

THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

INTRODUCTION

It has been observed that among the many thousands of English words, the three most *difficult* to repeat are “I was wrong,” while the three most *delightful* to read are “Find check enclosed.” Be that as it may, it can be safely concluded that the most *dynamic* single word in our language is the word *salvation*.

I. The Meaning of Salvation

A. The meaning of the word *salvation*

1. The Hebrew root word *yasha* (basis for the name of Joshua and Jesus) signifies freedom from what binds or restricts and thus effects deliverance.
2. The Greek word is *soteria*, meaning “to cure, to provide recovery, to rescue, to effect one’s welfare.”

B. The mention of the word *salvation*

1. It is found 160 times in the Bible and is referred to by 32 books.
 - a. The Old Testament includes 116 references as found in 16 books (Gen., Exod., Deut., 1 & 2 Sam., 1 & 2 Chron., Job, Psa., Isa., Jer., Lam., Jon., Mic., Hab., Zech.).
 - b. The New Testament includes 44 references as found in 16 books (Luke, John, Acts, Rom., 2 Cor., Eph., Phil., 1 & 2 Thess., 2 Tim., Titus, Heb., 1 & 2 Pet., Jude, Rev.).
2. Its first mention comes from a father in Egypt – “And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days.... I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD” (Gen. 49:1, 18).
3. Its final mention comes from the faithful in heaven – “And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God” (Rev. 19:1).

C. The magnificence of the word *salvation* – Note the way it is employed in the following verses: “Salvation belongeth unto the LORD: thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah” (Psa. 3:8). “The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?” (Psa. 27:1). “Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit” (Psa. 51:12). “Truly my soul waiteth upon God.”from him cometh my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved” (Psa. 62:1-2). “Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah” (Psa. 68:19). “Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: and let such as love thy salvation say continually, Let God be magnified” (Psa. 70:4).

“Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation” (Isa. 12:2). “Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished” (Isa. 51:6). “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!... The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God” (Isa. 52:7, 10). “I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels” (Isa. 61:10).

“But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD” (John. 2:9). “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” (Rom. 1:16). “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom. 10:10).

II. The Implications of Salvation – The very word itself carries with it a twofold implication.

A. That someone needs to be saved

1. The facts involved – People are lost.

- a. Only a sick person needs a doctor, and man is desperately ill – “From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment” (Isa. 1:6). “And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city. And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the

palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee” (Matt. 9:1-2).

- b. Only an accused person needs a lawyer, and man stands condemned 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” (Rom. 3:19).
- c. Only a drowning person needs a lifeguard, and man finds himself flooded by the waters of sin – “Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me” (Psa. 69:1-2).
- d. Only a person unable to find his way needs a guide, and man is hopelessly lost – “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). “That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world” (Eph. 2:12).

A sinner may not be as *bad* as he can be (like an Adolf Hitler), but he is nevertheless as *bad off* as he can be. Man is both dead spiritually and dying physically (see Gen. 2:17). This can be likened to a condemned criminal on death row awaiting the electric chair and suffering from terminal cancer.

2. The focus involved – Why are people lost?

- a. Because of their rejection of biblical revelation – “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork” (Psa. 19:1). “Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness” (Acts 14:17). “Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse” (Rom. 1:19-20).
- b. Because of disobeying their own conscience – “(Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.) This will take place on the day when God will judge men’s secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares” (Rom. 2:14-16, NIV).
- c. Because of their relationship to the world – “Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:” (Eph. 2:2). “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (James 4:4). “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 John 2:15-16).
- d. Because of their relationship to Satan – “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it” (John 8:44). “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” (2 Cor. 4:4). “In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother” (1 John 3:10).
- e. Because of their relationship to sin – “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 2:17). “For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not” (Eccles. 7:20). “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jer. 17:9).
- f. Because of their relationship to God – “He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the

Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:12). "These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit" (Jude 19).

- B. That someone is able and willing to save – Such a Savior must fulfill both requirements
 - 1. He must be able to save – It is possible for a person to have the desire but not the ability to save another individual. Many a physician has stood in utter frustration beside the bed of his dying patient, wanting so much to give aid, but totally helpless to do so.
 - 2. He must be willing to save – It is possible for a person to have the ability but not the desire to save another individual. In 1978, a man in the United States in desperate need of a rare blood-type transfusion died. The tragedy of the story was that he suffered and died needlessly, for one of his own relatives possessed that rare type of blood and could have easily donated some, but stubbornly refused. Perhaps the greatest ability, after all, is availability.

III. The Source of Salvation – Jesus Christ is the source of salvation. He meets both requirements.

- A. He is able to save – "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Eph. 3:20). "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: 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" (2 Tim. 1:12).

"For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. 2:18). "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25). "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24).

- B. He is willing to save – "And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed" (Matt. 8:2-3). "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:3-4). "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" (2 Pet. 3:9).

As has been previously stated, the Lord Jesus Christ is the source, center, and sum total of salvation. This is clearly demonstrated in the following passages:

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass" (Zech. 9:9).

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David" (Luke 1:68-69). "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation" (Luke 2:29-30). "Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God" (Luke 3:5-6).

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). "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" (Rom. 1:16). "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11). "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9).

IV. The False Hopes of Salvation – "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12).

- A. Education – On two separate occasions Paul warns Timothy about the folly of depending on education. "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called" (1 Tim. 6:20). "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim. 3:7).
- B. Church membership – The scriptural reason for joining a local church is not for the obtaining of one's salvation, but rather for its outworking.
- C. Good works – "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9).
- D. Baptism – "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect" (1 Cor. 1:17).
- E. Proper environment – Being fortunate enough to have experienced a proper and comfortable environment may lead one to success, but never to salvation. In fact, to the contrary, the world's systems (on both sides

of the tracks) are in the hands of the evil one (1 John 5:19). This is the case for the down-and-outers as well as the up-and-comers.

- F. Keeping the law – “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” (Gal. 2:16).
 - G. Confirmation – Religious confirmation is as far removed from redemption’s transformation as a lump of coal from a glittering diamond.
 - H. Living by the Golden Rule – There is one very simple reason why an unsaved person cannot experience salvation living by the Golden Rule, and that reason is he cannot keep the Golden Rule. “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” (Isa. 64:6).
 - I. Sincerity – While it is true that God cannot save an insincere man, sincerity in itself is not sufficient, for one can be sincerely wrong.
 - J. Lodge membership – A ring, however impressive, adds not the slightest iota to the owner’s redemption.
 - K. Tithing – Paul commands the churches in Macedonia not simply for the financial help he received from them, but rather because they had first submitted their wills to the Lord and only then their wallets (see 2 Cor. 8:1-7).
 - L. Political organizations – During the coming great tribulation the combined secular, political, and economical organizations of this world will turn against the Father and attempt to dethrone his Son, only to be themselves utterly destroyed by the brightness of his coming. (See Psa. 2; Rev. 18.)
 - M. Religious organizations – The unified and false religious movement will likewise suffer destruction during the tribulation. (See Rev. 17.)
- V. The Threefold Method of Salvation – While God has indeed dealt with his creatures under different dispensations (the pre-law stages, the age of the law, the post-law stage, etc.), he saves them all by the identical threefold method.
- A. Salvation is always by the blood – “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb. 9:22). Furthermore, this blood must be innocent, shed, and applied.
 - 1. Innocent – “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?” (Heb. 9:14).
 - 2. Shed – “For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matt. 26:28).
 - 3. Applied – “And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood” (Rev. 1:5).
 - B. Salvation is always through a person – “But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD” (John 2:9). “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). “For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thes. 5:9). “And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:9).
 - C. Salvation is always by grace – “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8-9). “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men” (Titus 2:11).
 - 1. This grace is appropriated by the sinner’s faith – “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1). “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” (Heb. 11:6).
 - 2. This grace is accompanied by the Savior’s peace – “To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 1:7). “Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 1:3). (See also Gal. 1:3.)
- VI. The Work of the Trinity in Salvation – The following poem quickly overviews the subject of salvation as it relates to heaven, earth, and hell.

*The Father wrought it,
The Son bought it,*

*The Spirit taught it,
The devil fought it,
The rich man sought it,
The dying thief caught it,
Praise God, I've got it!*

As shown by this little poem, the entire Trinity was totally involved in the work of salvation.

A. The work of the Father in salvation

1. He foreknew and predestinated us – “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate” (Rom. 8:29a). “God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew” (Rom. 11:2). “Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will” (Eph. 1:5, 11).
2. He chose and elected us – “And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Matt. 24:31). “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth” (Rom. 8:33). “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love” (Eph. 1:4). “God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation” (2 Thess. 2:13). “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father” (1 Pet. 1:2).
3. He called and conformed us – “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Rom. 8:28). “To be conformed to the image of his son” (Rom. 8:29). “Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called” (Rom. 8:30).
4. He justified and glorified us – “And whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified” (Rom. 8:30).
5. He sent his Son to us – “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” (2 Cor. 5:19). “Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift” (2 Cor. 9:15).

B. The work of the Son in salvation – The following four action verbs depict the work of Jesus in our salvation.

1. Showing – “And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me” (John 12:45). “Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?” (John 14:8-9)
2. Seeking – “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).
3. Sacrificing – “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep” (John 10:11).
4. Satisfying – ‘Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus’ (Rom. 3:25-26).

Note: “Propitiation” here refers to satisfaction. This is simply to say Christ’s death satisfied the holiness and righteousness of God.

C. The work of the Holy Spirit in salvation

1. He convicts, thus pointing us to Christ – “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged” (John 16:7-11).
2. He baptizes, thus placing us in Christ – “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:13).

VII. The Costliness of Salvation

- A. According to David and Moses, creation was effected by God’s fingers and came about through his spoken word – “And God said, Let there be light: and there was light” (Gen. 1:3). “When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?” (Psa. 8:3-4). “By the word of the LORD

- were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.... For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (Psa. 33:6, 9). (See also Gen. 1:6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26.)
- B. According to Isaiah and Peter, salvation was effected by God's arms and came about through his shed blood – 'Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?' (Isa. 53:1). "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 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. 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" (Isa. 53:4-6), '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; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot' (1 Pet. 1:18-19).
- In the book of Revelation John records all of heaven praising Christ for his work in *creation* (4:11) and *salvation* (5:9). "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (Rev. 4:11). "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev. 5:9).
- VIII. The Old Testament Types of Salvation – These are depicted by *events* (the Passover, the serpent of brass, etc.), *institutions* (the Sabbath), *objects* (lamb, oil, tabernacle), *places* Jerusalem, Egypt, Babylon, Canaan), or *individuals* (Adam, Isaac, Joseph, Jonah) that serve to foreshadow a particular New Testament aspect of salvation. The Greek word *tupos* (referring to a type) is found 18 times in the New Testament, translated by such words as *example*, *figure*, and *pattern*. Here are but a few *tupos* of salvation.
- A. Adam and Eve, illustrating that salvation clothes us – "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them" (Gen. 3:21). The first terrible result of sin upon Adam and Eve was the realization of their shame and nakedness before God. "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons" (Gen. 3:7). But the gracious Creator then forgave and clothed his two sinful citizens in Eden (see Gen. 3:21).
- For a similar case describing how Joshua the high priest was clothed with divine righteousness during the rebuilding of the temple, see Zechariah 3:1-5.
- B. Cain and Abel, illustrating that salvation guarantees us acceptance – The story of Cain and Abel also demonstrates (in Cain's example) the wrong way to be accepted. "And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering" (Gen. 4:4). Abel made the first recorded "public profession of Christ" on earth when he offered the blood sacrifice, while Cain became the first religious rebel by offering a bloodless sacrifice. (See Eph. 1:7.)
- C. The ark and the Passover, illustrating that salvation protects us from God's wrath
1. The ark – "And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation" (Gen. 7:1).
 2. The Passover – "For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you" (Exod. 12:23). The unprotected will be subjected to a future world judgment wrath (the message of the ark) and to a personal great white throne judgment (the lesson from the Passover).
- Consider also the following passages: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom. 1:18). "For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience" (Col. 3:6). "And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. 1:10). "For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. 6:17).
- D. Abraham and Isaac, illustrating that salvation provides for us an acceptable substitute – "And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen" (Gen. 22:12-14).
- Some 20 centuries after Abraham offered up Isaac, another Father lifted up his only Son on that

same spot, but this time there was no last minute reprieve. This was prophesied by Isaiah: “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 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. 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” (Isa. 53:4-6). (See 1 Pet. 3:18.)

- E. The manna and the smitten rock, illustrating that salvation satisfies us – “And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground” (Exod. 16:14). “Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel” (Exod. 17:6).

Bread from the sky and water from a rock. Oh, the total and tender satisfaction of God's salvation. ‘Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's’ (Psa. 103:5), ‘For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness’ (Psa. 107:9).

- F. The brazen serpent, illustrating that salvation cures us – “And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived” (Num. 21:9).

In the New Testament Christ applied this Old Testament event to himself and led Nicodemus to salvation: “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up” (John 3:14).

- G. Naaman, illustrating that salvation cleanses us – This Syrian pagan was the only man in the entire Old Testament to be cleansed from the dreadful scourge of leprosy. (See 2 Kings 5:1-14.) Note the following: “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow” (Psa. 51:7).

- H. The tabernacle, illustrating that salvation restores lost fellowship – “And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel” (Exod. 25:22).

One of Israel's most tragic moments in the Old Testament was the worship of a devilish Egyptian golden calf god (see Exod. 32). Both idolatry and immorality were involved in that sordid affair. But the newly constructed tabernacle was able to once again assure Israel's fellowship with God. “He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake” (Psa. 23:3).

IX. The Vocabulary of Salvation – There are 15 key words in the vocabulary of salvation. These are:

conversion	redemption	justification
substitution	regeneration	sanctification
reconciliation	imputation	glorification
propitiation	adoption	preservation
remission	supplication	origination

We shall now examine each of these important terms.

- A. Conversion – The word *conversion* (Hebrew, *shub*; Greek, *epistrophe*) is found some 14 times in the Bible. (See Pss. 19:7; 51:13; Isa. 1:27; 6:10; Matt. 13:15; 18:3; Mark 4:12; Luke 22:32; John 12:40; Acts 3:19; 15:3; 28:27; James 5:19-20.)

Here are some examples of its usage: “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple” (Psa. 19:7). “Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee” (Psa. 51:12-13).

“And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 18:3). “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19). “And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren” (Acts 15:3). “Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins” (James 5:20).

In essence, both Hebrew and Greek meanings have reference to a twofold turning on the part of an individual. One has to do with repentance (a turning from), and the other with faith (a turning to).

1. Repentance (Greek, *metanoia*)

a. What repentance is not

- (1) It is not reformation, that act of turning over a new leaf.
- (2) It is not remorse, that act of regretting the *fruit* of one's crime, but not the *root*.

Here we have two biblical examples:

- (a) Esau – “For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears” (Heb. 12:17). (For the full background of this, read Gen. 27.)
 - (b) Judas – “Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders” (Matt. 27:3). That this was only remorse and not true repentance is shown in the following passage: “And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself” (Matt. 27:5).
 - (3) It is not penitence, that act of attempting to make up for one's sins through good works.
- b. What repentance is – It is a voluntary and sincere change in the mind of the sinner, causing him to turn from his sin. It should be noted here I said *sin* and not *sins*. True repentance involves the turning from one specific sin, the previous rejection of Christ. Jesus spelled this out very clearly for us. “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged” (John 16:7-11).

