveness changes our attitude. We need the Lord's help in changing our attitude.

Forgiveness is an important spiritual matter. The lack of forgiveness affects our health and that of others around us. We lose God's blessings and protection when we fail to forgive. Unforgiveness leads to bitterness and hatred. Hebrews 12:15 informs us, "***Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;... .***" When one becomes bitter and in a state of hatred that leads to the loss of health, friends, jobs, homes, and ministries. It also hinders God's protection and promises.

There are many institutions filled with emotional wrecks. Drugs are said to be the primary cause. Why do people turn to drugs? Could it be related to broken homes which result from the lack of forgiveness in the lives of family members and friends? We need to understand that failure to forgive destroys one's ability to reason with confidence. An unforgiving person cannot live a normal and productive life. The mind is in a state of confusion while trying to solve a problem that only God can solve.

Failure to forgive those who wrong us starts in us a serious mental, downward process. That process is described to us in Romans, chapter one. First, we cease to be thankful, then we begin to imagine all kinds of things. This leads to imaginations and confusion. We think people are laughing at or talking about us. Instead of giving thanks when someone wrongs us and letting the Lord deal with that person or persons, we become angry and bitter. "***Because that, when***

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*they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened* “ 22 *“Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,”* (Romans 1:21-22).

Lack of thanksgiving and a bitter spirit leads us to become our own god. We leave God out when we make our own decisions. *“Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:”* 25 *“Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.”* (Romans 1:24-25 ). We insist on making decisions without the leadership of the Lord. This, of course, gets us in serious trouble that grows worse and worse.

The person with a reprobate mind started the downward trend when he quit being thankful. He insisted on being his own authority without seeking the direction of God’s Word. *“And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;”* (Romans 1:28). In his mind, others are causing the problem. He never intended to go as low as this type of attitude takes him. Unthankfulness will always lead to bitterness and ultimately to a reprobate mind if not corrected. We cannot afford to carry a grudge. Christ has declared forgiveness (II Corinthians 5:19) to the person who does us wrong, and to us who receive the wrong. It would be foolish to destroy ourselves and others by harboring a cruel, selfish, unthankful attitude.

To help us to better understand, I want to share with you something that happened in my ministry several years ago. While studying for a sermon, I saw the need to use I Thessalonians 5:18. As I was about to write the Scripture

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reference down, the Lord impressed me not to do so. In my mind I questioned, “Why?” He impressed on me that I did not believe the verse. Immediately I replied in my thoughts, “I do believe all the Bible.” The verse says, “***In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.***” (I Thessalonians 5:18).

As I further questioned the Lord, He reminded me that I had never thanked Him for what happened to our daughter. I flushed with anger at the thought of what happened and said, “I am not very smart, but I know that I am not supposed to thank God for bad things.” God continued to impress I Thessalonians 5:18, “***In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.***” Again I argued, it did not make sense to consider thanking God for bad things. Suddenly, I realized that I was arguing with the Lord - with the Word of God. I was so ashamed of myself. I knew the Lord would not change. It was time for me to make a decision. Was I going to obey the Lord or follow my sincere traditional thinking?

In the manner of a small child, I laid my open Bible on my office chair opened to I Thessalonians 5:18, and dropped to my knees. At that point I read the verse out loud to the Lord, then I prayed, “Lord, I am not thankful. In fact, I am very angry with the people who were involved. You know my heart. I cannot fool you. I must be obedient and thank you for what happened to our daughter and showing me the need to give thanks.” Immediately the Lord ministered to my mind and heart. I was no longer angry. From that time forward I could minister in perfect peace to the people involved. Only the Lord can fix a person’s mind like he fixed mine. It is such a joy to learn how to forgive! We have a wonderful Saviour!

