

THE GOLDEN CHAINS OF GRACE

An Exegetical Journey Bound in Romans 8:28-
30

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Treasuring Truth Ministries



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The Golden Chains of Grace

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This book is dedicated to Austin Moore. My brother from the Marine Corps, my brother in the faith, and my brother in eternity. May the Lord deliver you from the shackles of oppression as you rejoice in His Truth so that you might be abundant in hope, joy, and peace knowing you have Assurance of Salvation that rests on the promise of The Great I AM.

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SHACKLED

By Casey Boothe

Shackled.

*We are purchased by crimson blood,
dripping from torn flesh—
bound in slavery as we gasp for oxygen,
lungs burning from the sweetness of forbidden fruit.*

Shackled.

*Crowns cast upon the graves of dry bones,
waiting for sinews, breath, and form—
crushed beneath the weight of human exaltation,
rising from the pit of our fractured soul.*

Shackled.

*Consumed by an explosion of delight—
intimacy with Infinity.
Tethered to Divinity
in this fragile essence of dust and flame.*

Shackled.

*Racing toward the cataclysmic Light,
we sail the seas of Heaven's glory,
not free from chains,
but free within them.*

PREFACE

The past seven years have been very hard on me, specifically 2020 was the toughest year for me in terms of mental stability. Ten months out of the year of 2020 was full of mental instability in the form of mental episodes that were stress induced which contained symptoms such as: flashbacks, hallucinations, extreme paranoia, intense and realistic nightmares, severe crippling anxiety, emotional dysregulation, feelings of worthlessness, and difficulties in all my relationships. I remember almost everything that I experienced, including constructed ideas within my mind that caused me to be disconnected from reality. Jesus allowed me to endure this mental illness to humble me, but also to educate me. You may ask, “how has enduring this mental illness over the past seven years been a process of education?” Answer: Not only was I exposed to high mental instability, but my mental instability manifested deconstruction of faith because of the trials I endured. Which in turn reconstructed my faith by divinely educating me in one particular Fruit of The Holy Spirit called faithfulness.

I did not deconstruct because I chose to walk away from the faith. Rather through generational curses in my bloodline, such as: suicide, divorce, lust, etc. doors to the demonic powers were indirectly opened up to me, subjecting me to the sown seeds of previous family members. In turn I developed poor character, bad behavioral habits, which led way to willful sin in my life, and later culminated as mental, emotional, and spiritual instability. This overarching instability opened me up to a severe type of spiritual suffering that I endured, which only three people alive today know of in its depths, and my faith's foundation was tested severely. Naturally, deconstruction took place due to the exploitation of fear, and shaky

foundation. I was not firmly built on The Rock. Thankfully, once I had medicine in my system my mind was clear, and my faith was stabilized.

During this particular trial in 2020—which was primarily in the form of mental instability rooted in demonic attack, observed as chemical imbalance—as a byproduct, I was without a permanent place of residence for ten months, moving from home to home, at one point seeking to live in homeless shelters, but was unable to hold a job because of my mental instability which disqualified me from entry. This ultimately left me to live out of my car. All this said, I did however read my Bible every day and prayed without ceasing to the best of my ability. The only problem was that I could not properly interpret the Bible like I had in the past because my mental instability distorted my understanding—a testament to Yahweh's faithfulness to His children, even when our minds and bodies fail us ultimately—Within this deconstruction, which I believe was primarily a result of demonic attack (another topic of debate for another book), my worldview had shifted temporarily. I began to see different perspectives through being exposed to doctrines from Hinduism, Materialism, Pantheism, Universalism, Dualism, and New Age thinking. I was exposed to these doctrines inadvertently from within worldly movies, shows, music, and books I consumed at the time; not from dedicated study, rather consumption of Hollywood production—This should raise alarm for any born again believer seeking the fullness of God—Ultimately their presentations are rooted in doctrines of demons. At one point, by the divine wisdom of God, He ordained that I might be tormented by a demon. The demonic power tormented me up to the point I attempted to physically do harm to myself in order to save a hallucinated "younger brother" who was being tortured alive by this demonic power. In the hallucination it was understood that the "brother" was being tormented because I would not kill myself; I believe God would not permit this demonic power to touch me physically—by His sovereign decree—which is why it sought to influence me to harm myself.

(Note: In 2019, while attending Asbury University for education, I had physical harm come to me through a spiritual demonic manifestation; it

caused me physical breathing problems. This event was the primer to "why" I had such instability. Let the reader understanding we are in a cosmic war, and you must seek the refuge of Yahweh in order to survive it).

I still remember the hallucinated "brother" manifested by the demonic power, saying to me, "You are so weak, just stop breathing and I will live; that's all you have to do, stop breathing." As I heard the screams of this "brother", I attempted to choke myself to death five times to save his life over mine. Praise God that He delivered me through that dark hole, and one of the tools He used was medicine. Now you may be thinking, "why are you telling me all this?", "how is this relevant to salvation?", "this guy is crazy, I shouldn't be reading his book; he is not qualified to lead or teach." So, in order to be thorough, I'll tackle these questions and one statement in reverse order.