God is not primarily interested in convincing a sinner to give up smoking, swearing, drinking, and illicit sex, as bad as these may be, for this will never save him. His great sin which will eventually condemn him forever is the rejection of Jesus Christ. Repentance, therefore, deals with a turning from this horrible crime of spurning Calvary.

- (1) As expressed in the ministry of John the Baptist: “And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 3:2). “Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance” (Matt. 3:8).
- (2) As expressed in the ministry of Jesus: “I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Matt. 9:13). “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:5). “I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repented, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance” (Luke 15:7). “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47).
- (3) As expressed in the ministry of Peter: “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19).
- (4) As expressed in the ministry of Paul: “But [Paul] shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent” (Acts 26:20). “And the times [prior to the cross] of this ignorance God winked at [overlooked]; but now commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30).

2. Faith

a. What it is not

- (1) It is not a “blind leap into the dark.”
- (2) It is not supposition.
- (3) It is not speculation.
- (4) It is not opinion or hypothesis.

b. What it is – It is a voluntary and sincere change in the mind of the sinner, causing him to turn to the Savior.

- c. When it occurs – It occurs the instant a sinner involves both his head and heart concerning the claims of Christ. It is *not* enough to simply possess an intellectual knowledge of the gospel. Biblical faith demands both head acknowledgment and heart acceptance. Note: “And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand” (Matt. 7:26). “King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know

that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian” (Acts 26:27-28).

“Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble” (James 2:19).

- d. How it is produced – “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Here Paul is saying that faith comes from hearing the message and the message comes through preaching Christ.
- e. Why it is so necessary – “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” (Heb. 11:6).
 - (1) The sinner is saved by faith – “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1). “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8-9).
 - (2) The saint is sanctified (grows in grace) by faith. Thus, by faith:
 - (a) We live – “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith” (Rom. 1:17).
 - (b) We stand – “Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand” (2 Cor. 1:24).
 - (c) We walk – “For we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7).
 - (d) We fight – “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses” (1 Tim. 6:12).
 - (e) We overcome – “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4). We have now seen both sides of the coin of conversion. Repentance is a turning from sin, and faith is a turning to Christ. Paul includes both concepts during his farewell message to the Ephesian elders. “Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21).

- B. Substitution – “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God” (1 Pet. 3:18). Substitution refers to that act whereby someone or something replaces, or stands in the stead of someone else or something else. The Scriptures present two kinds of substitution.

- 1. Temporary substitution – In Old Testament times, prior to Calvary, the sheep died for the shepherd.
 - a. As illustrated by a ram on a mountain – “And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.... And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son” (Gen. 22:1-2, 10-13).
 - b. As illustrated by a lamb in Egypt – “Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house.... And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.... For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt” (Exod. 12:3, 6-7, 12-13).
- 2. Permanent substitution – “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins” (Heb. 10:4). In New Testament times, after Calvary, the Shepherd died for the sheep. “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep” (John 10:11).

Thus, Christ became on the cross what he was not – namely, sin – that we might become what we were not – namely, righteous. The Son of God became the Son of man that sons of men might

become the sons of God. “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” (2 Cor. 5:21). (Also read carefully Isa. 53.)

C. Reconciliation

1. The meaning of reconciliation
 - a. The Old Testament meaning – The Hebrew word kaphar, which means “to cover something,” is found some 83 times in the Old Testament. Of these, it is translated “atonement” 76 times and “reconciliation” 7 times. Robert Lightner writes: “The Old Testament words for reconciliation do not represent a final dealing with sin. Rather, they present sin as being covered temporarily from God, awaiting final reconciliation through Christ (see Lev. 6:30; 8:15; 2 Chron. 29:24; 1 Sam. 29:4; Ezek. 45:15)” (*Evangelical Dictionary*, p. 195).
 - b. The New Testament meaning – The Greek word *allasso* means to change from that of enmity to that of friendship. In essence, it indicates a change of relationship from that of hostility to that of harmony between two parties.
2. The need for reconciliation – “Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear” (Isa. 59:1-2). “And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled” (Col. 1:21).
3. The example of reconciliation
 - a. That of a man and his brother – “Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift” (Matt. 5:23-24).
 - b. That of husband and wife – “But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife” (1 Cor. 7:11).
 - c. That of God and the sinner – “And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:18). “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement” (Rom. 5:10-11).
4. The implications of reconciliation
 - a. That a previous animosity once existed
 - b. That the offended party (or parties) now views things differently
5. The two phases of reconciliation
 - a. God has reconciled himself to the world through Christ – “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” (2 Cor. 5:19).
 - b. Man is now to reconcile himself to God through Christ – “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” (2 Cor. 5:20).

Paul Enns writes:

There are two parts to reconciliation. The objective aspect of reconciliation is that in which man is reconciled to God prior to faith and man is rendered savable (2 Cor. 5:18a, 19a). This is provisional reconciliation. The subjective aspect of reconciliation is that in which man is reconciled to God when he believes (2 Cor. 5:18b, 19b). This is experimental reconciliation. (*Moody Handbook of Theology*, p. 324)

6. The chronology of reconciliation

- a. In Eden, God and man faced each other in fellowship.
- b. After the Fall, God and man turned from each other.
- c. At Calvary, God, through Christ, turned his face toward man.
- d. At conversion (through repentance and faith), man turns his face toward God.

D. Propitiation

1. The meaning of propitiation – The Greek word *hilasmos* means “to render favorable, to satisfy, to appease.” On one occasion the Greek word is translated “mercy seat.” In essence the doctrine of propitiation states that the death of Christ fully satisfies all the righteous demands of God toward the

sinner. “And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2). “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10).

2. The method of propitiation – How could God possibly reconcile his holiness and righteousness to his mercy and grace? This problem was of course gloriously solved by Christ who was “set forth to be a propitiation” (Rom. 3:25). This then became the grand fulfillment of the prediction: “Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other” (Psa. 85:10).

Thus Paul could write with absolute confidence: “To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Rom. 3:26). “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood” (Rom. 3:24-25).

3. The necessity for propitiation – It was necessary because of God’s wrath (that stern reaction of the divine nature to evil in man).

- a. The current wrath of God – “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (John 3:36). “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness” (Rom. 1:18). “Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience” (Eph. 5:6).

- b. The coming wrath of God – “And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb” (Rev. 6:16). “And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth” (Rev. 11:18). “The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb” (Rev. 14:10). “And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God” (Rev. 19:15).

4. The place of propitiation

- a. The Old Testament temporary place: the mercy seat in the tabernacle (typically) – Note: The mercy seat in the Holy of Holies beneath the glory cloud of God was actually the golden lid belonging to the boxlike structure known as the Ark of the Covenant that contained, among other things, the tablets of the Ten Commandments.

Once each year on the Day of Atonement the high priest would enter the Holy of Holies and sprinkle blood upon the mercy seat. The spiritual significance of this act cannot be overstated; namely, the only thing separating the righteous demands of God (as seen by the glory cloud) from the sinful condition of man (as seen by the Ten Commandments he had already broken) was the blood of a sacrificial animal.

“And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel” (Exod. 25:22). “And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy seat; of which we cannot now speak particularly. Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people” (Heb. 9:5-7).

- b. The New Testament permanent place: the center cross on Golgotha (actually) – “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life” (Rom. 5:10). “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” (Col. 1:20).

5. The results of propitiation

- a. God is justified in forgiving sin.
 - b. God is justified in bestowing righteousness – “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Rom. 3:25-26). Stated another way, Jesus’

- blood as it covered God's mercy seat totally satisfied the righteous demands of the Law.
- E. Remission – “To him (Jesus) give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins” (Acts 10:43). “For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matt. 26:28). “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47). “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb. 9:22).
1. The meaning of remission – This concept is practically synonymous with the word *forgiveness*. It refers to a sending back, a putting away.
 - a. “Put away” – In the following passages it is translated “put away.”
 - (1) In regard to Joseph – “Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily” (Matt. 1:19).
 - (2) In regard to a wife – “It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement” (Matt. 5:31).
 - (3) In regard to believers – “Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another” (Eph. 4:25).
 - (4) In regard to apostates – “Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck” (1 Tim. 1:19).
 - (5) In regard to Christ – “For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Heb. 9:26).
 - b. “Forgive” – In the following passages it is translated “forgive.” “Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven” (Luke 6:37). “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Eph. 4:32). “And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses” (Col. 2:13).
 2. The Old Testament example of remission – A classic illustration is found in Leviticus 16, where the high priest brought two goats to the tabernacle during the great Day of Atonement. One goat was killed, and its blood was sprinkled upon the mercy seat. Concerning the other goat we read: “And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness” (Lev. 16:21-22).
- In light of this, carefully note Paul’s words in the following verses:
- “Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach” (Heb. 13:12-13).
3. The problem of remission – As the Old Testament closed, a great problem remained to be solved. It centered around the two words *remission* and *forbearance*, ‘Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God’ (Rom. 3:25).
 - a. The word remission – The word remission (as we have already seen) refers to the act of letting something pass by, in this case, the sins of the Old Testament saints.
 - b. The word forbearance – The word forbearance refers to the act of holding something back, in this case, the wrath of God upon those sins. “Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways” (Acts 14:16). “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30). (See also Psa. 50:16-22.)
 4. The uniqueness of remission – Of the 15 key words in the vocabulary of salvation, remission alone has to do with *subtraction*, whereas all other terms speak of glorious *addition*.
- F. Redemption – “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people” (Luke 1:68). “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law” (Gal. 3:13). “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (Rev. 5:9).
1. The threefold meaning of redemption
 - a. To pay a ransom price for something or someone – “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" (Heb. 9:12).
- b. To remove from a slave marketplace – "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. 3:13).
 - c. To effect a full release
 - (1) The current, immediate release – "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24). But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30). "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:14).
 - (2) The coming, ultimate release – "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 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" (Rom. 8:22-23). "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30).

Charles Ryrie observes:

Redemption may be summarized around three basic ideas. (1) People are redeemed *from* something; namely, from the market place or slavery of sin. (2) People are redeemed *by* something; namely, by the payment of a price, the blood of Christ. (3) People are redeemed *to* something; namely, to a state of freedom; and then they are called to renounce that freedom for slavery to the Lord who redeemed them. (*Basic Theology*, p. 292)

2. The Old Testament example of redemptions of the most important Old Testament offices was that of a *goel*, or kinsman-redeemer. *Baker's Dictionary of Theology* describes this office as follows:

It is used in the regaining possession of a property which had been sold for debt (Lev. 25:25). It is used in the restoring or preserving of the name of one who had died without offspring: his brother is then to take his wife (Levirate marriage), and raise up seed to him, that his name be not forgotten in Israel (Deut. 25:5). Boaz is the most familiar example of this (Ruth 3 – 4). (p. 252)

There were three requirements a *goel* had to fulfill:

- a. He must be a near kinsman – "After that he is sold he may be redeemed again; one of his brethren may redeem him: Either his uncle, or his uncle's son, may redeem him, or any that is nigh of kin unto him of his family may redeem him; or if he be able, he may redeem himself" (Lev. 25:48-49).
"And now it is true that I am thy near kinsman: howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I. Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, that if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman's part: but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, as the LORD liveth: lie down until the morning" (Ruth 3:12-13).
- b. He must be able to redeem – "Their Redeemer is strong; the Lord of hosts is his name: he shall throughly plead their cause, that he may give rest to the land, and disquiet the inhabitants of Babylon" (Jer. 50:34).
- c. He must be willing to redeem – Jesus Christ, of course, successfully fulfilled all three of these requirements.
 - (1) He became a near kinsman – "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham" (Heb. 2:14-16). "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" (Heb. 4:15).
 - (2) He was able to redeem – "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.... No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (John 10:11, 18).
 - (3) He was willing to redeem – "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin

thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 10:4-10),

3. The costliness of redemption – “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; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pet. 1:18-19).

Note: The Bible is in reality the record concerning God’s two great works, that of creation (Gen. 1 – 2) and that of *redemption* (Gen. 3 – Rev. 22). It took only a command (“And God said, let there be...”) to effect the work of creation, but that of a cross to accomplish the work of redemption.

- G. Regeneration – “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Titus 3:5).

1. The definition of regeneration – It is that process whereby God, through a second birth, imparts to the believing sinner a new nature. “Jesus answered and said unto him (Nicodemus), Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). “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: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12-13). “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him” (1 John 5:1).
2. The necessity for regeneration – It is necessary because of the corruptness of human nature. “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil” (Jer. 13:23). “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes” (Rom. 3:10-18).

“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not” (Rom. 7:18). “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Rom. 8:7). “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal. 5:19-21).

- a. By nature all men are dead to God – “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1).
- b. By nature all men are children of wrath – “Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others” (Eph. 2:3).
- c. By nature all men are sons of disobedience – “Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2).
- d. By nature all men are cursed with Adam’s sin nature – “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Rom. 5:12). “The first man is of the earth, earthly: the second man is the Lord from heaven” (1 Cor. 15:47).
3. The extent of regeneration
 - a. Individual – “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Titus 3:5).
 - b. Universal – Universal here refers to the redemption of nature itself. This will transpire during the Millennium. “And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon

twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Matt. 19:28).

“For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 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” (Rom. 8:19-23).

4. The results of regeneration
 - a. It provides us a new mind, allowing us to know God (1 Cor. 2:16).
 - b. It provides us a new heart, allowing us to love God (Rom. 5:5; 1 John 4:9).
 - c. It provides us a new will, allowing us to obey God (Rom. 6:13).
5. The means of regeneration – Three factors are vital for a sinner to experience redemption.
 - a. The Word of God – “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). “That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word” (Eph. 5:26). “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Titus 3:5). “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures” (James 1:18). “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Pet. 1:23).
 - b. The man of God – “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” (Rom. 10:13-15).