Forgiveness is essential for us to have a good prayer

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life. *“And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.”* 26 *“But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.”* (Mark 11:25-26). When we have “...*ought*...” or bitterness in our heart against another person, we fail to enjoy forgiveness for self and offer forgiveness to him. We blame the other person whom we say is responsible. It is important that we keep in mind that we are responsible for our own spirit. We are commanded to forgive and to do otherwise is sin. We must maintain an attitude of thanksgiving to protect our minds and influence.

The following is another example of forgiveness that a friend learned. It happened several years ago as I was visiting a friend who was near death with cancer. He lived in Rockville, Indiana. He was lying on a hospital bed in their living room. His wife and I were also in the living room talking about their situation and many other things. I asked her, “Have you thanked God for your husband’s cancer?”

She angrily replied, “No, and I will not. Do you realize that my husband is my brain? He has always made the decisions. I have enjoyed being a submissive wife and you suggest to me that I should thank God that my leader and brain are dying? No, I will not thank God.”

My reply was simple, but positive. “It is not me who wants you to thank God. It is God Himself. No doubt, you want to be obedient to Him. Therefore, you must thank Him if you want to have fellowship with Him. You have seen and heard what the Scriptures have to say about giving thanks for all things.”

She was very annoyed at my statement. The next morning she came into the living room where her husband and

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I were talking. She said, “I know what you were talking about last night.”

I replied, “What were we talking about? We talked about so many things, I am not sure to what you are referring.”

She said, “It is about thanking God for my husband’s condition. This morning I knelt beside my bed and thanked God. Before I could stand back to my feet, the Lord reminded me that it was through my husband’s cancer that our son and his wife are back together, two aunts were saved, and the family is closer together than ever. It is amazing what God does for us when we obey Him.”

Dear Reader, you could enjoy the same benefits if you obey.

There are examples of forgiveness recorded in God’s Word that can help us. As Jesus was being crucified by wicked people, he said, “**...Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do....**” (Luke 23:34a). The purpose of these wicked people was to hurt and destroy the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus could say, “**...Father, forgive them;...**” because He knew their sin debt was being paid by His obedience to become sin and endure the judgment of God’s wrath upon sin.

The woman taken in adultery experienced forgiveness. “**And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,**”<sup>4</sup> “**They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.**”<sup>11</sup> “**She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.**” (John 8:3,4,11).

The religious leaders did not bring the man who was involved in the adulterous act. Their attitude was not right. Because Jesus Christ paid for sin, He forgave the woman. We

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too can forgive and also enjoy being forgiven. It is essential to our mental and spiritual welfare.

Joseph experienced a horrible home life with his brothers. They hated him. ***“And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.”*** 5 ***“And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.”*** (Genesis 37:4,5). Later, they planned to kill him. ***“And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him.”*** 19 ***“And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh.”*** (Genesis 37:18,19). Instead of killing him, they sold him into slavery. When they returned home, they told their daddy, Jacob, that Joseph had been killed by wild animals. They had Joseph’s coat of many colours which they had dipped in blood as proof of their story. Years later they learned (as Jacob learned) that God had protected and promoted Joseph. He was second in command in the government of Egypt.

After Jacob died, the brothers expected Joseph to slay them. Joseph knew something that few people know. He knew how to forgive. He understood that the Lord overruled and turned the curse into a blessing. ***“And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants.”*** 19 ***“And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God?”*** 20 ***“But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.”*** 21 ***“Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.”*** (Genesis 50:18-21).

Joseph forgave his brothers because he understood

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God's program. God overruled and turned the plan of Joseph's brothers into something good for them and for Joseph. Instead of being bitter, he nourished his brothers who had done him so much wrong.

*"Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them."*  
(Genesis 50:21)

As we consider the importance of forgiving and the need or necessity of giving thanks, we will discuss another experience that occurred concerning a pastor and his wife. His wife came to my office and said, "I am going to kill my husband. He went to the doctor the other day and learned that he has a venereal disease due to his being unfaithful to me. The doctor told him that I must come to the office for treatment. I am on the way now to the doctor's office." She sobbed, "He will never sleep with me again and when I get home I am going to kill him!" She continued to sob.