First, the qualification to teach and lead is determined by The Father, manifested by The Holy Spirit, and given through Jesus Christ so that you might edify His Bride. Jesus Christ is the Great Redeemer, who creates something new in us; a burning spark of life. No man qualifies another for the work of God, they only affirm or potentially refine the calling given to them by God.

Second, the relevance of my salvation with my suffering is paramount. Christians are told they will suffer, "Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name." (1 Peter 4:16)

Lastly, I tell you this because faith is personal and experiential; you must know of His goodness. God is the God of the mountain tops and the God of the valley, "Where shall I go from Your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to Heaven, You are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, You are there!" (Psalm 139: 7-8)

INTRODUCTION: UNEARTHING THE TREASURE HIDDEN IN THE FIELD

If you are like me, you grew up in a church who mainly used classical hymns as worship music in order to praise Jesus Christ. If you are unlike me, you probably grew up without a church or in a church who played more contemporary songs in order to praise Jesus Christ. Both types of worship are good if the music itself is Biblically rooted in sound theology — Furthermore, due to my mental instability impacted by years of Hollywood media consumption which was/is ultimately rooted in doctrines of demons, I highly encourage you to seek to consume eternally profitable: music, media, literature, etc. in general; in other words, if it has no eternal value why bother paying any attention to it?— I believe that our worship should primarily render praise and honor to Jesus Christ while simultaneously bringing us abundant Joy in Christ, and secondarily direct us back to the Bible. Just like every preacher and teacher should be evaluated and tested by The Holy Spirit to make sure they are Spirit-filled and guiding you to the Biblical evidence supported by the passage of scripture selected, so should worship music be.

If you are like me, you should remember a hymn called, “Blessed Assurance.” If you are unlike me, you are in for a tasting of the goodness of God. The song goes like this,

“Blessed assurance
Jesus is mine
O what a foretaste of glory divine
Heir of salvation, purchased of God
Born of His Spirit, washed in His Blood

This is my story, this is my song
Praising my savior all the day long
This is my story, this is my song
Praising my savior all the day long.”

This hymn was written in 1873 by a blind hymn writer named Fanny Crosby aided by Phoebe Knapp. The message of the song is in the title of the song. It manifests the beautiful doctrine of assured salvation.

This song raises the question, “why would someone write a song about Assurance of Salvation, if they did not believe it was true?” Answer: They would not... No human (Born again or not) creates music without inspiration, in this case divine inspiration. This hymn is the theme the book was written about. There will be a brief analysis of this hymn and how it pertains to my Biblical worldview: Covenantal Mysticism with an emphasis on Christian Hedonism.

A tasting of theology

There are two well-known theologians who have completely different views on the topic of Assurance of Salvation: John Calvin and Jacobus Arminius. For now, we will briefly discuss their viewpoints. John Calvin’s doctrine of salvation is the Trinitarian work of God’s eternal electing grace, Christ’s definite atonement, and The Spirit’s regenerating power—bringing sinners

from death to life, ensuring they Joyfully persevere to glory, all for the praise and glory of God’s sovereign grace. Therefore, all Saints have Assurance of Salvation because God is faithful. However, within Arminian Theology, salvation is a cooperative work between God and man—initiated by God’s prevenient grace, made possible through Christ’s universal atonement, and received through free human response. God desires all to be saved, but He does not override human freedom. Therefore, all Saints have Assurance of Salvation only if they persevere remaining faithful. Here is a chart for greater clarification.

Calvinism vs. Arminianism: A Theological Comparison

Point	Calvinism (TULIP)	Arminianism (Remonstrants)
1. Total Depravity	Man is totally depraved and spiritually dead. He cannot choose God without regenerating grace.	Man is depraved, but prevenient grace is given to all, enabling free response to the gospel.
2. Unconditional Election	God elects individuals solely based on His sovereign will, not foreseen faith.	God elects based on foreknowledge of who will freely believe in Christ.
3. Limited Atonement (Particular Redemption)	Christ died only for the elect, fully securing their salvation.	Christ died for all people. His death makes salvation possible for anyone who believes.
4. Irresistible Grace	The Spirit’s inward call to the elect always results in salvation. Grace cannot be finally resisted.	God’s grace can be resisted. People may freely reject His call.
5. Perseverance of the Saints	All true believers will persevere in faith and be preserved by God’s power.	True believers can fall away through persistent unbelief or rebellion.