“For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel” (1 Cor. 4:15). “And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; 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. 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” (2 Cor. 5:18-20). “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you” (Gal. 4:19).
 - c. The Spirit of God – “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:5-6). “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” (1 Cor. 2:14). (See also Titus 3:5.)
- These three factors should not be lightly passed over. They teach that no sinner has ever been saved since Adam apart from them. Some may deny the necessity of the second factor, however (the man of God), pointing out that people often came to Christ while alone, after reading a gospel tract. But just how was that tract written, printed, and distributed in the first place? Obviously saved human beings were involved. If the above is true, then it is not unreasonable to conclude that as the Holy Spirit looks for a human instrument (mothers) to bring living souls into this world, he likewise seeks out human instruments (soul winners) to usher sinners into the kingdom of God.
6. The biblical illustrations of regeneration – Among the many conversions in the Bible the two which perhaps most vividly demonstrate the life-changing process effected by regeneration are those of Manasseh in the Old Testament and Saul of Tarsus in the New Testament.
 - a. Manasseh (2 Kings 21:1-18; 2 Chron. 33:1-20)
 - (1) Manasseh, the unique king
 - (a) He was the fourteenth king of Judah.
 - (b) He ruled for 55 years, longer than any other king in the Bible (2 Kings 21:1).
 - (c) He was 12 years old when he began to reign (2 Kings 21:1).
 - (2) Manasseh, the ungodly king (2 Kings 21:2-16; 2 Chron. 33:2-10)

- (a) He rebuilt the pagan high places his father Hezekiah had destroyed.
 - (b) He erected altars to Baal and made an Asherah pole.
 - (c) He bowed down to the starry hosts and worshipped them.
 - (d) He rebuilt pagan altars in the temple of God.
 - (e) He sacrificed his own sons in the fire in the Valley of Hinnom, outside Jerusalem.
 - (f) He practiced sorcery, divination, and witchcraft.
 - (g) He consulted mediums and spiritists.
 - (h) He did more evil than the original Canaanites in the land had done.
 - (i) He filled Jerusalem from end to end with the blood of innocent people who were slaughtered at his command.
 - (j) Tradition says he ordered Isaiah to be sawn asunder (Heb. 11:37).
 - (k) He continued to do all these things in spite of repeated warnings from God.
 - (l) Jeremiah the prophet later referred to Manasseh as a symbol of evil (Jer. 15:4).
- (3) Manasseh, the upright king
- (a) The record of his conversion
 - i) The prison – God punished Manasseh for all this by allowing the Assyrians to take him prisoner, put a hook in his nose, bind him with bronze shackles, and take him to Babylon (2 Chron. 33:11).
 - ii) The prayer – In his distress, Manasseh turned to God and begged for forgiveness (2 Chron. 33:12). God heard his prayer, saved him, and brought him back to Jerusalem (2 Chron. 33:13, 18-19).
 - (b) The results of his conversion
 - i) Military accomplishments – Manasseh rebuilt the outer wall of the city of David, making it much higher, and stationed military commanders in all the fortified cities of Judah (2 Chron. 3:14).
 - ii) Moral accomplishments – He got rid of the foreign gods and altars, removing them from the temple (2 Chron. 33:15). He urged all Judah to serve God (3 Chron. 33:16).
- b. Saul of Tarsus
- (1) His war against the Savior
- (a) He “kept the raiment” of those that murdered Stephen, and consented to his death (Acts 7:57-58; 8:1-2; 22:20).
 - (b) He made havoc of the church (Acts 8:3) – This word describes the act of a wild hog viciously uprooting a vineyard.
 - (c) He entered the homes of Christians and dragged them off to prison (Acts 8:3).
 - (d) He hounded Christians to their death in various cities (Acts 22:5).
 - (e) He beat believers (Acts 22:19).
 - (f) He voted to have them put to death (Acts 26:10).
 - (g) He attempted through torture to force them into cursing Christ (Acts 26:11).
 - (h) He persecuted the church beyond measure and “wasted it” (Gal. 1:13).
- (2) His witness to the Savior – Following his conversion Saul, once Satan’s most ferocious wolf, then became God’s most faithful sheepdog.
7. The fruits of regeneration
- a. The twice-born person now loves other Christians – “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death” (1 John 3:14).
 - b. The twice-born person now loves Jesus – “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments” (1 John 5:1-2).
 - c. The twice-born person now loves the separated life – “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 John 2:15-16). “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4).
 - d. The twice-born person now loves his enemies – “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt

love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. 5:43-45).

- e. The twice-born person now loves the Word of God – "And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved.... The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.... O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.... How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!... Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold.... Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it.... Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them" (Psa. 119:47, 72, 97, 103, 127, 140, 165).
- f. The twice-born person now loves the souls of men – "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom. 9:1-3). "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved" (Rom. 10:1). "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead" (2 Cor. 5:14).
- g. The twice-born person now loves prayer – "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5:19-20).

H. Imputation – "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Rom. 4:8).

- 1. Definition of imputation – To impute is for one person to add something good or bad to the account of another person.
- 2. Kinds of imputation – In the Bible there are three main theological imputations.
 - a. The imputation of Adam's sin upon the human race – 'Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned' (Rom. 5:12). "For as in Adam all die" (1 Cor. 15:22). "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).

This first imputation seems at first to be totally unjust. Why should Adam's sin be imputed to me when it happened in a remote part of this world thousands of years before I was even born? If the story ended here it might be unjust, but it doesn't. Read on.

- b. The imputation of the race's sin upon Christ – "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" (Isa. 53:5). "My righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities" (Isa. 53:11). "That he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9). "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" (1 Pet. 2:24). (See also 2 Cor. 5:14-21.)

The first imputation was an unwilling one (for no human would voluntarily accept Adam's guilt), but the second imputation was effected upon a totally willing volunteer. "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.... No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself" (John 10:11, 18).

- c. The imputation of God's righteousness upon the believing sinner – "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. 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, 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" (Phil. 3:7-9).

This imputation, like the second, must be voluntary. God forces the righteousness of Christ upon no one.

3. Biblical examples of imputation

- a. Abraham – "And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God" (James 2:23). "And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness" (Gen. 15:6). "For what saith the scripture?

Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Rom. 4:3).

- b. David – “Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin” (Rom. 4:6-8).
“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile” (Psa. 32:1-2).
- c. Onesimus – Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost writes:

Paul’s prison cell in Rome became a pulpit from which the gospel went out to multitudes in the capital city of the Roman Empire. Among those to whom the gospel came in transforming power was a runaway slave, Onesimus, who had stolen from his master and made his way from the city of Colosse in Asia Minor over to Rome. While Paul could have used this new-found son in the faith to minister to his needs as a prisoner, he purposed to send Onesimus back to Philemon, his master.

Paul wrote the letter to Philemon to exhort him to forgive and restore his runaway slave, and to count him as a brother in Christ. Paul recognized that before such a restoration could be made, the debt which Onesimus had incurred must be paid. Onesimus had nothing with which he could discharge that debt, and so in penning his epistle the Apostle says (vv. 17-18), “If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself. If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account; I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it.” And in those words the Apostle was giving a classic example of the great Christian doctrine of imputation. (Things Which Become Sound Doctrine, p. 40)

- d. Stephen – “And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep” (Acts 7:59-60).
 - e. Paul – “At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge” (2 Tim. 4:16).
- I. Adoption – “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Gal. 4:4-5).
- 1. The theology of adoption (Rom. 8:15-23)
 - a. Clarified – The word literally means “the placing of a son.” Adoption logically follows regeneration. Regeneration gives one his nature as a child of God, whereas adoption gives him his position as a son of God.
“And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor. 6:18). “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Gal. 4:4-6). “Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will” (Eph. 1:5).
 - b. Contrasted – How spiritual adoption differs from civil adoption
 - (1) We never adopt our own children, but God never adopts any other.
 - (2) Civil adoption provides comfort for the childless, but God had a beloved Son prior to adopting us – “And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17). “While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him” (Matt. 17:5).
 - (3) There are usually many pleasing characteristics in a civil adopted child, but not in God's children prior to their adoption – See Romans 3:10-18.
 - (4) Civil adoption could never give the child the nature of the father, but God's adopted are given the very mind of Christ – “For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor. 2:16).
 - (5) In some cases, civil adoption could be declared null and void, but God's adopted are absolutely secure.
 - c. Compared – How spiritual adoption compares with civil adoption
 - (1) The Father must begin the action leading to adoption – “Come now, and let us reason

- together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1:18). "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).
- (2) Both adoptions give an inheritance to one who previously had none – "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Rom. 8:17).
 - (3) Both adoptions provide a new name – "And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone"(John 1:42). "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" (Rev. 2:17).
2. The Trinity in adoption
 - a. There is an intimacy toward the Father – "Whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15). This is a very personal name for one's Father. Only Jesus himself had used this until now. "He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done" (Matt. 26:42). "And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt" (Mark 14:36).
 - b. There is an illumination by the Spirit – He both leads us and assures us. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14). "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8:16).
 - c. There is an inheritance with the Son – "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Rom. 8:17). (See also 1 Pet. 1:3-9.)
- J. Supplication (prayer) – "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men" (1 Tim. 2:1). "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" (Eph. 6:18). "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4:6).
- It may be said that no sinner is saved without prayer and no believer is sanctified (to grow in grace) apart from prayer. The prayer may be like Solomon's prayer (one of the longest in the Bible, with 31 verses; see 1 Kings 8:23-53) or like Peter's prayer (one of the shortest, with 1 verse containing three words, see Matt. 14:30), but in any case, prayer must be exercised.
1. Definition of prayer – Prayer may be best defined as "having fellowship with God." It is more than simply talking to God, but rather talking with God. It implies a two-way give-and-take.
 2. Elements in prayer – "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen" (Matt. 6:9-13).
- According to this model prayer of Jesus', which was given to us at the request of the disciples, prayer includes 10 elements:
- a. A personal relationship with God: "Our Father" – The word "our" signifies the believer's brotherly relationship between himself and all other Christians. While the Bible nowhere presents the universal fatherhood of God, it does declare the universal brotherhood of believers. The word Father signifies the relationship between God and the believer.
 - b. Faith: "which art in heaven" – Paul declares that without this element, our prayers are useless. "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" (Heb. 11:6).
 - c. Worship: "hallowed be thy name" – David felt this part of prayer to be so important that he appointed a select group of men who did nothing else in the temple but praise and worship God. "Moreover four thousand were porters; and four thousand praised the LORD with the instruments which I made, said David, to praise therewith" (1 Chron. 23:5). "Moreover David and the captains of the host separated to the service of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals.... So the number of them, with

their brethren that were instructed in the songs of the LORD, even all that were cunning, was two hundred fourscore and eight” (1 Chron. 25:1, 7).

In the book of Revelation, John sees four special angels who exist solely to worship God and who “rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come” (Rev. 4:8).

See also Christ’s statement to the Samaritan woman: “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23-24).

- d. Expectation: “Thy kingdom come” – This kingdom is that blessed millennial kingdom spoken of so much in the Old Testament: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (Isa. 2:2-4).

This kingdom was later previewed by John in the New Testament. (See Rev. 20:1-6.)

- e. Submission: “Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” – Jesus would later give the finest example of this element in Gethsemane. “And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matt. 26:39).
- f. Petition: “Give us this day our daily bread” – This suggests that our praying should be as our eating – daily.
- g. Confession: “And forgive us our debts” – The blood of Christ will forgive us of every sin, but not one excuse. Only confessed sin can be forgiven. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).
- h. Compassion: “as we forgive our debtors” – “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” (1 John 4:20). (See also Matt. 18:21-35.)
- i. Dependence: “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil” – It should be understood that, while God has never promised to keep us *from* temptation, he has promised to preserve us *in* and *through* temptation. “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Cor. 10:13).
- j. Acknowledgement: “For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever” – See David’s great prayer in 1 Chronicles 29:10-19, where he actually anticipates the final part of Jesus’ model prayer.

3. Reasons for prayer – Why should we pray?

- a. Because of the repeated command of God – “Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way” (1 Sam. 12:23). “Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer” (Rom. 12:12). “Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving” (Col. 4:2). “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17). “I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting” (1 Tim. 2:8).
- b. Because of the example of Christ – “Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared” (Heb. 5:7). “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously” (1 Pet. 2:21-23).
- c. Because of the example of the early church – “These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren” (Acts 1:14). “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42). “But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry

of the word” (Acts 6:4). “Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him” (Acts 12:5).

d. Because prayer is God's chosen method for the following:

- (1) Defeating the devil – “But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22:32). “But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer” (1 Pet. 4:7).
- (2) Saving the sinner – “And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18:13).
- (3) Restoring the backslider – “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.... Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins” (James 5:16, 19-20).
- (4) Strengthening the saint – “But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost” (Jude 20).
- (5) Sending forth laborers – “Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest” (Matt. 9:38). “As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away” (Acts 13:2-3).
- (6) Curing the sick – “Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him” (James 5:13-15).
- (7) Glorifying God's name – And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints” (Rev. 5:8). “And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand” (Rev. 8:2-4).
- (8) Accomplishing the impossible – “And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive” (Matt. 21:22). “And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting” (Mark 9:29). “Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit” (James 5:17-18). (See also Acts 12:5-17.)
- (9) Giving good things – “He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer” (Psa. 102:17). “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?” (Matt. 7:7-11). (See also Matt. 21:22.)
- (10) Imparting wisdom – “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (James 1:5).
- (11) Bestowing peace – “Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:5-7).
- (12) Keeping one from sin – “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matt. 26:41).
- (13) Revealing the will of God – “And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye

shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened” (Luke 11:9-10).

- e. Because of the example of the greatest Christian of all time – Paul
 - (1) Paul began and ended his Christian life by prayer.
 - (a) The beginning – “And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth” (Acts 9:11).
 - (b) The ending – “At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge” (2 Tim. 4:16).
 - (2) Paul prayed everywhere he went.
 - (a) In a prison (Acts 16:25) – “And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them” (Acts 16:25).
 - (b) On a seashore
 - i) At Miletus – “And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all” (Acts 20:36).
 - ii) At Tyre – “And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed” (Acts 21:5).
 - (c) In Jerusalem (Acts 22:17)
 - (d) On an island – “And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him” (Acts 28:8).
 - (3) Paul prayed for almost everyone he met.
 - (a) For the churches (Rom. 1:9; 1 Cor. 1:4; 2 Cor. 13:7; Gal. 4:19; Eph. 1:16; 3:14; Phil. 1:4, 9; Col. 1:3, 9; 1 Thess. 1:2; 3:10; 5:23; 2 Thess. 1:3, 11; 2:13)
 - (b) For Philemon (Philem. 4)
 - (c) For Timothy (2 Tim. 1:3)
 - (d) For Onesiphorus (2 Tim. 1:16-18)
 - (e) For those who forsook him in Rome (2 Tim. 4:16)
 - (f) For Israel – “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved” (Rom. 10:1).
 - (g) For all men (1 Tim. 2:1-3, 8; 4:4-5)
 - (4) Paul constantly asked others to pray for him (1 Thess. 5:25; 2 Thess. 3:1; Philem. 22; Rom. 15:30; Col. 4:3).
 4. Direction of prayer – To whom should we pray? To the Father? Son? Spirit? The basic New Testament rule is this: Prayer should be made to the Father, through the Spirit, in the name of Jesus. (See Rom. 8:15-16, 26-27.)
 5. Objects of prayer – For whom should we pray?
 - a. For ourselves – In the Scriptures Abraham’s servant, Peter, and the dying thief prayed for themselves. The first prayer was for guidance, the second for survival from drowning, and the third for salvation.
 - (1) Abraham’s servant – “And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham” (Gen. 24:12).
 - (2) Peter – “But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me” (Matt. 14:30).
 - (3) The dying thief – “And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom” (Luke 23:42).
 - b. For one another – “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16). “For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers” (Rom. 1:9).
 - c. For pastors – The apostle Paul requested prayer for himself from both Ephesian and Colossian believers. “And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak” (Eph. 6:19-20). ‘Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds” (Col. 4:3).