After some discussion, I calmly replied, "Have you considered thanking God for this dilemma in which you find yourself involved?"

She angrily replied, "No, how ridiculous to suggest such a cruel thing! The very idea that you suggest I thank God for such a horrible thing!"

My simple reply was, "God commands us to thank Him for every thing. Is He ridiculous to command us to thank Him?"

"God is **never wrong** about any thing," she answered. She obediently thanked the Lord. She then went to the doctor for her appointment and went on with her marriage with the man she was going to kill. After giving thanks, she was able to forgive her husband. She made the right decision. It was no doubt very painful in the process of forgiving.



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There are many stories I could tell about people who refused to give thanks. They became very bitter while refusing the miracles that God had for them. It is certainly a miracle when God turns a tragic and bitter situation into a blessing and turns a cold, bitter heart into a forgiving, caring person. In the Book of II Corinthians, chapter two, the Apostle Paul told the church to forgive and comfort the man who had been put out of the church lest he be overcome with sorrow. ***“So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.”*** (II Corinthians 2:7). He pointed out to them that Satan’s plan is to destroy. One of the ways Satan destroys people is to get people to be slow in forgiving or refuse to forgive at all. To do so is playing right into the Devil’s hand. ***“Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.”*** (II Corinthians 2:11).

We would be wise to learn that God will always overrule in our lives, that is, when we trust Him. We need to expect Him to teach us what we need to learn from undesirable situations. As we learn, it will certainly prevent a lot of destructive influence. A bitter and unforgiving person is extremely unhappy, and is also dangerous to himself, to his family, and to others around him. Without meaning to, the person with such an unforgiving attitude will poison the minds of others and lead to broken homes.

Many people are hurt and even destroyed because of an unforgiving, bitter spirit. They think people are against them and conduct themselves in such a way that others shun them. We learn this in the book of Hebrews 12:15. Hebrews 12:15. ***“Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;... .”*** We must develop an

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attitude of being willing to overlook or discount the faults of others in order to protect our own minds. This will always produce fruit and dividends for us and for those around us.

Giving thanks is a wonderful way to keep your mind and attitude clean and clear. Sometimes it is a must before we can forgive. God promises to cause us to benefit from trials and persecutions as we trust Him. ***“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;”*** (II Corinthians 4:17).

Friends and close family members can become bitter enemies as the result of an unforgiving spirit. People choose sides that lead to hatred and confusion. Protect yourself from such an atmosphere of bitterness and destruction. Quickly give thanks for the problem. Seek the Lord’s Word for direction. No family is exempted from the Devil’s methods. Determine in your mind to thank God and to forgive others in every situation. It is essential for Christian stability and personal sanity. Bitter people make insane decisions.

The home is probably the setting of the most harmful stress and confusion. Husbands and wives talk of their great love for each other. They “buck” parents and relatives to have each other. A few trials and testings and the “lovebirds” become bitter enemies. They say harsh words to each other. They quit thanking the Lord for their trials. They fail to forgive. Each blames the other one for the problem. They commit emotional and mental suicide that hurts many others.

The Lord will use every trial to build character in our lives if we would give Him a chance. ***“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;”*** 18 ***“While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things***

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***which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”***

Another setting for the most surprising and vicious disturbance is the local church. What should be a place of encouragement and help, can be a battle ground for war. New comers are amazed at the vicious and destructive spirit of church members when division arises. Where love and encouragement should prevail, the devil has a heyday. Church members fail to glorify the Lord, cease to be thankful, and become vain in their imaginations. Professing themselves to be wise, they become fools. ***“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”*** (Romans 1: 21,22). They insist on promoting their opinion and people choosing sides. What a tragedy this is in a home, a church, or wherever it takes place.