Calvinism and Arminianism offer two distinct—opposing— visions of how salvation unfolds in Scripture. Calvinism teaches that man is totally depraved, spiritually dead, and utterly incapable of turning to God without sovereign, regenerating grace. Election is unconditional, grounded not in foreseen faith but in God’s eternal will and mercy. Christ’s atonement is definite and effective—He died not merely to make salvation possible but to actually save the elect. The grace extended to them is irresistible, changing the heart and securing a willing response. And all whom God saves will persevere in faith because He preserves them by His power. By contrast, Arminianism argues that though man is fallen, prevenient grace is

given to all, enabling them to respond freely to the gospel. Election is conditional, based on foreseen faith. Christ's atonement is universal, intended for all people, and salvation is applied only to those who believe. Grace is resistible—people may reject God's call—and the security of salvation depends upon continued faithfulness. The heart of the divide lies in the source and efficacy of grace: is salvation ultimately of the Lord, or does it hinge upon man's choice? Prevenient grace, though affirming God's initiative, becomes in principle a slippery slope toward Pelagianism.

First, it shifts the ground of salvation to human response. If prevenient grace merely enables choice, and not all believe, then the decisive cause of salvation is no longer God's action but man's response. This undermines sovereign grace and veers toward the Pelagian idea that man can initiate salvation. Second, it assumes a neutral will—a condition in which the sinner can freely choose Christ. But Scripture teaches that the mind set on the flesh is hostile to God, and those in the flesh cannot please Him. (Romans 8:8) Prevenient grace, if resistible, leaves the heart unchanged and the bondage of sin unbroken. Third, if all receive the same grace and only some believe, then the difference lies in man. This implies that man is the final determiner of salvation, otherwise known as ultimate self-determination, which is fundamentally opposed to Paul's teaching that it depends not on human will or exertion but on God who has mercy. (Romans 9:16) Finally, from a Covenantal Mystic worldview with an emphasis on Christian Hedonism, prevenient grace fails to account for the Joyful awakening that sovereign grace produces. Grace is not merely about restored choice—it is about awakened delight. It opens blind eyes to behold the beauty of Christ and births a superior pleasure in the glory of God. (Psalm 27:4; Isaiah 35:5) Therefore, Calvinism guards both divine glory and human Joy. It grounds assurance not in the fragility of man's will, but in the invincibility of God's love. By contrast, prevenient grace, though motivated by a desire to preserve free will, risks dethroning the God who alone saves, and in doing so, leads perilously close to the errors of Pelagianism. True assurance and true worship are found not in man's ability to choose, but in God's ability to save.

A little town called Eufaula

Something you should know about me is that I actually grew up in a Southern Baptist church called Parkview Baptist in Eufaula, Alabama. I professed to be a Christian at the age of seven at a Vacation Bible School almost immediately after my mother attempted to commit suicide in front of my sister and I by seeking to jump out of a moving vehicle while my Aunt was driving. During my time at Parkview Baptist from the age of seven to the age of twenty-six there were three head pastors. All three pastors taught the Bible. However, at a young age the theology that was received was not explicitly identified, which caused some confusion later in my life. At a young age theology can be blurred, and not just a young age. Looking back, I do believe that Jesus had begun a good work in me by his grace, at the age of seven. However, I did not have a mature understanding of the doctrine of salvation, naturally. All I knew is that Jesus was my savior.

Within my church and church camps I attended, the emphasis placed on the sinner making the choice to choose Jesus Christ was more profound than the emphasis placed on relying on Jesus Christ to save us if we pleaded with Him for forgiveness. Due to the emphasis placed on the choice rather than dependency on Jesus, it made it seem like we saved ourselves because of that choice. This resulted in confusion about what salvation actually was. In order to help distinguish the salvation experience as the miracle of God it is, here are a few ritualistic traditions to a "salvation experience," emphasized by most pastors and speakers I have listened to, that I think hinder the Body of Christ today.

Tired of going through the motions

The first tradition I reject today is the designated altar call, otherwise known as an invitation. I believe that an invitation or call to action should without a doubt be within a sermon; the sermon should foundationally be an

invitation. However, it is not the invitation —or call of Christ— that I have a problem with, but the structure of the invitation. Most churches — primarily Contemporary Evangelicals— at the end of the pastor’s sermon will start to play music when the pastor is starting to really drive the nail home. The pastor will then say something like, “If you want to accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and savior, you can do that today. All you have to do is pray this prayer with me.” The church subtly uses the music, dims the lights, and seeks to exploit possible overwhelming emotions to invoke an emotional response to “come to salvation.” I believe this is manipulation, and as if the manipulation is not bad enough, the pastor emphasizes works by saying, “all you have to do.” That implies the sinner can do something to receive the grace given to them by God The Father. To be clear, the sinner does nothing, but surrender. Specifically the only thing the sinner “does” is receive the truth that is, “Jesus is Lord,” submitting humbly to His Lordship through surrender by repenting of their sins in an act of belief. Even so, receiving the truth in surrender and humbly repenting of sins can only be done if The Father draws us to Him granting repentance. (John 6:44) The work of regeneration has already been done; the sinner just enjoys this divine initiative that is truly a gift. (Ephesians 2:8)

A call to action is not just at the end of a sermon, but is also in the beginning, and the middle. A call to action is moved by The Holy Spirit. He sets the tone for the sermon. The Holy Spirit does not wait to move the sinner or the Saint to repentance. “Come now, let us reason together, says The Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.” (Isaiah 1:18)