- d. For sick believers – “Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him” (James 5:14-15).
 - e. For rulers – “I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour” (1 Tim. 2:1-3).
 - How easy it is (and how sinful) to criticize our leaders but never remember to pray for them.
 - f. For our enemies – “But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Matt. 5:44). “Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you” (Luke 6:28). “And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep” (Acts 7:59-60).
 - g. For Israel – “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee” (Psa. 122:6). “I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth” (Isa. 62:6-7).
 - h. For all men – See 1 Timothy 2:1.
6. Positions for prayer – No specific position is required. It is the heart that counts. Note the various positions as described in the Bible.
- a. Standing (suggested by Jesus) – “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” (Mark 11:25),
 - b. Sitting (done by David) – “And David the king came and sat before the LORD, and said, Who am I, O LORD God, and what is mine house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?” (1 Chron. 17:16), (See 1 Chron. 17:16-27.)
 - c. Bowing (Moses) – “And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped” (Exod. 34:8).
 - d. Lying (David) – “I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears” (Psa. 6:6).
 - e. With lifted hands (David) – “Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle” (Psa. 28:2).
 - f. On one’s face (Jesus) – “And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matt. 26:39).
 - g. On one’s knees (Solomon, Daniel, Jesus, Paul)
 - (1) Solomon – “And it was so, that when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the LORD, he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven” (1 Kings 8:54).
 - (2) Daniel – “Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime” (Dan. 6:10).
 - (3) Jesus – “And he was withdrawn from them about a stone’s cast, and kneeled down, and prayed” (Luke 22:41).
 - (4) Paul – “And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all” (Acts 20:36).
 - h. With the face between the knees (Elijah) – “So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees” (1 Kings 18:42).
7. Time of prayer – Anytime
- a. Early in the morning – “And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed” (Mark 1:35).
 - b. At noon – “Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice” (Psa. 55:17).
 - c. Late in the afternoon – “Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer,

- being the ninth hour” (Acts 3:1).
- d. In the evening – “Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice” (Psa. 141:2).
 - e. At midnight – “And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them” (Acts 16:25).
8. Hindrances to prayer
- a. Known sin – “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me” (Psa. 66:18).
 - b. Insincerity – “And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward” (Matt. 6:5).
 - c. Carnal motives – “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts” (James 4:3).
 - d. Unbelief – “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed” (James 1:5-6).
 - e. Satanic activity – “And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands. And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling. Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withheld me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia” (Dan. 10:10-13).
- On certain occasions the sovereign God for a short period of time may allow satanic interference to block the prayer line of the believer. This is usually for the purpose of testing and purifying his child, as the book of Job and tenth chapter of Daniel so vividly illustrate.
- f. Domestic problems – “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered” (1 Pet. 3:7).
 - g. Pride – “Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (Luke 18:10-14).
 - h. Robbing God – “Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Mal. 3:8-10).
 - i. Refusing to help the needy – ‘Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard’ (Prov. 21:13). “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?” (1 John 3:16-17).
 - j. Refusing to submit to biblical teaching – “He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination” (Prov. 28:9). (See also Prov. 1:24-31; Zech. 7:11-14.)
 - k. Refusing to forgive or to be forgiven – “Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift” (Matt. 5:23-24). “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.... For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you” (Matt. 6:12, 14).
9. Qualifications of prayer – What are the ground rules of prayer? The following points absolutely must be met.
- a. Prayer should be humble – “LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their

heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear” (Psa. 10:17). (See also Luke 18:13-14.)

- b. Prayer should be bold – “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. And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him” (1 John 5:13-15).
- c. Prayer should be in faith – “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” (Heb. 11:6).
- d. Prayer should be sincere – “The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth” (Psa. 145:18).
- e. Prayer should be simple – “But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking” (Matt. 6:7).
- f. Prayer should be persistent – “And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?” (Luke 18:7). “Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving” (Col. 4:2).
- g. Prayer should be definite – “One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple” (Psa. 27:4). “Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him” (Acts 12:5).

All too often our prayers are so vague and indefinite as to render them totally meaningless.

Petitions such as “Lord, save that soul nearest hell,” or “Heal all the sick and comfort all the lonely,” simply provide no basis for divine action.

- h. Prayer should be in accord with Scripture – “And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us” (1 John 5:14). Prayer must be grounded in and bounded by the Word of God if we are to find his will for our life.

K. Justification

1. The definition of justification

a. Negative considerations (what it is *not*)

- (1) It does not mean to be acquitted, that is, to successfully defend oneself against all charges – “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” (Rom. 3:19).
- (2) It does not mean to be pardoned, that is, to be found guilty but given a second chance.
- (3) It does not mean to be paroled, that is, to be guilty and set free with certain restrictions.

b. Positive considerations (what it *is*) – The great theologian A. H. Strong has defined justification in the following way: “By *justification* we mean that judicial act of God which, on account of Christ, to whom the sinner is united by faith, He declares that sinner to be no longer exposed to the penalty of the law, but restored to His favor” (*Systematic Theology*, p. 849).

Justification is thus that legal act whereby man's status before God is changed for the good.

2. The need for justification – In his Epistle to the Romans, the Apostle Paul presents sinful man in a courtroom on trial for his very life. The *charge* is high treason against the King of the universe. “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23).

- a. The presiding *Judge* is the Lord Jesus Christ himself – “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son” (John 5:22). “Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:31).
- b. The *jury* is made up of the Law of God and the deeds of man – “Who will render to every man according to his deeds.... For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law” (Rom. 2:6, 12).

After proper deliberation a just and fair *verdict* of “guilty” is returned. (See Rom. 3:9-20.)

- c. A terrifying *sentence* is then imposed – spiritual death, meaning to be forever separated from God to suffer throughout all eternity in the lake of fire – “For the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). “Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:41). “And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:15).

In light of all this, it can be readily seen that a desperate need for justification existed.

3. The miracle of justification – Up to this point the case of God against man has pretty well followed the format of earthly jurisprudence. But suddenly something totally different and unexpected takes place that would surely cause every earthly court reporter to gasp in utter amazement. After the Judge has carefully heard all the evidence and patiently listened to all the pleas, he finds no other choice but to invoke the supreme penalty, lest true justice be denied. But before the terrible sentence can be carried out, this same Judge quietly closes the case book, lays down the heavenly gavel, rises to his feet, takes off his judicial robes, and goes out to die for these convicted defendants. This and this alone is justification.

The corrupt, doomed, and naked sinner may now be cleansed, delivered, and clothed in the very righteousness of Christ himself.

Stated yet another way, an earthly judge might approach a guilty defendant in one of three possible ways.

- a. He could *condemn* the man, and thus fulfill the demands of justice.
- b. He could *compromise* with the man, and thus frustrate the demands of justice.
- c. He could seek to somehow *clear* the man – The divine Judge, of course, chose the third approach; namely, clearing the guilty defendant through justification.

4. The method of justification – “How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?” (Job 25:4). “Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace” (Rom. 4:16).

- a. It is by faith – “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1). This is the only way for the sinner to be saved.

One of the great Old Testament examples of salvation can be found in Numbers 21 (and referred to in John 3). At that time many sinning Israelites had suffered fatal wounds by poisonous snakes. But God offered a cure, requiring only that, by faith, the stricken victim gaze upon a brass serpent atop a pole.

- (1) The events as reported by Moses – “And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived” (Num. 21:9).
 - (2) The event as recalled by Jesus – “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up” (John 3:14).
- b. It is by grace – “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3:24). “That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:7). This is the best way for God to be glorified. (See Eph. 2:1-10.)

Man justifies only the innocent; but God, only the guilty. Man justifies on the basis of self-merit; but God, on the basis of the Savior's merit.

5. The two great examples of justification

- a. Abraham – He was justified apart from circumcision. “And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness” (Gen. 15:6).

We are informed he was 86 at the time of his conversion. “And Abram was fourscore and six years old, when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram” (Gen. 16:16). We are told he was 99 when circumcision took place. “And Abraham was ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin” (Gen. 17:24). (See especially Rom. 4:1-5, 9-25.)

Note: Some have imagined a contradiction between *Paul* and *James* concerning the justification of Abraham. “Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (Rom. 4:4-5). “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” James 2:24).

There exists no such contradiction. Let us note what these two men say about justification. *Paul* says that through *faith* a man is justified before *God*. *James* says that through *works* a man is justified before *men*. *Paul* says *faith* is the *root* of justification. *James* says *works* are the *fruit* of justification.

The teaching of the Reformation was: “Good works make not a good man, but a good man doeth good works.”

- b. David – He was justified apart from the Levitical offerings. “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile” (Psa. 32:1-2). “For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise” (Psa. 51:16-17). “Even as David also describeth

the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Rom. 4:6-8).

6. The results of justification

- a. The remission of sin's penalty – "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: 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). (See also Rom. 8:1, 33-34.)
- b. The restoration to divine favor – See Romans 5:1-11.
- c. The imputation of Christ's righteousness – "For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.... Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead" (Rom. 4:3, 23-24). "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" (2 Cor. 5:21).

L. Sanctification – "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth" (John 17:19), "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" (Eph. 5:25-26). "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification" (1 Thess. 4:3). "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly" (1 Thess. 5:23).

1. Sanctification defined

a. Negative considerations (what it is *not*)

- (1) It is *not* the eradication of the sinful nature – In fact, those who boast of the eradication of their sinful natures actually claim that which Paul, James, and John admit they had not attained.
 - (a) Paul's testimony – "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:12-14).
 - (b) James's testimony – "For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body" (James 3:2).
 - (c) John's testimony – "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:8-9).

Note: The opposite and equally erroneous position of eradicationism is *antinomianism*, which means literally "against the law." This was the theory that a Christian was under no moral obligation whatsoever to observe the commandments. Thus, the first view was an attempt to *eliminate* sin, while the second simply *enjoyed* it. Both sinless perfection and sinful imperfections are unscriptural doctrines. Although the Christian cannot be sinless, he can, nevertheless, through sanctification, *sin less*,

- (2) It is *not* the "second blessing" – In 2 Corinthians Paul writes: "And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a second benefit" (2 Cor. 1:15).

Some have taken their theology of the second blessing from this verse. However, Paul describes the Corinthian believers in his first epistle as already being sanctified: "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours" (1 Cor. 1:2). "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:11).

- (3) It is *not* the baptism by the Holy Spirit – Paul states *all* believers have been baptized by the Holy Spirit, regardless of their personal spiritual condition. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13).

Compare this with the following: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envy, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as

men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?" (1 Cor. 3:1-4).

- b. Positive considerations (what it *is*) – Sanctification occurs in various forms some 300 times in the New Testament and 760 times in the Old Testament, for a total of 1,060 in the Bible. The basic meaning in all these instances is “to set apart.” Thus:
- (1) Days and seasons were sanctified – “And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made” (Gen. 2:3).
“Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee” (Deut. 5:12).
“Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the LORD your God, and cry unto the LORD” (Joel 1:14). “Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly” (Joel 2:15). (See also Neh. 13:19-22.)
 - (2) Physical objects were sanctified.
 - (a) Mount Sinai – “And Moses said unto the LORD, The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it” (Exod. 19:23).
 - (b) The Levitical offerings – “And thou shalt sanctify the breast of the wave offering, and the shoulder of the heave offering, which is waved, and which is heaved up, of the ram of the consecration, even of that which is for Aaron, and of that which is for his sons” (Exod. 29:27).
 - (c) The fields – “And if a man sanctify unto the LORD a field which he hath bought, which is not of the fields of his possession” (Lev. 27:22).
 - (d) The tabernacle – “And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest's office” (Exod. 29:44).
 - (e) The city gates – “Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brethren the priests, and they builded the sheep gate; they sanctified it, and set up the doors of it; even unto the tower of Meah they sanctified it, unto the tower of Hananeel” (Neh. 3:1).
 - (f) Houses – “And when a man shall sanctify his house to be holy unto the LORD, then the priest shall estimate it, whether it be good or bad: as the priest shall estimate it, so shall it stand” (Lev. 27:14).
 - (3) People were to sanctify themselves – “For I am the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth” (Lev. 11:44).
 - (4) One man could sanctify another – “Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine” (Exod. 13:2).
 - (5) Evildoers sanctified themselves – “They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD” (Isa. 66:17)
 - (6) Israel was punished for not sanctifying God – “Because ye trespasses against me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel” (Deut. 32:51).
 - (7) God sanctified Christ – “Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?” (John 10:36).
 - (8) Christ sanctified his disciples – “I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine” (John 17:9).
 - (9) A believing married partner can sanctify the unbelieving partner – “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy” (1 Cor. 7:14).
 - (10) Carnal Christians are said to be sanctified – “Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours” (1 Cor. 1:2) “For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” (1 Cor. 3:3)
 - (11) Believers are to sanctify God – “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” (1 Pet. 3:15).

2. Sanctification contrasted – At this point it may help to contrast sanctification with justification.
 - a. Justification deals with our *standing*, while sanctification deals with our *state*.
 - b. Justification is that which God does *for us*, while sanctification is that which God does *in us*.
 - c. Justification is an *act*, while sanctification is a *work*.
 - d. Justification is the *means*, while sanctification is the *end*.
 - e. Justification makes us *safe*, while sanctification makes us *sound*.
 - f. Justification *declares* us good, while sanctification *makes* us good.
 - g. Justification removes the *guilt* and *penalty* of sin, while sanctification checks the *growth* and *power* of sin.
 - h. Justification furnishes the *track* that leads to heaven, while sanctification furnishes the *train*.
3. Sanctification achieved – In Romans 6 Paul clearly lays out the program leading to that lifelong process of growing in grace and spiritual maturity, which is sanctification. The plan involves three simple commands.
 - a.“Know ye” – See Romans 6:1-10.
 - (1) That we have been “buried with him [Christ] by baptism into death” – “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4)

Here Paul says Christ not only died *for me*, but *as me*. The word *baptism* simply means “identification.” This identification with Christ on Calvary is one of many “dry baptisms” in the Bible. Others would include:

 - (a) The baptism of sin and suffering upon Christ – “But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able” (Matt. 20:22).
 - (b) The baptism of the Holy Spirit upon believers at Pentecost – “For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence” (Acts 1:5).
 - (c) The baptism of believers into the body of Christ – “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:13).
 - (d) The baptism “for the dead” – “Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?” (1 Cor. 15:29). Note: This is thought to refer to the act of living believers identifying themselves with martyred believers by picking up their fallen banners,
 - (e) The baptism “unto Moses” – “And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea” (1 Cor. 10:2).
 - (f) The baptism of judgment during the tribulation (Matt. 3:11-12)
 - (2) That we have been “planted together... in the likeness of his resurrection” – “For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection” (Rom. 6:5).

The believer has now been “transplanted” three times:

 - (a) To the Garden of Eden, where he sinned with Adam
 - (b) To the cross, where he died with Christ
 - (c) To the tomb, where he arose with Christ
 - (3) That because of these two facts, the believer is:
 - (a) Delivered from his sin – “God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin” (Rom. 6:2, 6-7).
 - (b) Delivered to his Savior – “Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died

unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God" (Rom. 6:8-10).

Death cancels all obligations. Sin here is personified as a cruel tyrant who taxes his subjects beyond endurance. The only way to beat the rap is to die. This then renders inactive (but does not remove) the body of sin and makes it powerless. (See Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:9-10.)

- b. "Reckon ye" – See Romans 6:11-12. This simply means that by faith we are to act upon these facts regardless of any personal feelings.

c. Yield ye" – Romans 6:13-23

- (1) We are to stop yielding (present tense) our body members as instruments of unrighteousness.
- (2) We are to once for all (aorist tense) yield our body members as instruments of righteousness.

There are three Latin theological terms that may clarify this precious doctrine.

These are:

- (a) *Non posse non pecare* – not able not to sin. This refers to believers before their salvation.
- (b) *Posse non pecare* – able not to sin. This describes them after their salvation. They now have the power to live victorious lives.
- (c) *Non posse pecare* – not able to sin. This describes their existence after the Rapture.

- M. Glorification – "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified" (Rom. 8:30). "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:2). "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" (Rom. 8:18).