They fail to be thankful. They insist on having their own way. They act upon all kinds of rumors and smut talk. They do not consider thanking God and forgiving the person or persons. They listen to anything they can use against the victim and make sure others hear about it. Of course, they do all this “in the name of the Lord.” They say they are protecting others from the heretic. They tell of how they prayed about the matter not understanding that God has forgiven all involved. Then they make destructive decisions that increase divisions. They insist on others being involved. They want everyone to choose sides. It would be wonderful if we would allow the Lord to do the censoring. He certainly knows how. This way could save so many families, churches and friendships.

It was my privilege to be reared by a family who went to a Baptist church. I joined the church at a young age. When

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I came of age, I taught Sunday School and was very active in the church. After being an active church member for twenty-one years, at the age of 32, I realized I was lost and going to Hell. I had made a profession of faith and had been baptized, and I was very active in the church.

I learned of my lost condition as a result of someone witnessing to me from another type of church setting. Immediately, after learning of my lost condition, I trusted Christ as my Saviour to take me to Heaven. The pastor and many of my church member friends refused to recognize the truth about my salvation. They said some very harsh things. They insisted that I was mixed up and did not get saved. They insisted I get back like I was before I said I had gotten saved. Of course, that was impossible! They never accepted the fact that I was a lost church member. One man said, "If Mac needed to get saved, so does everybody in the church need the same thing."

Some years later, I was called to preach and have pastored for thirty years. Because of Bible Truth and my own background and experiences, I stress a positive, know-so salvation. It is so simple. Christ died for our sins. He has made peace with God. A person must know they are going to Heaven if they go. Faith is believing God. His Word declares that we are reconciled and accepted in the Beloved. The sin debt is paid. Because of Christ, sinners are welcome in Heaven.

On many occasions, I have witnessed church members being saved. As they gave a positive testimony of trusting Christ to take them to Heaven and witnessing to others, they have been misunderstood and even rejected by so-called "good church members." This certainly hinders the lost from trusting Christ to take them to Heaven.

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In my early ministry here in Milton, a very active church member trusted Christ as Saviour and started questioning others about their testimony. A number of others trusted Christ, also. A deacon came to me and said, "If another church member gets saved, I am leaving the church."

I replied, "You may as well start packing. Others will be saved if I continue to preach the Word of God and I intend to do that."

The Word of God being preached has resulted in many other church members trusting Christ to take them to Heaven. Though the religious leaders get upset, those who trust Christ are happy and productive. The kind of attitude these religious leaders demonstrate is, I believe, that of religious, blind leaders. I believe they are victims of religion and have missed the truth of Calvary.

When we face an extremely painful and destructive situation, we can get relief if we obey I Thessalonians 5:18: "***In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.***" We may not be thankful because of the pain and hurt caused by others, but to be obedient, we must give thanks. The Lord will minister to our hearts as we obey Him. He may even make us thankful which will relieve our minds. As He overruled in the life of Joseph, He will also overrule in our lives. The experience of giving thanks when we are not thankful will make us more useful in His service. The Lord can make us thankful or adjust our "stinking" thinking." He has the power and desire to make us more useful. Character is developed when we thank God in obedience for any and all situations, regardless of how bad.

In James, chapter one, we are taught that our trials should bring joy. That is difficult. Testings and trials are to

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produce in us joy, patience, and maturity. ***“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;”*** <sup>3</sup> ***“Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.”*** <sup>4</sup> ***“But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”*** The Lord can do this for us. With that truth in mind, we should readily give thanks for the bad as well as the good. Many people have not even thought about what the Bible really teaches about giving thanks and the result of not giving thanks. No suffering of today is worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed later. ***“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”*** (James 8:18).

This obedience will also help us to forgive others who hurt us as the truth of Calvary works in our minds. People may plan to cause us much hurt. The Lord will overrule and cause the problem to help us. Therefore, we should praise Him and thank Him in every situation. We will always win when we are in obedience to God’s Word. Our lives will be richer and others will be helped through our influence as we practice a forgiving, thankful spirit. The welfare of others depends on our faithfulness.

# Author's Challenge

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