The second tradition I reject today is the “sinner’s prayer,” which has gathered a negative connotation (to me) over time. In order to clarify what a sinner’s prayer is, let me show you an *ordo salutis* (order of salvation). A lost soul could be aided by a shepherd (perhaps a Good Shepherd) praying in intercession that the Holy Spirit might begin a good work in the lost soul through the forgiveness of their sins, opening their eyes to the glory of the goodness of God, and awakening their souls to the beauty of the precious

treasure of the universe showing His infinite value and worth. As a result the soul of the elect might then pray in their brokenness, pleading with a Holy God to forgive them of their sins for eternity through His son Jesus Christ treasuring Him more than anything the world has to offer. Now, let me show you what the so called “sinner’s prayer” America has come to know is. “‘If you want to accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and savior, you can do that today. All you have to do is pray this prayer with me.’ ‘Heavenly Father, I know that I am a sinner, and I believe You rose from the dead, please forgive me of my sins, amen.’” Now some of you may be thinking, “This prayer is the epitome of the gospel,” or “this prayer looks just like the first example.” Others may say, “I totally disagree with this approach.” I personally disagree with this approach because they are different, please allow me to explain.

It is not so much the prayer I have a problem with, but the motive behind the prayer and placement of the prayer with an altar call surrounded by music, with dimmed lights, etc. Most humans within a community of believers would most likely get emotional enough to “repent” if they had been told they were guilty of high treason against a Holy God and they were a sinner while music was playing. They say, “I don’t want to go to Hell, so to make sure I do not, I’m going to pray this prayer.” Who are they putting their faith into? Jesus or themselves? You cannot save yourself, but the person who is hearing your prayer can. — People outside of a community of believers who were not raised in the church would not be so easily moved by lights, and music. The American church cannot expect to reach extremely callused sinners such as: Marines like myself, gang members, or those with affiliation, etc. if they operate this way. Most American pastors preach a watered down gospel without power that needs the aid of fog machines, strobe lights, coffee in the lobby, or is too disconnected from the culture by the dry traditions of a generation far older than our own, etc. Tradition is good in most cases, but not in this case. Jesus met me primarily through the Bible, not the church; I got more confusion from the American church than I did clarity.

Take away the music, the lights, and the pastor building vocally upon his main point, and do you have the same results? Answer: In my experience, no you do not. The experience of salvation cannot be manipulated or done by works. (Ephesians 2:8-9) The Holy Spirit initiates repentance, and the decision to repent is not just emotional, it is logical; you must have your mind changed. (Romans 8:29-30; Isaiah 1:18) “Come now, let us reason together,” says Yahweh, “though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool.” (Isaiah 1:18)

Although, feelings are highly important. In fact, I would argue if you do not feel the affection of love for God, and you do not take delight in Him, you might not be a born again believer. Nonetheless, Yahweh God does not say, let us “feel” together, but what? “Let us reason together.” The Apostle Paul says, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may approve what the will of God is, that which is good and pleasing and perfect.” (Romans 12:2)

The last tradition I reject today is presentation of the “new believer.” Chronologically, this is how this presentation may occur. The pastor gives the designated altar call, or invitation while the music plays. The individual—or group of people—then walks down to the prayer team or pastor at the altar. They then say I want to be saved, the pastor then says to the lost soul, “Repeat after me, ‘Heavenly Father, I know that I am a sinner, and I believe You rose from the dead, please forgive me of my sins, amen.’” The pastor asks them to stay with him. Once the invitation is over, the pastor then says to the congregation, “Hallelujah! they have just decided to come to Christ. We believe you are now a member of the Body of Christ because you prayed that prayer, and we would like to welcome you into the Body. Everybody give him a round of applause!” Now, some of you may be thinking, “what’s wrong with that?” or “should we not welcome brothers and sisters into the Body?” or some of you may be thinking, “I disagree with this approach entirely.” Well, I think there are a couple of things wrong with this approach. One, this places all the focus on the “new member;” if done wrongly, this does not glorify God. Two, should we or should we not

welcome our brothers and sisters into the Body? Answer: Yes, we should, but I argue that we should not do it immediately, here's why.