"It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power" (1 Cor. 15:43). 'When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory' (Col. 3:4). "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed" (1 Pet. 5:1).

- 1. The meaning of glorification – It refers to the ultimate and absolute physical, mental, and spiritual perfections of all believers. (See Rom. 8:22-23; 1 Cor. 15:41-44; 15:51-55; 2 Cor. 4:14-18; Jude 24-25.)
- 2. The time of glorification – It will begin at the Rapture and continue throughout all eternity. "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (1 Cor. 15:51-53). (See also 1 Thess. 4:13-18.)
- 3. The purpose of glorification – Glorification is both the logical and necessary final side of the great salvation triangle. It completes justification and sanctification.
 - a. In the past – Christ the Prophet saved us from the penalty of sin through justification (Eph. 2:8; Titus 3:5).
 - b. In the present – Christ the Priest saves us from the power of sin through sanctification (Heb. 7:25).
 - c. In the future – Christ the King shall save us from the presence of sin through glorification (Rom. 5:9-10).
- 4. The results of glorification – What kind of body will the believer possess?
 - a. It will be a body like Christ's body – 'Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself' (Phil. 3:21). "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" (1 John 3:2).
 - b. It will be a body of flesh and bone – "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have" (Luke 24:39).
 - c. It will be a recognizable body – "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Cor. 13:12).
 - d. It will be a body in which the Spirit predominates – "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body" (1 Cor. 15:44). "And as we

have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly” (1 Cor. 15:49).

This situation is, of course, reversed today, as seen in the following verse: “Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak” (Mark 14:38).

- e. It will be a body unlimited by time, gravity, or space – On at least three occasions during the early days following his resurrection, our Lord defied all natural laws by suddenly appearing in and out of locked rooms to comfort his disciples.
 - (1) First occasion – He disappears from the home of two disciples in Emmaus. “And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight” (Luke 24:31).
 - (2) Second occasion – He appears to the apostles in Jerusalem. “Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you” (John 20:19).
 - (3) Third occasion – He appears (eight days later) to 11 apostles in Jerusalem. “And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you” (John 20:26).
- f. It will be an eternal body – “For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Cor. 5:1).
- g. It will be a glorious body – “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” (Rom. 8:18). (See 1 Cor. 15:43.)

The Hebrew word for glory is *kabod*, which means literally “to be heavy,” lending itself to that one laden down with riches (Gen. 31:1), power (Isa. 8:7), and position (Gen. 45:13). It can also refer to moral beauty (Exod. 33:18-23).

The Greek word for glory is *doxa*, which means literally “to manifest an honorable opinion.” Both words often suggest the brightness and brilliance of supernatural light. Putting all these meanings together, it may be suggested that the believer’s glorified body will be supernaturally enriched and empowered to serve God in an appointed position by radiating the brightness of grace to angels and the universe.

- N. Preservation – “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it” (1 Thess. 5:23-24). “Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called” (Jude 1).

This word, which deals with the burning question, “Can a saved person ever lose his or her salvation?” will be fully considered in section XI, “The Security of Salvation.”

- O. Origination – “Wherefore David blessed the LORD before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed be thou, LORD God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee” (1 Chron. 29:10-14).

We now briefly (and bravely) discuss the final word concept in the vocabulary of salvation. It deals with what is, without doubt, the most profound (and often perverted) subject in the entire Word of God. Throughout church history (especially from the sixteenth century onward) no other single theme has stirred such thunder and turmoil as has this subject. Some detest it, while others delight in it, but no honest Bible student can ignore it. By what means and for what reasons was the plan of salvation originated? Why are not all men saved? Can indeed all men be saved?

1. The terms included within the subject of salvation origination – Eight words here must be considered: *decree, ordain, foreknowledge, election, counsel, predestination, purpose, and called.*
 - a. Decree – “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” (Col. 1:16). “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (Rev. 4:11).

The decree of God is defined by the Westminster Shorter Catechism as follows: “The decree

of God is His eternal purpose according to the counsel of His will, whereby, for His own glory, He hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.”

Louis Berkhof lists seven characteristics involved in this decree.

- (1) It is founded in divine wisdom (Eph. 3:9-11; Psa. 104:24; Prov. 3:19),
- (2) It is eternal (Acts 15:18; Eph. 1:4; 2 Tim. 1:9).

The divine decree is eternal in the sense that it lies entirely in eternity. In a certain sense it can be said that all acts of God are eternal, since there is no succession of moments in the Divine Being. But some of them terminate in time, as, for instance, creation and justification. Hence we do not call them eternal but temporal acts of God. The decree, however, while it relates to things outside of God, remains in itself an act within the Divine Being, and is therefore eternal in the strictest sense of the word. (*Systematic Theology*, pp. 103 – 104)

- (3) It is efficacious (effective) (Psa. 33:11; Prov. 19:21; Isa. 46:9-10; 14:24).

This does not mean that God has determined to bring to pass Himself by a direct application of His power all things which are included in His decree, but only that what He has decreed will certainly come to pass; that nothing can thwart His purpose. (*Ibid.*, p. 104)

- (4) It is immutable (Acts 2:22-24).

Man may and often does alter his plans for various reasons. It may be that in making his plans he lacked seriousness of purpose, that he did not fully realize what the plan involved or that he is wanting the power to carry it out. But in God nothing of the kind is conceivable. He is not deficient in knowledge, veracity, or power. Therefore, He need not change His decree because of a mistake of ignorance, nor because of inability to carry it out. And He will not change it, because He is the immutable God, and because He is faithful and true. (*Ibid.*, pp. 104 – 105)

- (5) It is unconditional or absolute (Eph. 2:8; 1 Pet. 1:2) – This means that it is not dependent in any of its particulars on anything that is not part and parcel of the decree itself.
- (6) It is universal or all-comprehensive.

The decree includes whatsoever comes to pass in the world, whether it be in the physical or in the moral realm, whether it be good or evil, Eph. 1:11. It includes: (a) the good actions of men, Eph. 2:10; (b) their wicked acts, Prov. 16:4; Acts 2:23; 4:27, 28; (c) contingent events, Gen. 45:8; 50:20; Prov. 16:33; (d) the means as well as the end, Psa. 119:89-91; 2 Thess. 2:13; Eph. 1:4 (e) the duration of man’s life, Job 14:5; Psa. 39:4, and the place of his habitation, Acts 17:26. (*Ibid.*, p. 105)

- (7) With reference to sin, it is permissive.

It is customary to speak of the decree of God respecting moral evil as permissive. By His decree God rendered the sinful actions of man infallibly certain without deciding to effectuate them by acting immediately upon and in the finite will. This means that God does not positively work in man “both to will and to do” when man goes contrary to His revealed will.... It is a decree which renders the future sinful act absolutely certain, but in which God determines (a) not to hinder the sinful self-determination of the finite will; and (b) to regulate and control the result of this sinful self-determination. (*Ibid.*, p. 105)

“So they did eat, and were well filled: for he gave them their own desire” (Psa. 78:29). “And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul” (Psa. 106:15). “Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways” (Acts 14:16).

- b. Ordain – The Greek word for *ordain* is *tasso*, also translated “appoint.” To ordain means “to place or put in order, to arrange.”

- (1) In the New Testament we have three nontheological examples of this – “Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them” (Matt. 28:16). “For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it” (Luke 7:8). “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God” (Rom. 13:1).
- (2) In the theological usage of the word, note – “And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed” (Acts 13:48). “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; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you” (1 Pet. 1:18-20).
- c. Foreknowledge – The Greek word for *foreknowledge* is *proginosko*, meaning “to know experientially, to know beforehand.” This prior knowledge is seen operating in the following areas:
- (1) The realm of creation itself – “Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world” (Acts 15:18).
 - (2) The nation Israel – “Hear this word that the LORD hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities” (Amos 3:1-2). “I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid... God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew” (Rom. 11:1-2).
 - (3) The crucifixion and resurrection of Christ – “And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!” (Luke 22:22). “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it” (Acts 2:23-24). “Who [Christ] verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world” (1 Pet. 1:20). “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” (Rev. 13:8).
 - (4) The believer
 - (a) His physical condition – See Psalm 139.
 - (b) His spiritual condition – “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate” (Rom. 8:29). “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father” (1 Pet. 1:2).
- d. Election – The Greek word for *election* is *eklektoς*, To elect is “to pick or choose from a number.” It means to select for an appointed task.
- (1) Christ was God’s elect – “A living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious” (1 Pet. 2:4). (See also Isa. 42:1; 49:5; Luke 23:35; 1 Pet. 2:6.)
 - (2) A certain group of angels have been elected – “I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels” (1 Tim. 5:21).
 - (3) Old Testament Israel was an elect nation – “The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers” (Acts 13:17). (See also Deut. 4:37; 7:6-8; 1 Kings 3:8; Isa. 44:1-2; Matt. 24:22, 24, 31; Rom. 9:25-27.)
 - (4) Believing Jews today are an elect group – “Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace” (Rom. 11:5).
 - (5) Certain men were elected to perform important tasks in God’s ministry.
 - (a) Jeremiah – “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations” (Jer. 1:5).
 - (b) David – “And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he” (1 Sam. 16:12). (See also 2 Sam. 7:8; Psa. 78:70-72.)
 - (c) Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3)

- (d) John the Baptist (Luke 1:13-17)
- (e) Paul – “But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel” (Acts 9:15).
- (f) Isaac – “Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called” (Rom. 9:7).
- (g) Jacob – “(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth)” (Rom. 9:11).
- (6) The 12 apostles were elected by God – “And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples” (Matt. 10:1). “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you” (John 15:16). “Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?” (John 6:70). (See also Acts 1:2, 24; 10:41.)
- (7) The plan of salvation was chosen by God – “But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are” (1 Cor. 1:27-28).
- (8) The people of salvation were chosen by God – “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect?” (Rom. 8:33). “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4). (See also 2 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim, 2:10; Titus 1:1-2; James 2:5; 1 Pet. 1:1-2; 2:9; Rev. 17:14.)
- e. Counsel – The Greek word for *counsel* is *boulema*, referring to “deliberate and willful intention.” Biblical examples are:
 - (1) The intention of the Pharisees to kill Christ – “Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death” (John 11:53).
 - (2) The intention of the Pharisees to kill Peter and John – “When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them” (Acts 5:33).
 - (3) The intention of the centurion to save Paul – “But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land” (Acts 27:43).
 - (4) The intention of God to offer up Christ – “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain” (Acts 2:23). (See also Acts 4:26-28.)
 - (5) The intention of God to save the elect (Eph. 1:11; Heb. 6:17)
 - (6) The intention of God to control all things – “Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure” (Isa. 46:10). (See Psa. 33:11; Prov. 14:21; Isa. 25:1; 46:10.)
- f. Predestination – The Greek words for *predestination* are *proorizo* and *horizo*. To predestinate is to “mark out beforehand, to determine a boundary.” The English word *horizon* comes from *horizo*. It is our horizon, of course, that marks out the earth from the sky. The Greek word is also translated as “determination” and “declaration.” This word is used in reference to:
 - (1) The declaration of the deity of Christ – “And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Rom. 1:4). While Jesus was on earth, God the Father marked off the true identity and nature of his beloved Son, Jesus Christ.
 - (2) The predetermination of the death of Christ at the hands of wicked men – “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain” (Acts 2:23). (See also Luke 22:22; Acts 4:27-28.)
 - (3) The predetermining of national boundaries – See Acts 17:24-26.
 - (4) The predetermining of believers to be conformed to Christ – See Romans 8:29-30; Ephesians 1:9-12.

The Westminster Confession of Faith states this act of God as follows: “God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of His own Will, freely and unchangeable ordain whatsoever to pass: yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the Will of the creatures, nor is the liberty of contingency

- of second causes taken away, but rather established.”
- g. Purpose – The Greek word for *purpose* is *prothesis*, literally meaning a “setting forth.”
- (1) The setting forth of the shewbread in the tabernacle (Luke 6:4; Heb. 9:2)
 - (2) The setting forth of nations for judgment
 - (a) Assyria (Isa. 14:26)
 - (b) Tyre (Isa. 23:9)
 - (c) Babylon (Isa. 46:11)
 - (d) Israel (Jer. 4:28; 51:29)
 - (3) The setting forth of Pharaoh as an object of God’s judgment – “For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth” (Rom. 9:17).
 - (4) The setting forth of the divine plan to work through Isaac (instead of Ishmael) and Jacob (instead of Esau) – See Romans 9:6-13.
- h. Called – The Greek words for *called* are *kaleo* and *klesis*, meaning “to officially summon.”
- (1) As used in reference to Jesus’ parables
 - (a) The parable of the Lord of the vineyard – “So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first” (Matt. 20:8).
 - (b) The parable of the departing master – “For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods” (Matt. 25:14).
 - (2) As used in reference to the call of the elect – “Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified” (Rom. 8:30). “God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor. 1:9). (See also Eph. 4:1; 1 Thess. 2:12; 2 Thess. 1:11; 2 Tim. 1:9; Phil. 3:4; Heb. 9:25; 3:1; 2 Pet. 1:10.)
2. The two basic positions concerning the subject of salvation origination – Why are some people saved and others lost? Does man have *any* say in his salvation? Does he have *all* say? No serious Bible student denies the *fact* of God’s election. However, good men do disagree concerning the *nature* of this election.
- a. Position number one
- (1) Defined
- The only people that God predestinates to be saved are those whom He did foreknow, that is, those who, in His infinite knowledge, God knows will, when given the opportunity, come to trust in Christ to be saved. It is not that predestination *causes* people to trust Christ and be saved. No, they are only predestinated to be saved because God knows that they will put their trust in Christ. Predestination is based wholly on God’s foreknowledge. (John R. Rice, *Predestinated for Hell? No!* p. 90)
- Perhaps one of the most qualified theologians to hold this position is Henry Thiessen. He writes:
- Furthermore, He chose who He foreknew would accept Christ. The Scriptures definitely base God’s election on His foreknowledge: “Whom He foreknew, He also foreordained,... and whom He foreordained, them He also called” (Romans 8:29-30); “to the elect... according to the foreknowledge of God the Father” (1 Peter 1:1, 2). Although we are nowhere told what it is in the foreknowledge of God that determines His choice, the repeated teaching of Scripture that man is responsible for accepting or rejecting salvation necessitates our postulating that it is man’s reaction to the revelation God has made of Himself that is the basis of His election. May we repeat: Since mankind is hopelessly dead in trespasses and sins and can do nothing to obtain salvation, God graciously restores to all men sufficient ability to make a choice in the matter of submission to Him. This is the salvation-bringing grace of God that has appeared to all men. In His

foreknowledge He perceives what each one will do with this restored ability, and elects men to salvation in harmony with His knowledge of their choice of Him. There is no merit in this transaction. (*Systematic Theology*, pp. 344 – 345)

- (2) Defended – A number of scriptural principles are offered to support this first position. Some are as follows:

- (a) Because Christ is said to have died for all men – “In him was life; and the life was the light of men. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light that all men through him might believe” (John 1:4, 7). “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die.... And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world” (John 12:32-33, 47). “Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life” (Rom. 5:18). (See also Rom. 8:32; 1 Tim. 2:6; 4:10; Heb. 2:9; 2 Pet. 2:1; 3:9; 1 John 2:2.)
- (b) Because of the justice of God – Henry Thiessen writes:

It is admitted that God is under no obligation to provide salvation for anyone, since all are responsible for their present lost condition. It is also admitted that God is not obliged actually to save anyone, even though Christ has provided salvation for men. But it is difficult to see how God can choose some from the mass of guilty and condemned men, provide salvation for them and efficiently secure their salvation, and do nothing about all the others, if, as we read, righteousness is the foundation of His throne. God would not be partial if He permitted all men to go to their deserved doom; but how can He be other than partial if He selects some from this multitude of men and does things for them and in them that He refuses to do for the others, if there is not something about the two classes that makes the difference? We hold that common grace is extended to all, and that everyone has the ability restored to him to “will to do His will.” The salvation-bearing grace of God has appeared to all men; but some receive the grace of God in vain. It seems to us that only if God makes the same provisions for all and makes the same offers to all, is He truly just. (*Ibid.*, pp. 346 – 347)

- (c) Because Christ bore all our iniquities –“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” (Isa. 53:6).
- (d) Because of the command for all men to repent – “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30).
- (e) Because of the universal “whosoever will” invitation – “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). “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Rom. 10:13). “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev. 22:17).

Note the words of John R. Rice in concluding this first view:

There is a Bible doctrine of God’s foreknowledge, predestination and election. Most great bodies of Christians not strictly Calvinists, or not Calvinists at all, agree that God has His controlling hand on

the affairs of men. They agree that according to the Bible, He selects individuals like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and King Cyrus, as instruments to do certain things He has planned, He raised up Pharaoh who was already “a vessel of wrath,” with many years of hardened heart and wicked rejection, to make him an example of punishment. Christians agree that God may choose a nation, particularly that He did choose Israel, through which He would give the law, the prophets, and eventually through whom the Saviour would come. It is a Bible doctrine that God foreknows who will trust in Christ, and that He has predestined or purposed to see that they are justified and glorified. He will keep the saved, will glorify those He saves. You see, Calvin did not originate those teachings. They are taught in the Bible, believed by multitudes who are not Calvinists.

But the doctrine that God predestined some men to Hell, that some cannot be saved, that they are born to be damned by God’s own choice, is a doctrine of Calvinism, a philosophy developed by John Calvin. It is a sectarian tenet strictly followed only by hyper-Calvinists. It is a radical heresy, not taught in the Bible.

The term *Calvinism* is loosely used by people who do not hold Calvin’s teaching on predestination. To thousands who may call themselves Calvinists, the word means only that they believe in salvation by grace, without human merit, as Calvin did, and so believe in everlasting life for the believer, since he is kept by the power of God. One who says he is a Calvinist generally means simply that he is not an Arminian, that he is kept by the grace of God, and is not saved or kept by his own works or life.

So those who are generally, but mistakenly, called Calvinists only rarely follow Calvin in his doctrine that some are predestined to be lost, born to be damned, by God’s own plan, and cannot be saved.

John Calvin was a great theologian, was right in saying that people are saved by grace alone. But extreme Calvinism, the teaching that some people, by the foreordained plan of God, are predestined to be saved and some are predestined to be lost and that their destinies were settled before they were born, is a wicked heresy contrary to the Bible, that dishonors God and has done incalculable harm. The heresy of extreme Calvinism is particularly appealing to people from four viewpoints.

First, it appeals to the scholarly intellect, the self-sufficient and proud mind. So brilliant, philosophical, scholarly preachers are apt to be misled on this matter more than the humble-hearted Bible-believer.

Second, this doctrine appeals particularly to those who hold “covenant theology,” that is, the Presbyterian doctrine that believers and their children should be received in the church alike, that babies sprinkled in infancy are in a covenant relationship with God without any choice of their own, etc.

Third, the hyper-Calvinistic heresy is particularly appealing to the carnal nature, unwilling to have the heartbreak, the burden for soul-winning, unwilling to pay the price of separation and perhaps ostracism which goes with all-out-soul winning, unwilling to pay the price for the fullness of the Spirit in continual self-crucifixion and waiting on God.

Fourth, Calvinism especially appeals to those who think that hyper-Calvinism is the only answer to Arminianism. They do not

believe that a saved person is “on probation” and may lose his salvation at any moment. They know that the Bible dearly teaches salvation by grace and not of works. Hyper-Calvinists would like to make people believe, and do make many believe that, if one does not teach universal salvation, he must be either a Calvinist or an Arminian. The Arminian position does such violence to the grace of God that many would rather be Calvinists. I am convinced that Whitefield and Spurgeon were both influenced by the pressure of Arminian theology in their day, to call themselves Calvinists, although neither was hyper-Calvinistic in actual practice and emphasis.

Note some of the foolish statements of hyper-Calvinists. It has been said that ‘There are babes in Hell not a span long,’ that is, little ones who died in infancy or before birth, predestined to Hell with no choice in the matter! This is wholly unscriptural.

(*Predestined for Hell? No!* pp. 6 – 9)

b. Position number two

- (1) Defined – A. H. Strong explains this view.

Election is that eternal act of God, by which in His sovereign pleasure, and on account of no foreseen merit in them, he chooses certain out of the number of sinful men to be the recipients of the special grace of His Spirit, and so to be made voluntary partakers of Christ’s salvation. (*Systematic Theology*, p. 779)

Years before Strong, church father Augustine had written in similar fashion: “He chooses us, not because we believe but that we may believe; lest we should say that we first chose him.”

- (2) Defended – Charles F. Baker writes the following in defense of the second position.

In approaching the doctrine of Election, we must keep certain Scriptural facts in mind. The first is that God is absolutely righteous. As Paul introduces the subject of Election in Romans 9 he asks the question which comes to the mind of everyone who has ever seriously considered the doctrine: “What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God?” (vs. 14). And he immediately answers: “Perish the thought.” The second fact we need to consider is the estate of man under sin. Man is a responsible being who is fully accountable to God. He is responsible for his apostasy from God and his lost condition. He merits only the judgment of God. The third thing which Scripture presents is that no man of himself seeks after God. In other words, Scripture teaches that, even though God provided a salvation for the whole world, not one would accept it and be saved unless God first of all took the initiative by Himself seeking after man.

– What election is not:

It is not an arbitrary act of God or capriciousness. Election is according to God’s eternal purpose and foreknowledge (Romans 8:28, 29; 9:11; Ephesians 1:4-11; 1 Peter 1:2).

It is not an act to choose some to be lost or a decree of reprobation. Election is to salvation, not to condemnation (1 Thessalonians 1:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:13),

It is not merely God’s purpose to save them that believe, although it is true that only those who believe will be saved.

It is not man’s choosing of himself, although man must himself choose if he is to be saved. Election is God’s choice. Christ said to His apostles: “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you” (John 15:16).

It is not merely to a place of service, although God chooses men for special tasks. Election is also unto salvation (2 Thessalonians 2:13).

– What election is:

It is a choice on the part of God which includes some, but not all. This fact is substantiated by three lines of proof. The fact that some are lost is proof that not all were chosen. The word itself, to elect, would be meaningless if all were to be saved. When an election is held, it is evident from the use of the word that only certain ones will be appointed to office. In the third place the Scripture speaks over and over of those who are lost, so that these are definitely not among the elect.

It is a choice which God made before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4). It is sometimes helpful to consider the fact that God is a timeless Being, that He lives in an eternal now. Hence, it is not as though He made a choice a billion years before He really knew what we would do, but rather He knew us then as we are today.

It is a choice based upon something that is in God, and not something that is in man. Paul states that election is according to grace (Romans 11:5), and he also definitely states that it is not of works (Romans 9:11). Election, like salvation, is all of grace and not of works. Therefore, it should be evident that God did not choose to save certain ones because He foresaw any goodness or merit in them.

It is a choice based upon foreknowledge, which in turn is based upon the determinate counsel and purpose of God. It is evident that God has purposed everything that He has done, and the reason God foreknows what will happen is because He has purposed it.

It is a choice which is absolutely sure of fulfillment; no power can overthrow it. Romans 8:28-30 indicates that every one who is fore-known of God will be called, justified, and glorified. Verse 33 states that no one will ever be able to lay anything to the charge of God's elect, and the chapter ends with the assurance that nothing shall ever be able to separate the elect from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. Acts 13:48 states, "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed."

It is a choice which is in harmony with human freedom. Election does not coerce or force the elect to believe. No man upon believing the gospel has the consciousness of being forced against his will to believe. It is probably at this point that human knowledge is most lacking in understanding how God can move upon the will of man without violating man's freedom. Even the apostle Paul, after discussing the elective purposes of God with Israel, had to confess: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?... For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen (Romans 11:33-36). (A Dispensational Theology, pp. 389 – 390)

3. The objections leveled against these views of salvation's origination

a. First position

- (1) It leaves salvation wholly in the hands of man
 - (a) The soul winner has 100 percent power to decide who will get a chance to go to heaven.
 - (b) The sinner (upon hearing the message) has 100 percent power to decide whether he will go to heaven.
- (2) It does violence to the word *election* – If God merely knew who would accept him, he would be thus limited to crystal-ball gazing and not electing or choosing in any sense of the word whatsoever. It would be like "electing" all those who will be born in the USA next year to become Americans.
- (3) It limits God's purpose and his glory to the actions of men.

b. Second position

- (1) It makes God a respecter of persons.
- (2) It forces salvation upon the elect.
- (3) It denies the freedom of man.
- (4) It views election as an arbitrary act of God.
- (5) It discourages evangelism and missionary activity.
- (6) It generates pride in the mind of the elect.
- (7) It does violence to the word *whosoever*.
- (8) It leads to the doctrine of reprobation, the decree that certain ones should be lost.

4. Some conclusions on salvation's origination – In light of all we have just discussed, what position is the correct one? What are we to believe and teach? One is almost tempted when asked for his view on all this to respond as a politician once did. Upon being asked his position concerning a burning issue he replied: “Some of my friends are violently opposed to this issue, while other friends of mine are 100 percent in favor of it. But I want to tell you that *I'm for my friends!*”

In a more serious tone, it seems to this author that rather than ask which position is *correct*, one should inquire concerning which position is *complete*. Is either view able to work in all the Scriptures involved and harmonize them? It would appear not. Whatever interpretation one holds, he *must* consider the following principles.

- a. The Bible clearly presents in the strongest language *both* the sovereignty of God *and* the responsibility of man – The sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man cannot be totally reconciled in the mind of man. To do so would be like attempting to pour the Atlantic Ocean into a small bucket.

Consider the following illustration. Here is a mighty river flowing from eternity past to eternity future. Its ultimate destination is the glory of God and the good of the elect. On either side of the river is a clay bankside. One side is called the Sovereignty of God Bank, and the other side is the Responsibility of Man Bank. Some of the elect can be seen standing on both banks discussing (and on occasion perhaps denouncing) the theology of the opposite bank dwellers. But in doing this, the great and glorious River of Grace flowing at their feet is overlooked. The perfect will of God would direct both sides to embark upon that river and experience all its bountiful blessings. It takes two bank sides to make a river.

As a final thought here, what happens to a river if one of its supporting banks is removed? This, of course, has happened to earthly rivers through earthquakes or enemy bombs. When this occurs, the once life-giving waters cease flowing and the river becomes an ill-smelling, insect-ridden swamp.

To overemphasize one aspect of election and ignore or deny the other side is to turn salvation's river of redemption into a theological and sectarian swamp.

- b. We do not possess all the facts about anything – “And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know” (1 Cor. 8:2).

God has indeed told us everything he wants *us* to know, but certainly not everything *he* knows. “For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.... For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known” (1 Cor. 13:9, 12).

Following a discussion concerning the sovereignty of God, Paul freely confesses his ignorance and breaks into singing over the marvelous and matchless wisdom of God: “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen” (Rom. 11:33-36).

- c. God cannot do *anything* that is either unfair or unreasonable – It is not simply that he *wouldn't* but that he *couldn't*. “That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us” (Heb. 6:18).

We must therefore interpret anything God *does* by what he *is*. “He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he” (Deut. 32:4). (See also Gen. 18:25; Mark 7:35-37.)

The words penned by King Solomon some 30 centuries ago are appropriate as we bring this chapter to a close. “The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth. The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd. And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man” (Eccles. 12:10-13).

- X. The Completeness of Salvation – A modern proverb runs: “Youth is such a wonderful thing, but it's a shame to waste it all upon teenagers!” Be that as it may, one can rephrase the proverb in the area of

salvation to read: “Salvation is such a wonderful thing, but it’s a shame to waste it all upon the soul!”

The truth of the matter is that when we speak of winning souls to Christ, we imply salvation is limited to this area. However God’s salvation fully embraces man’s soul, spirit, and body.

- A. Salvation in regard to man’s body – “It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body” (1 Cor. 15:44). “Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Phil. 3:21). “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” (Rom. 8:23).
 - B. Salvation in regard to man’s soul – “Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil” (Heb. 6:19). “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls” James 1:21). “Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls” (1 Pet. 1:9). “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” (1 Pet. 4:19).
 - C. Salvation in regard to man’s spirit – “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” (Rom. 8:16). “The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen” (2 Tim. 4:22). “To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect” (Heb. 12:23).
- XI. The Security of Salvation – Does the Bible present a *whole* (unconditional and permanent) salvation, or does it offer a *holey* (conditional and temporary) salvation?

- A. The problems of eternal security – Dr. John F. Walvoord writes:

While most believers in Christ accept the doctrine that they can have assurance of salvation at any given moment in their experience, the question is often raised, “Can a person once saved become lost again?” Since the fear of losing salvation could seriously affect a believer’s peace of mind, and because his future is so vital, this question is a most important aspect of the doctrine of salvation.

The claim that one who is once saved may be lost again is based on certain biblical passages which seem to raise questions concerning the continuance of salvation. In the history of the church, there have been opposing systems of interpretation known as Calvinism, in support of eternal security, and Arminianism, in opposition to eternal security (each named after its foremost apologist, John Calvin or Jacob Arminius), (*Major Bible Themes*, p. 220)

Those holding the Arminian position confidently assure us their view is amply supported by some 100 biblical passages. It will prove helpful to all at this point to examine the more important of these verses.

They can be arranged under the following topical headings:

1. Passages dealing with false teachers – Matthew 7:15-23; 24:11; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15; 1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Peter 2:1-22; 3:16-17; 1 John 2:19; 2 John 7; Jude 4, 10-16; Revelation 22:18-19.
 - a. The above-mentioned passages considered – The men described in the above verses are apostates. An apostate is one who has received light but not life. He knows something of the Word of God, but nothing about the God of the Word. He then refuses to give even mental assent to the great truths of the Bible. His description and deeds are as follows:
 - (1) He is a grievous and ravening wolf dressed in sheep’s clothing – “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Matt. 7:15).
 - (2) He hates real sheep – “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock” (Acts 20:29).
 - (3) He will deceive many through great signs and wonders – “And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.... For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (Matt. 24:11, 24).
 - (4) He is a perverse empire-builder – “Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:30).
 - (5) He is divisive and materialistic – “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them” (Rom. 16:17).