A declaration of dependence

One, i've noticed that some Evangelicals seemingly do this to reinforce or affirm their teaching in hopes it may boost their attendance or giving. It's a business approach to Evangelism, it makes the "church" look good; results equal efficiency —It also alleviates any notion that The Holy Spirit isn't working, because people are "getting saved." If people are "accepting Jesus," then that infers that Holy Spirit is at work, and reinforces the ministry of the one in the pulpit making it seem as if they are validated or affirmed by God. So you see, it is also insecurity driven. The American Church is so performance driven by their insecurities of lack of actual anointing or power of The Holy Spirit that in their attempt to "do it themselves," they have forgotten that you cannot manufacture God's soul saving work; it is a miracle— And as a young boy who grew up in the church and attended many church camps, I cannot tell you how many times I experienced this manufactured presentation. Two, there is nothing in the Bible that says that the new believer is not a part of the Body of Christ. However, the primary evidence Saints have of salvation that can be discerned by other believers and assures us on Earth we/they are Justified is the production of The Fruit of The Spirit within us/them. (Galatians 5:22-23) You produce Fruit of The Spirit immediately upon being born again. (Acts 8:39) However, this is not easily seen in the believer immediately. Usually, it takes time to see the effects of The Holy Spirit in our lives. Most likely that individual will look back at this event in their history and say, "one time I prayed a prayer and was presented to the church as a believer, therefore I'm saved." Meanwhile, they never go to church again, continue to live lives full of unrepentant, unconfessed sin, thinking they are a Christian based on this one ritualistic experience they had. This is not what it means to be a Christian, and to this day it makes me very sad to see this, because that reality was my reality.

These ritualistic traditions all contradict Biblical Christianity. They emphasize choice over sovereignty, emotions over reason, quantity over quality. Thankfully, the current pastor at Parkview Baptist is very clear with his intentions of leadership. His approach to worship is opposite to the traditions and rituals just stated, although the altar call remains. I'll never forget when an interim pastor at Parkview name Mike Fortenberry preached on a sermon titled "A Declaration of Dependence." In the middle of the sermon, he read from the book of Psalms on his knees in front of the entire congregation, declaring his utter dependance on Jesus to save, to uphold, to love, to guide, to lead, and to provide. It impacted my soul for eternity; Yahweh is I AM!

April 14th of 2019

Now, why mention all these things? Answer: Throughout my earlier years leading up to the age of twenty-two, I developed a mixture of Dispensationalism as a Cessationist to Arminian Theology with Charismatic perspective. All due to a lack of Biblical Theology that was clarified in doctrinal statements. At the age of twenty-two I was confronted by Jesus, through His law, about my unconfessed sin and lack of repentance as a believer. I had strongholds of sin in my life that I had not surrendered to Jesus. I was adamant and uncompromising on some Biblical truths, yet overlooked sins that I loved; idolatry. "Hypocrite!", He said to me by the power of The Holy Spirit! Jesus spoke to me through His word, "Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, 'you shall be Holy, for I, Yahweh your God am Holy.''" (Leviticus 19:2)

I was spiritually naked and exposed, on my knees before The Holy and Perfect God of The Universe who had stripped me of my good deeds, and He pointed to my strongholds of sin and said "I AM coming!" My foundation shook before a Holy God, and in absolute fear and trembling all

I could do was lean on the very one who was coming to collect my soul, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16) I said to Yahweh, "I believe! I believe! I believe! But your word also says in 1 Corinthians 6: 9-11 that based off of my actions currently, I will not inherit the Kingdom of heaven. Yet, I believe in You Jesus!— Simultaneously, the Fear of God, Peace He gave me from His words, and also the Joy of life given by The Author of Life engulfed me.

I remember the exact time of day, month, year, location, what I was wearing, what was in my room, the candle that was lit, the bed sheets I had on my bed, etc. That day I was introduced to The Ninefold Veil Paradox. Ultimately, I saw two contradictive realities; I discovered that my choice to sin, and my lack of faithfulness was not greater than God’s sovereignty and Jesus’ all sufficient death on the cross. I submitted to His word. No sin is too great to be forgiven. You see the reason I was trembling with fear was because I had been taught I was no longer saved because there was a season of unfaithfulness in my life. However, based on what scripture said of God’s faithfulness, I was justified once and for all, undergoing the process of Glorification.

God’s word declared me guilty with a debt to be paid, yet God Himself had declared the debt had already been paid by His son, Jesus Christ, through His word; Both realities were true. I was indeed a sinner, but I was indeed declared a Saint. When the reaper came to collect my soul, and death was knocking at the window of my soul, God led me to solid unshakeable ground of Biblical truth. He assured me through affliction; Justified once and for all through the revelation of His glory! I learned all Saints have sinned, do sin, and will sin in a decreasing pattern no matter how hard they try, until Jesus glorifies us with Him by His second coming making us complete in Him. (Romans 7:19) Now when I sin, I immediately repent and confess that sin to Jesus Christ shaking the shame of the serpent, and I continue to persevere embracing a mindset that focuses not on what I've done, but who God says I am.

This Truth manifests abundant life in me, and when I discovered this Truth, I knew what I believed and why I believed it. I had to sift out the inconsistencies from the weak theology I had developed over the years. I discovered the Truth; The Rock of Ages. Only then did I discover afterwards that Calvinism aligned with the Truth I discovered. I am not saying Calvinism has all the answers, but it is a clear window into the spiritual reality I have tasted. Nonetheless, I am saying that the Arminian Theology, specifically Wesleyan-Arminianism, which I had been exposed to over time was forcing God into a box. It inferred my free will surpassed God's sovereignty; Ultimate Self-Determination. So, I found The Truth and a new theology that aligned with the Biblical evidence I found within the text. I found new theology that acknowledged both seemingly contradictory truths and admitted a lack of full comprehension; Calvinism did this. Calvinism said, "There it is in scripture. I don't know precisely how, but God, I believe you." ...That's faith... and by grace you are saved through faith. (Ephesians 2:8) Now I particularly align with Covenantal Mysticism with an emphasis on Christian Hedonism. In other words, I cling to the promise of the mystery of eternal life with Joy, unending Joy!