- (6) He gives impressive speeches, using flowery language – “For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple” (Rom. 16:18).
- (7) He deceives by allowing Satan to disguise him as an angel of light, rather than a demon of darkness – “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.... 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” (2 Cor. 11:13, 15).
- (8) His nature and message are demon-controlled – “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth” (1 Tim. 4:1-3).
- (9) He perverts the doctrine of the Son of God – “For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist” (2 John 7). (See also 2 Pet. 2:1; Jude 4.)
- (10) He perverts the Word of God (2 Pet. 3:16; Rev. 22:18-19).
- (11) He perverts the grace of God (Jude 4).
- (12) He can be identified by his fruits – “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us” (1 John 2:19). (See also Matt. 7:16-20; James 3:11-12.)

b. Two of the above-mentioned passages considered in more detail

- (1) 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. 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? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

Some day Jesus will say to all false teachers and preachers, “I never knew you.” It does *not* read, “I *once* knew you,” or “I *used* to know you,” but rather, “I *never* knew you.”

- (2) 2 Peter 2:20-22 – “For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.”

While these false teachers had (for a time) escaped the evils of alcohol, sexual diseases, cancer from tobacco, etc. by loosely applying (as do, for example, the Mormons) the *principles* of the gospel, they nevertheless had *never* accepted the *person* of the gospel, the Lord Jesus Christ.

These cannot be Christians who became unsaved, for nowhere in the Bible does God call a believer a hog or a dog (2 Pet. 2:22). The “sow that was washed” here in the Greek language is in the middle voice, and thus should read, “The sow that washed itself.” Here is a clear case of moral reformation, *not* Messiah regeneration.

2. Passages dealing with the act of conversion itself – Matthew 10:32-33; John 8:51; 1 Corinthians 15:1-2; 2 Corinthians 13:5; Colossians 1:23; Hebrews 2:1-4; 12:25, 29; James 2:14-26; 1 John 3:6, 8-9; 5:18; 2 John 9.

Note a few of these passages:

- a. John 8:51 – “Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.”

Just what “saying” (teaching, commandment) is Jesus referring to here? In a previous conversation (John 6:28) a crowd had asked him: “What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?” Our Lord answered: “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him [Christ] whom he [the Father] hath sent” (John 6:29).

- b. 1 Corinthians 15:1-2 – “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain,”

The key phrase here is “unless ye have believed in vain.” What does this mean? Paul explains it in the following passage: “Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?” (1 Cor. 15:12).

There were apparently in Corinth some professing believers who denied the resurrection of Christ. The apostle, thus, says they were not saved in the first place and their faith was in vain since it is impossible for a denier of Christ’s resurrection to experience the new birth.

The little word *if* in 15:2 has also bothered some. But here in the Greek New Testament it is the first-class condition and should be rendered *since*. This is also true concerning the *if* in the following passage: “If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister” (Col. 1:23).

- c. 1 John 3:9 – “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”

Greek scholar Kenneth Wuest writes:

The infinitive in the present tense in Greek always speaks of continuous, habitual action, never the mere fact of the action... the translation therefore is, “He is not able to habitually sin.” The Greek text here holds no warrant for the erroneous teaching of sinless perfection. (*In the Last Days*, p. 150)

The same Greek construction also holds true for the following verses: “Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him” (1 John 3:6). “We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not” (1 John 5:18).

- d. Matthew 10:32-33 – “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.”

At the beginning of this chapter Jesus is instructing his apostles before sending them out to preach for the first time. In the above-quoted verses he reminds them of the seriousness of their task. They are to warn their hearers that to personally reject the Messiah here on earth would someday mean his rejection of them in heaven.

3. Passages dealing with Christian rewards – 1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Corinthians 5:9-10; Galatians 6:9; Colossians 3:24-25; 2 Timothy 2:12; James 1:12; 2 John 18; Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21.
 - a. 2 Timothy 2:12 – “If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us.”

The *deny* here can be tied into 1 Corinthians 3:15: “If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.” Thus the denial here is that of rewards.

- b. Colossians 3:24-25 – “Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.”

4. Passages dealing with missing God’s best – 1 Corinthians 9:27; 10:5; Hebrews 3:11-19; 4:1-16; 12:14-15.

- a. 1 Corinthians 9:27 – “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”

The word *castaway* here is *adokimos*, which means “disapproved.” Paul was not in the least concerned about his *salvation* from God (2 Tim. 1:12), but he was very concerned about his *service* for God. He did not want to be set on a spiritual shelf somewhere.

- b. 1 Corinthians 10:5 – “But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.”

- c. Hebrews 3:11 – “So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.”

These verses review the tragic Old Testament account of Israel’s unbelief at Kadesh-barnea in Numbers 14, where they refused to enter Palestine. Because of this, God would not allow anyone under 20 Joshua and Caleb excepted) to enter. Even Moses (because of a later sin) was refused passage. However, all this had nothing whatever to do with spiritual damnation, but rather with physical destruction. It simply (and sadly) meant that most of that generation would

never get out of the hot desert into a land flowing with milk and honey.

In Psalms we are told of God's reaction to Israel's terrible sin in the wilderness. Note: "For their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant, But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath" (Psa. 78:37-38). "Many times did he deliver them; but they provoked him with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity. Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry" (Psa. 106:43-44).

Moses' eventual salvation certainly cannot be questioned even though he was not allowed to enter the land. However, he is mentioned in the New Testament. (See Matt. 17:1-4.)

The point of all the above is simply this: the author of Hebrews uses this historical example to exhort believers to press on in their Christian lives and enter into God's perfect will. "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.... Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief" (Heb. 4:1, 11).

5. Passages dealing with God's discipline

- a. Romans 14:23 – "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; for whatsoever is not of faith is sin."
- b. 1 Corinthians 11:29 – "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."
- c. 1 Timothy 5:12 – "Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith."

The problem word found in each of these three verses is the word *damnation*. In each case the Greek word could be better rendered by the word *judgment*. In the first passage Paul refers to a believer eating certain foods he was not sure God wanted him to eat. In the second passage the apostle speaks of believers partaking of the Lord's Table with known sin in their lives. In the third passage he describes young believing widows who had displayed a worldly attitude toward sex and marriage. While *none* of these parties involved faced damnation, they all would, however, be judged by God.

Peter summarizes all this and uses the same Greek word. "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" (1 Pet. 4:17). (See also Heb. 12:50-11.)

6. Passages dealing with fruit bearing, testimony, and Christian maturity

- a. Matthew 5:13 – "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men."
- b. John 8:30-32 – "As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Our Lord would later amplify this statement: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly (John 10:10). While all Christians have *life*, only fruit-bearing Christians enjoy *abundant* life.

- c. John 15:6 – "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."

We note that it is *men* here who gather these fruitless branches and burn them, and *not* God. A similar example is given by Christ during the Sermon on the Mount. (See also Acts 13:43; 14:22; James 1:26; 2 Pet. 1:9-11; 1 John 2:24.) These verses thus describe useless testimony before men, not lost salvation before God.

7. Passages dealing with a believer being influenced by false doctrines – 2 Corinthians 11:2-4; Galatians 5:4; Colossians 2:4, 8, 18; 1 Thessalonians 3:5; 1 Timothy 1:6, 19-20; 6:20-21; 2 Timothy 2:18, 26. One of the reasons why a Christian is to mature in the faith is: "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Eph. 4:14).

Here Paul sadly admits it is tragically possible for a true believer to become entangled with false doctrine.

- a. The false doctrine of legalism – "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:4). This verse is probably the favorite proof-text of Arminian theology, especially the phrase "ye are fallen from grace." But it must be

asked just what had caused them to fall? It was a frantic (and fruitless) effort to fulfill the Mosaic Law. Does this then mean that a Christian who does his very best to perform good works will lose his salvation? It does not. Paul faults the Galatians *not* because of their *evil* against the law, but because of their *effort* to keep the law. Thus, to fall from grace is the act of allowing the legalism of law to prevent one from enjoying the full liberty of love. It is possible that both Peter (Gal. 2:11-14) and James (Acts 21:18-26) “fell from grace” for awhile over this matter. (See also 1 Tim. 1:6-7.)

- b. The false doctrine of worldly wisdom and philosophy (Col. 2:8)
- c. The false doctrine of angel worship (Col. 2:18)
- d. The false doctrine of a past resurrection theory (1 Tim. 1:19-20; 2 Tim. 2:18)
- 8. Passages dealing with the sin unto death – Acts 5:1-11; Romans 6:16; 8:13; 1 Corinthians 5:5; 11:30; Hebrews 6:4-20; 10:26; James 1:13-15; 5:19-20; 1 John 5:16.

This sin unto death is a sin only a believer can commit. It refers not to his eternal soul, but to his earthly service. It is committed when he allows his life to become so carnal and unproductive that God simply takes him home early via physical death. This sin (or perhaps sins) can vary among Christians.

- a. Ananias and Sapphira committed this sin (Acts 5:1-11).
- b. Some of the Corinthian believers committed it – “For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep” (1 Cor. 11:30).
- c. The man in 1 Corinthians 5 was in danger of committing it (1 Cor. 5:1-5).
- d. Hymenaeus and Alexander were in danger of committing it – “Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme” (1 Tim. 1:20).
- e. Some to whom the book of Hebrews was addressed were in danger of committing it – “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame” (Heb. 6:4-6). “For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.... For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb. 10:26, 30-31).
- 9. Passages dealing with the unpardonable sin – “Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come” (Matt. 12:31-32).

These verses have bothered many Christians and unsaved alike. Two basic questions must be asked here.

- a. To whom did Jesus speak these words? They were directed toward the wicked Pharisees, “But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand” (Matt. 12:24-24).
 - b. What grievous sin had they committed? For many months they had the priceless privilege of hearing the Savior’s sermons and viewing his mighty miracles. But instead of believing, they degraded the Son of God, accusing him of performing miracles through satanic energy. By doing this they committed the unpardonable sin. What else could God himself possibly do to convince them? It was not, of course, that they *couldn’t* believe, but that they *wouldn’t* believe.
- In light of the above, the unpardonable sin cannot be committed today, as Jesus is not walking about in his earthly body performing miracles.
- 10. Passages dealing with the nation Israel and the tribulation – Matthew 22:1-13; 24:13, 45-51; 25:1-30; Luke 13:23-30.
 - a. Unsaved Israeli individuals – Each of these passages deals with those unsaved Israeli individuals who survive the tribulation but find themselves spiritually unprepared to meet their returning Messiah. Jesus uses the parabolic method to relate this sad truth in each of the five passages.

- (1) The parable of the wedding guest without a wedding garment (Matt. 22:1-13)
 - (2) The parable of the unfaithful servant (Matt. 24:45-51)
 - (3) The parable of the 10 virgins (Matt. 25:1-13)
 - (4) The parable of the eight talents (Matt. 25:14-30)
 - (5) The parable of the shut door (Luke 13:23-30)
- b. Physical survival during the tribulation – One passage deals with sheer physical survival during the tribulation. Note: “But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved” (Matt. 24:13).
- What “end” is he referring to here? Verses 21 and 29 make it clear he is talking about the coming great tribulation. “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matt. 24:21).
11. Passage dealing with Gentile nations – Romans 11:13-24 (especially to be noted are verses 21-22). “For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee, Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off” (Rom. 11:21-22).
- In dealing with this entire passage, let us consider four questions.
- a. To whom is Paul talking? Paul is talking to Gentile people (v. 13).
 - b. What is he talking about? He tells about the opportunity of Gentiles to share in the spiritual blessings of Abraham. (See especially Rom. 4:23-25.)
 - c. Who are the broken-off branches mentioned in 11:17? They represent the nation Israel, which had just rejected its own Messiah. (See also Matt. 21:42-43.)
 - d. Who are the grafted branches here? They represent Gentile people. The conclusion is that this passage has nothing whatsoever to do with individuals losing their salvation, but rather with that of the Gentiles receiving (during the Church Age) those blessings forfeited by Israel.
12. Passages dealing with the testimony of local churches – Revelation 2 – 3. Note especially the following verses:
- “Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love, Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent” (Rev. 2:4-5). “I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth” (Rev. 3:15-16).
- The last verse in chapter 1 makes it perfectly clear that Jesus speaks these words to local churches, and the issue in question concerns itself with that of the personal testimony of each local church, not to the individual members within the church.
13. Passages dealing with head assent instead of heart acceptance – Matthew 13:1-8, 18-23; Luke 11:24-28; John 6:66.
- a. The seed and the four soils (Matt. 13:1-8, 18-23) – Some have mistakenly concluded that all four individuals here (as represented by different kinds of soil) were originally saved, but only one retained this salvation. However, a little logic will show the error of this position. Does the Bible teach that every person who hears the gospel will be saved? It does not. Furthermore, Scripture teaches that a person cannot be saved without eventually showing *some* kind of fruit, however small. Thus, the only born-again individual here was the fourth, as proven by his fruit.
 - b. The man and the unclean spirits – “When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him 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” (Luke 1:24-26).
- Here is clearly a case of moral reformation without regeneration. A demon (let alone eight) cannot dwell in the heart of a saved man.
- c. The defecting disciples – “From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him” (John 6:66). The word *disciple* simply means “one who learns.” Many of those who followed Christ were simply band-wagon, fair-weather friends. When the sun grew hot and the road bumpy, they just drifted away, For a while they may have *professed* salvation, but they never *possessed* it. (See also John 2:23-25; 12:42-43.)
14. Passages dealing with the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar – Ezekiel 3:17-21; 33:8.
- One of the most important rules in rightly understanding any passage in the Bible is to put it into

its proper context. Ezekiel wrote these words around 597 B.C. from Babylon (where he had been taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar) prior to the final destruction of Jerusalem, which occurred in 586 B.C. While Ezekiel was in exile, God had commissioned him to be a “watchman unto the house of Israel.”

“Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me” (Ezek 3:17). “So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me” (Ezek. 33:7).

He was to warn those still living in Jerusalem that, unless they repented immediately, a similar fate awaited them. In other words, those arrogant Jerusalem citizens felt that, inasmuch as they had already escaped Nebuchadnezzar’s first (605 B.C.) and second (597 B.C.) siege, they had nothing to fear and need not repent.

15. Passages dealing with the Book of Life – Here two separate books apparently are in mind.
 - a. The book of physical life – “And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. And returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin –; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written” (Exod. 32:30-32). Moses here may have been offering himself as a physical substitute for the nation Israel which nation had just grieved and angered God through the sin of golden calf worship.

“Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous” (Psa. 69:28). Here David obviously refers to the physical death of his enemies.
 - b. The book of eternal life – “Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven” (Luke 10:20). (See also Dan. 12:1; Rom. 9:3; Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5; 13:8, 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27; 22:19.)
16. Passages dealing with certain individuals
 - a. Esau – “Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears” (Heb. 12:16-17).

The account here has reference to events recorded in Genesis 25:27-34; 27:1-46. They concern themselves with the birthright and blessing of the eldest son and have nothing to do with the doctrine of salvation. There is not the slightest evidence that Esau was ever a saved man.
 - b. Balaam (Num. 22 – 24.) – Balaam was a typical hireling prophet, seeking only to make a market of his gift. He was, to King Balak (his employer), the best prophet money could buy. Three New Testament passages make it clear that he was never a saved man (2 Pet. 2:15; Jude 11; Rev. 2:14).
 - c. Saul – Was the first king of Israel a saved man? Some have advocated that he was, on the basis of the following verses: 1 Samuel 10:6-12; 11:6, 13-15; 12:13; 14:35; 15:30-31. However, the bulk of Bible students have held that he was not. A great number of passages would seem to bear this out: 1 Samuel 13:13-14; 14:37, 44; 15:22-23, 35; 16:14; 18:10-12; 20:30-33; 22:17; 28:6, 16,
 - d. Judas – Was the world’s most notorious traitor ever saved? The Scriptures answer with a resounding *no*,

“Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve” (Luke 22:3). And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!” (Luke 22:22). “Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve” (John 6:70-71). (See also John 12:4-6; 13:27.)