Once I leaned on the faithfulness and sovereignty of God and that He would see to it that I would be Holy, my faith matured into unshakeable faith. Since then I have been tested in valleys and fire. I challenge you to look me directly in my eyes and tell me God is dead. Those who do will see a broken man held together by the very Fire of Life you claim to be absent in existence. Once I realized that my works were evidence of my faith and salvation, not what my salvation depended on, and that nothing could remove me from the hand of God because He chose me, I had peace and assurance. (John 10:28) I knew that even if I was unfaithful, sinful, and running from God that He would be faithful, Holy, and never changing. (Malachi 3:6) I knew I could depend on Him, no matter what, to do the job of Glorification in me. (Exodus 34:6)

Daily choice of Jesus Christ

I am not saying that "Believers of Christ" do not have a responsibility to choose Jesus daily. I also am not saying that we should sit back and be passive in our faith. Quite the opposite, we must persevere. I am saying we are only faithful to persevere because God is faithful to us. (Psalm 146:8) All believers have a responsibility to choose Jesus. "Then Yahweh said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is lying at the door. And its desire is for you, but you must rule over it." (Genesis 4:7) However, this choice is non-existent without the work of regeneration in us by the power of The Holy Spirit. (Ezekiel 36:26)

A brief discussion on God centered and man centered theology

Now, let us revisit the Arminian view of salvation from the section, "A tasting of theology." The Arminian view holds that salvation is conditional as a result of a work of God called grace, based on the foreknown choices of sinners, and infers that born again believers can lose their salvation because they choose not to confess sin or apostatize deeming Jesus Christ resistible. Therefore, all Saints have Assurance of Salvation only if they persevere ultimately by their willful obedience remaining faithful. As you can see in the section, "April 14th of 2019," I really wrestled with this theology that I once held to, why? Answer: What I was taught in Christianity growing up, and what I discovered in the word confirmed by my experiences, were a contradiction.

As you know, I confessed to be a Christian at the age of seven. I was also regularly active in the church until the age of seventeen. From the age of seven to the age of twenty-two I produced — in varying degrees— Fruit of The Spirit such as: love, joy, patience, kindness, faithfulness and had an active prayer life. While in the Marine Corps infantry I was unable to attend church regularly, although I did witness often to my unit some in small and some in large masses. Once I was a professional military instructor and witnessed to 400+ marines, male and female, that God saved me from suicidal ideation; I bought a necklace as a testimony of remembrance. You see, I thoroughly believed in Jesus Christ as God, my fruit was evidence; I

loved Him...but only to a degree. But there were strongholds of sin and bad character that I had not overcome yet which cried out, hypocrite! The accuser said to me, "You say you believe but you love these sins." Therefore, you are not Justified because true Christians are not hypocrites, they always produce good works and are faithful to Jesus Christ. Clearly a lie from the accuser of the brethren. (Revelation 12:10) Although, it is true that strong believers are not hypocrites because they produce continuous good works and Fruit of The Holy Spirit implying that they are remaining faithful to Jesus Christ — abiding in The True Vine— there is nothing in scripture that indicated that I was no longer Justified; A sinner indeed, but still Justified and being Glorified. Everything that I read in scripture pointed to the opposite direction. We will come back to this thought in the sub-section, The rivals of theology.

Now, let us revisit the Calvinist view of salvation from the section, “A tasting of theology.” The Calvinist view holds that salvation is unconditional as a result of a work of God in us called regeneration and is not determined by our ultimate choice. That born again believers cannot and would not choose to walk away from Jesus Christ, who is the irresistible treasure of Heaven and supplies our eternal life as a gift, predetermined by the sovereign will of God. Therefore, all Saints have Assurance of Salvation because God is faithful. Can you see the difference? The Arminian view acknowledges God’s choice and work of grace based on human choices, ultimately focusing on the decisive choice of the humans. The Calvinist view acknowledges God’s choice and work of regeneration based on His final and decisive choice, ultimately focusing on the decretal will of God. Yahweh always has the final say, always.

The rivals of theology

As you saw in the section, “April 14th of 2019,” this is a battle between God’s sovereignty and man’s free will. I would like to point out that Calvinism also believes in free will like Arminianism. We just talked about this in the last section, but in a different language. Calvinism acknowledges God’s sovereign choices trump man’s free will to choose. This means man

can freely choose, but the emphasis on this freedom to choose is not the ability to choose good or evil, rather it's the ability to freely love the God who saved us from eternal wrath without bondage to sin. You see, Yahweh has the final say so. Arminianism acknowledges God's choice but infers man's free will to choose Him is ultimately decisive in our destiny. I reject this claim as heretical, because it does not affirm that we are saved "by grace through faith alone." (Ephesians 2:8-9) In order to clarify, we will briefly discuss one passage of scripture to introduce the doctrine of sovereignty, and then briefly talk about where man's free will to choose ultimately falls through the window of practicality. In just a moment, we will look at Romans 8:29-30, but first here's an illustration.

Once there was a farmer. This farmer knew that there was going to be a winter, so the farmer planned ahead of time what to plant. He prepared the field He chose, tilting it, fertilizing it, and guarding it. The farmer had already decided to plant a certain seed that would survive the cold winter. When the appropriate time came, He planted a specific seed, during a specific time of day, and in the specific location He chose for the seed. The farmer watered the seed, so it would grow. When the seed manifested a plant, the farmer pruned the plant for more growth so it would be big and strong. Because of the proper care from the prior planning this plant grew into a strong tree that produced much fruit for the farmer to enjoy. The farmer shared His abundance from the tree that He cared for so much. Finally, winter came. The leaves withered and the fruit was no more, but the farmer knew ahead of time this season would pass, and the tree would survive the cold wintery world because it had strong and deep roots and He would take care of it throughout the winter. At last, spring approached, and the tree budded new leaves, and the farmer had great Joy and was pleased with the tree.

Now let's look at Romans 8:29-30. "For those whom He Foreknew He also Predestined ... And those whom He predestined He also Called, and those whom He Called He also Justified, and those whom He Justified He also Glorified."

Can you see the parallel? The farmer Foreknew; He determined, He planted, He pruned, and He was pleased. The farmer saw to it that the seed would survive. God Foreknew; He Predestined, He Called, He Justified, and He will Glorify. God sees to it that we make it to the end. The tree enjoyed the benefits of the farmer being a farmer, and the farmer got to share with others what the tree produced in order to show He was indeed a good farmer. The Saint enjoys the benefit of the relationship with God, and God gets the glory showing that He is indeed a good God. What about if which switched the roles around and put the emphasis on the tree? Would the illustration still work? Answer: I do not think so; it would be illogical. You may be saying, “this illustration does not apply to man’s free will, a tree does not choose or have morality.” For those of you who think this way, you should know that illustrations are limited, an aid. However, I have another illustration for those of you who struggle with the trees lack of choice.

In the beginning was God. God knew that there was going to be sin, so God planned ahead of time what to do. He prepared a place to dwell, He chose a garden, filling it with all kinds of plants, making it fertile, and guarding the entrance. God had already decided to make a certain race. When the appropriate time came, He made man in His image, male and female He created them. He made them during a specific time of day, and in the specific location He chose for them. God provided for this race, so they would thrive. He gave them authority to be co-rulers over this place of dwelling, and He made His home among them so they would have growth and be full of Joy. Because of the proper care from the prior planning, they were strong and produced much fruit that He could enjoy. God shared His abundance of love from the relationship with the Son and the Holy Spirit that He cared so much for. Finally, sin came, paradise was lost, death had come, and Joy was no more, but God knew ahead of time this would pass. He determined that the race would survive from a remnant, and He would crush his head and he would bruise His heel. The race sinned; God started over. The race sinned again; God remained faithful. The race continued to sin; God calls them back to Him. At last, the time approached for sin to be conquered through the ultimate one raised up and finally the race bore new

fruit. Once more they dwelled again, and God had great Joy and was pleased.

Now, can you see the parallel? This illustration is a synopsis of the bible. As you can see, Yahweh God who is sovereign, will see to it that a born again believer will make it to Glorification whether they choose to be faithful or not, because He declared it to be so. (Nehemiah 9:16-21) Man was unfaithful in the beginning and is unfaithful today. (Genesis 3:1-7) Man did not choose God in paradise; therefore, man does not choose God outside paradise. (Romans 7:18) But God... He is good. (Exodus 34:6-7) He never changes and is faithful to the end. (Malachi 3:6) And whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

CHAPTER ONE: YOU ARE FOREKNOWN (THE OMNISCIENT GOD WHO KNEW YOU FIRST)

The entire basis of this book is founded on the first three chapters. There is an idea that infers a question discovered within the hymn of the theme for this book. The question is “What is blessed assurance?” This question in it's essence has follow on questions such as: “How can we have blessed assurance?”, and “I want blessed assurance. How do I get that?” So, let’s take our time to break down and interpret Romans 8:29-30, namely Romans 8:29 and the beginning of verse 30.

“Because those whom He Foreknew, He also Predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers; and those whom He Predestined, He also Called” (Romans 8:29-30a)

Here in verses 29-30a, the Apostle Paul is making a claim that is directed to believers known as the elect. We will talk more about what “election” means in chapter two. For now, let’s magnify our attention on the first claim which is, you (followers of Christ) are Foreknown! What is Paul talking about? When I first encountered this, I thought “yeah, so what?” Now, that I have a more full understanding of what this means I look back at myself and say, “Casey, what do you mean, ‘So what?’” This should blow you out of the water!