Dr. Robert Gromacki has written:

The *repentance* of Judas has caused some perplexity. Matthew wrote, “Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priest and elders, Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself” (Matt. 27:3-5).

What kind of repentance was this? This particular Greek word indicates an emotional regret (*metamelomai*), not a repentance of moral and spiritual guilt (*metanoeo*). Judas was sorry over what had happened to Jesus because he did not realize that it would go that far. After being with Jesus three years he knew that Jesus was not worthy of death.

He tried to reverse the trial action by returning the money, but it was too late. In remorse, he hanged himself. If this had been genuine repentance, he would have sought out Jesus or the eleven apostles. When the disciples prayed about the appointment of the twelfth apostle, they said, “Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take part of this ministry and apostle-ship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place” (Acts 1:24-25).

Judas did not fall from salvation; he fell from the apostleship. There is a vast difference. Judas is a perfect example of those unsaved Christian workers mentioned by Jesus in the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount: “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. 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? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matt. 7:21-23).

Judas had done all of these things (Matt. 10; Luke 10). He had performed a ministry for Christ, but he did not know Christ as his Savior from sin. He was a totally unsaved man, from the beginning to the end. (*Salvation Is Forever*, pp. 166 – 167)

- e. Simon – In John 2:23-25 it is recorded that a number of bandwagon jumpers believed in Jesus “when they saw the miracles which he did.” But, we are told that “Jesus did not commit himself to them, because he knew all men.” These fickle men were interested in his *miracles*, but were deaf concerning his *message*. (See Acts 8:5-25.)

The passage in Acts 8 records a similar thing. Even though Simon “believed” (probably based on the miracles performed by Philip – see 8:6) and was actually baptized (8:13), there is no indication he was ever saved.

“And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles and signs which he did” (Acts 8:6). “Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done” (Acts 8:13). “But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity” (Acts 8:20-23).

- f. The Prodigal Son – What was the purpose of Jesus in relating this parable? It was to emphasize the joy in heaven over men repenting here on earth. This is clearly indicated in Luke 15, especially in the following verses: “I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repented, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.... Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repented.... It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found” (Luke 15:7, 10, 32).

Is the repentance in this story that of a lost man being saved or of a saved man being restored to fellowship? The latter is true. This son did not lose his salvation and then regain it, for in the depths of sin and despair he could still say, “I will arise and go to my father.” No unsaved man can ever refer to God in such a manner.

- g. Demas – “For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica” (2 Tim. 4:10). Whatever else one may conclude here, this is a sad commentary on one of Paul’s companions. We had previously read of him fellowshipping with both the apostle and Luke (Col. 4:12-14).

The truth of the matter is that, as John Mark had once done (Acts 13:13), Demas failed Paul in an hour of great need. The John Mark story had a happy ending, however (2 Tim. 4:11). Perhaps the Demas story had a better ending also if we were told all the facts.

Before leaving this topic of the problems of eternal security, let us attempt to answer two oft-repeated charges against the doctrine.

1. "Why, if I believed that way, I could go out tonight, get drunk, lie, cheat, steal, commit adultery, and live like the devil, and still be saved."

I would like to relate a personal experience here. Some years ago an Arminian friend of mine would often repeat the above words to me. One day I said: "Glen, you're always bringing this up, Let me ask you a personal question. Are you telling me that the *only* reason holding you back from going out tonight and doing all these things is the knowledge that *if* you did, you'd be lost?"

He quickly assured me: "Oh no! That's not the main reason why. I don't do them because I love my family and the Lord!"

I then told him: "I feel the same way! I simply have no desire to do those things. My belief in eternal security has nothing whatsoever to do with the matter."

I believe it can be further demonstrated that the person believing in eternal security has, in reality, a *bigger* club hanging over his head than the one who does not believe in it. Consider the following:

Here are two salesmen from the same company located in a small town. One we will call Pentecostal Pete and the other Baptist Bill. Both men are saved and faithful workers in their respective churches. Both are sent by their company to a sales meeting in New York City. After the final meeting on a Friday each man is tempted to go out on the town and live it up before leaving the next day, as he used to do before his conversion. Let us suppose that, to their shame, both men given in to the temptation. What happens next? After a few drinks, Pentecostal Pete would conclude he had probably lost his salvation. He could then reason that since this was the case, he might as well enjoy himself and get saved again after the weekend! But what about poor Baptist Bill? Regardless of what he does, he realizes God is still his Father, that he cannot escape his ever-watching eye, that he is grieving the Holy Spirit of God within him, and that, due to all this, he is probably in for the spiritual spanking of his life.

2. "But what about the person who got saved and later on became a drunkard?"

To answer this, let me make a statement that may, at first glance, smack of pride, but it does not. Here is the statement: The *only* person that I can know beyond *any* shadow of doubt who is going to heaven is *myself*! Does this sound arrogant? Think about it for a moment. Actually, the only person *you* can be absolutely sure of in the same light is *yourself*. You see, we simply have no total insight into the mind of another person as we do our own heart.

We are, of course (as much as possible), confident that *all* our professing Christian friends are heavenbound with us, but again, the *only* person I can *know* will be there is *myself*. But what about the Christian who later becomes a drunkard? To begin with, we do not know whether he was saved in the first place. We *do* know, however, that *if* his conversion was real, God will step in somewhere along the line and chasten him to repentance.

As a personal note, to my shame, I did not start drinking until *after* my conversion. The reason for this is that I began running with a crowd of unsaved boys. I'm sure an Arminian would have pointed to me back then as an example of someone who "had it," but through booze had "lost it." Of course, they had no way of knowing the terrible struggle and conviction that were raging inside me during that period. The Spirit of God literally had my carnal soul in a divine vise, applying the pressure that only he can. Part of my carnality in those days was an attempt to escape the call of God to preach. I knew he was calling me, but, like Jonah, I turned and ran. Finally, unable to bear it any longer, I submitted my will to him. What peace and joy then filled my heart as I enrolled in the Moody Bible Institute to prepare for the gospel ministry.

The point of all the above is simply this: we cannot make a final judgment concerning the salvation of any professing Christian, for only God knows those who truly belong to him.

"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2:19),

As a final illustration, imagine yourself in the vicinity of the Garden of Gethsemane on a warm April night some 2,000 years ago. As you watch, a man walks up to Jesus and begins kissing him, You would probably conclude, "How this man must love the Master!" Shortly after this you are shocked to hear another man bitterly cursing Christ. Now your conclusion would be, "How this man must hate the Master!" But both times you would be wrong. Judas, the man who kissed Christ, really hated him, and Peter, the one who cursed Him, really loved Him.

In closing this point it should be noted that the honest Arminian must attempt to answer two key questions.

First, the Bible clearly teaches that salvation is wholly of grace and totally apart from any good works by man. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8-9). “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Titus 3:5).

Now if good works play no part whatsoever in *obtaining* salvation, how can they help in *keeping* it? If one must maintain good works to keep it, then salvation is simply not of grace at all. One cannot have it both ways.

Secondly, if one could be saved and then lost, how could he *ever* know at any given time whether he had retained or forfeited that salvation? For example, how many cigarettes could he smoke before becoming unsaved? Would he be able to feel his salvation leaving him when he reached the fatal number?

- B. The proofs of eternal security – We have discussed at some length the problems concerning eternal security. Now what are the proofs of this precious biblical doctrine? Does the Bible indeed teach once saved always saved? It most certainly does. In fact, the work of the entire Trinity guarantees it.

1. The work of the Father

- a. Because of his plan and program – “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Rom. 8:28). (See also Eph. 1:3-11; 2:7.) Note the features of this plan:

- (1) To predestinate all those he foreknew to be conformed to the image of Christ – “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Rom. 8:29).
- (2) To accept all those in Christ – “To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved” (Eph. 1:6). “For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God” (Col. 3:3). This means that the believer has as much right to be in heaven as Christ does, for he is in Christ.
- (3) To call, justify, and glorify all those accepted in Christ – “Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified” (Rom. 8:30).

Note especially the last phrase of this verse, “them he also glorified.” Glorification, of course, will not take place until the Rapture. (See 1 Cor. 15:51-54.) But in Romans 8:30 Paul puts the word in the past tense. In other words, in God’s sight the believer is *already* glorified in heaven with Christ. This is the strongest verse in the Bible on eternal security.

- (4) To gather them all in Christ in the fullness of time – “That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him” (Eph. 1:10).
- (5) To display those he has gathered in Christ as trophies of his grace throughout eternity – “That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:7).

- b. Because of his power – “My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand” (John 10:29). (See also Rom. 4:21; 14:4; 1 Cor. 1:8-9; Eph. 3:20; Phil. 1:6; 2 Tim. 1:12; 4:18; Heb. 7:25; 1 Pet. 1:5; Jude 24.)
c. Because of his love – “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). (See also Rom. 8:31-33.)
d. Because of his faithfulness in chastening his own – “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth” (Heb. 12:6).

2. The work of the Son

- a. Because of his promises – “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). (See also John 6:37; 10:27-28.)
b. Because of his prayer – “And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.... Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.... Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world” (John 17:11,

17, 24).

- c. Because of his death – “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” (Isa. 53:5). “For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matt. 26:28). “When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost” (John 19:30).

Here the law of double jeopardy is seen. This law states that a man cannot be tried or punished twice for the same crime. Through his death Christ was punished for my sin. By accepting him as Savior I agreed to allow him to pay my sin debt. But if I must eventually pay for my own sin in hell because I fell from grace prior to death, then the righteous Judge of the universe becomes guilty of breaking the law of double jeopardy.

- d. Because of his resurrection – “For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him” (Rom. 6:5-9).
- e. Because of his present ministry
 - (1) His work as our *advocate* in heaven assures our eternal security – “Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” (Rom. 8:34). “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” (Heb. 9:24). “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, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1).
 - (2) His work as our *intercessor* in heaven assures our eternal security – “And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:23-25). (See also John 17:1-26; Rom. 8:34.) Dr. John Walvoord writes:

The present ministry of Christ in glory has to do with the eternal security of those on earth who are saved. Christ both intercedes and serves as our advocate. As intercessor, He has in view the weakness, ignorance, and immaturity of the believer – things concerning which there is no guilt. In this ministry Christ not only prays for His own who are in the world and at every point of their need (Luke 22:31-32; John 17:9, 15, 20; Rom. 8:34), but on the grounds of His own sufficiency in his unchanging priesthood, He guarantees that they will be kept saved forever (John 14:19; Rom. 5:10; Heb. 7:25).

(Major Bible Themes, p. 226)

The summary statement of all the above is as follows: “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life” (Rom. 5:10). The glorious truth Paul is literally shouting about here is this: Jesus Christ died to get me saved, but he now lives to keep me saved. This is why he is said to be the author of *eternal* salvation: “And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:9).

- 3. The work of the Holy Spirit
 - a. He regenerates the believer (John 3:3-7; Titus 3:5; James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23) – This means the Christian now has a new nature that desires the things of God.
 - b. He baptizes the believer into the body of Christ (Rom. 6:3-4; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27; Eph. 4:4-5) – The believer thus becomes bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh.
 - c. He indwells the believer (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; John 14:16; 1 John 3:24).
 - d. He seals the believer (2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:13-14) – It has been noted that Romans 8:30 is probably the strongest verse in the Bible concerning eternal security. The second strongest would doubtless be found in Ephesians: “And grieve not (literally, stop grieving) the holy Spirit of God,

whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Eph. 4:30).

What is this day of redemption? According to Romans 8:23, it is a reference to the Rapture. In other words, the child of God is sealed by the Spirit of God until the day of the Rapture itself.

- e. He strengthens the believer (Eph. 3:16),
 - f. He prays for the believer (Rom. 8:26).
4. Conclusion – Let us now hear the conclusion of the matter. Can a saved person ever be lost? Absolutely not. If he could, then he would be forced to admit to the following *unthinkable* things:
- a. That it is possible for one who has been purged from sin by the blood of Christ to become *unpurged* – This claim is refuted by the following passage: “Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb. 1:3).
 - b. That it is possible for one who has been forever perfected to become *unperfected* – Refuted by: “For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (Heb. 10:14).
 - c. That God does remember that which he promised to forget – Refuted by: “And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more” (Heb. 10:17).
 - d. That God does that which he dares anyone else to do: namely, to lay something to the charge of his elect – Refuted by: “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” (Rom. 8:33-34).
 - e. That it is possible for one born of God to become *unborn* – Refuted by: “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5).
 - f. That it is possible for one who has been sealed to become *unsealed* – Refuted by: “And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Eph. 4:30).
 - g. That it is possible for one who has been baptized to become *unbaptized* – Refuted by: “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:13).
 - h. That it is possible for one who has been joined to the body of Christ to suffer amputation – Refuted by: “For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones” (Eph. 5:29-20). “Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular” (1 Cor. 12:27). (See also 1 Cor. 12:13.)
 - i. That it is possible for God's very elect to be defeated by Satan – Refuted by: “Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called” (Jude 1). (See also Rom. 8:33.)
 - j. That God did not really mean “shall never perish” – Refuted by: “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). “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand” (John 10:27-29).
 - k. That God did not really mean “shall never hunger or thirst” – Refuted by: “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).
 - l. That God did not really mean “shall never be judged” – Refuted by: “Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor. 1:8-9).
 - m. That God did not really mean “shall never taste of death” – Refuted by: “Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death” (John 8:52).
 - n. That God did not really mean “shall never be forsaken” – Refuted by: “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:6). “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” (Heb. 13:5).
 - o. That God did not really mean “shall never be moved” – Refuted by: “Cast thy burden upon the

LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved" (Psa. 55:22). Thus, if a Christian can be lost, then, according to Paul in Romans 8:35-39, he himself must be able to do that which the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, angels, demons, life, death, persecutions, distresses, things present, or things to come *cannot* do. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:35-39).

- XII. The Assurances of Salvation – "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" (1 John 5:13). "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?" (2 Cor. 13:5).

In his excellent book on salvation, Dr. Robert Gromacki lists 12 things by which one may test his salvation experience. They are:

- A. First, have you enjoyed spiritual fellowship with God, with Christ, and with fellow believers? (1 John 1:3-4)
- B. Second, do you have a sensitivity to sin? (1 John 1:5-10)
- C. Third, are you basically obedient to the commandments of Scripture? (1 John 2:3-5)
- D. Fourth, what is your attitude toward the world and its values? (1 John 2:15)
- E. Fifth, do you love Jesus Christ and look forward to his coming? (2 Tim. 4:8; 1 John 3:2-3)
- F. Sixth, do you practice sin less now that you have professed faith in Christ? (1 John 3:5-6)
- G. Seventh, do you love other believers? (1 John 3:14)
- H. Eighth, have you experienced answered prayer? (1 John 3:22; 5:14-15)
- I. Ninth, do you have the inner witness of the Holy Spirit? (Rom. 8:15; 1 John 4:13)
- J. Tenth, do you have the ability to discern between spiritual truth and error? (John 10:3-5, 27; 1 John 4:1-6)
- K. Eleventh, do you believe the basic doctrines of the faith? (1 John 5:1)
- L. Twelfth, have you experienced persecution for your Christian position? (John 15:18-20; Phil. 1:28) (*Salvation Is Forever*, pp. 177 – 182)