A definition

Foreknowledge is the intimate, covenantal love of God set upon His elect from eternity past, by which He sovereignly chose them in Christ before the foundation of the world—not because of anything foreseen in them, but because of the sheer delight of His will to glorify Himself by making them eternally happy in Him. An Earthly perspective of foreknowledge is a parent who knows that their child at birth will sometime in the future tell a lie or disobey them. The parent foreknows the decision to lie or disobey before the decision to lie or disobey comes to be. From a Heavenly perspective God has knowledge of the very depths of your heart before you are even created in the womb, more on this in the section “awesomely and wonderfully made by the life and light of man.” However, let’s get back to the basis of Romans 8:29-30a.

Psalm 139

Where is Paul getting this idea from? He is not just manifesting this himself. The idea of Foreknowledge is taught in the Old Testament, specifically Psalm 139. David the Psalmist, pours out his heart to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords in his own relationship with The Father. David is looking to the promise of a seed from his line promised to him by God (2 Samuel 7:8-17), and he has come to know truth revealed to him by The Holy Spirit. This truth is as follows:

“Lord, You have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I get up; You understand my thought from far away. You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways. Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, Lord, You know it all. You have encircled me behind and in front, And placed Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is too high, I cannot comprehend it. Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. If I take up the wings of the dawn, If I dwell

in the remotest part of the sea, Even there Your hand will lead me, And Your right hand will take hold of me. If I say, “Surely the darkness will overwhelm me, And the light around me will be night,” Even darkness is not dark to You, And the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are alike to You. For You created my innermost parts; You wove me in my mother’s womb. I will give thanks to You, because I am awesomely and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from You When I was made in secret, And skillfully formed in the depths of the Earth; Your eyes have seen my formless substance; And in Your book were written All the days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them. How precious also are Your thoughts for me, God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the sand. When I awake, I am still with You (Psalm 139: 1-18)

Omnipresent

What a beautiful expression of faith. There are many ideas within this passage that you could highlight, and we will. But first let’s talk about the anchor on the ship. David collectively anchors this Psalm in the reality and magnitude of God’s omnipresence. In other words, in order to support his claim that he makes of being searched and known, David talks about the depths and heights and breadth of God’s presence. This is known as being omnipresent. Just briefly I will define omnipresence. Omnipresence is the attribute of God whereby He is fully present, in the fullness of His being, at every point in space and time—not bound by creation, yet intimately and Joyfully active within it, sustaining all things by the word of His power and drawing His people into deeper communion with Himself.

This word —communion— is very important. It means that you are in rightly restored relationship with Him. How can you be everywhere at the same time if you cannot commune with whoever it is who claims to be everywhere at the same time?

This means that you and I, and the countless other billions in the world existing harmoniously and without harmony can all experience God simultaneously. This alludes to sub-characteristics of omnipresence: omnipotent and omniscient. Omnipotent meaning all powerful, and omniscient meaning all knowing. They reinforce the claim of omnipresence. In other words, One must be omnipotent in order to be omnipresent, and omnipresence leads to being omniscient. He is Alpha and Omega, beginning and end. He is past, present, and future. He is I Am. (Exodus 3:14) God was there before you were born, He is with you while you are alive bound by His Spirit, and He goes before your path and leads you to all Truth. So, we have a trinity of omni going on; The Omni-Trinity. David discovers this reality through his personal communion with Yahweh. He shows us how Yahweh has revealed a part of His character through Psalm 139.

Fully known and examined

David begins his claim that he is Foreknown by God by saying,

“You have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I get up; You understand my thought from far away. You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways. Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, Lord, You know it all.”

This is a direct call to the Lord’s omniscience. David ends with, “Behold, Lord, You know it all.” You could easily replace that behold with a “for”, but instead he uses “behold.” Why do you think that is? I believe this is because David is talking to the Lord. David wants God to know that he knows! He is expressing his knowledge which leads to the depth and height and breadth of being known. He is blown away! David literally says this just a little further down in the Psalm,

“You have encircled me behind and in front, And placed Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is too high, I cannot

comprehend it.”

It is too wonderful for me he says. Then David takes it a step further just to expand upon the height of God and says, “it is too high.” Here David is making another claim; God is transcendent. He shows that God knows so much of David, that he can’t even comprehend just how much of him God knows. David is saying to God, “You know me better than I do.” — something a created being would say to the one who created them— Therefore, You are transcendent. David is basing his claim on his inadequacy as a fallen man, his limitations. He says God, You are, because I am not! ...Wow! What a reality. Do you get that? Are you grasping this?

Let me put it into perspective for you, by what this is not saying. David is not saying, “God, I was told you know it all by the High Priest, so I believe.” Or “God, I read that in the Abrahamic Covenant only You walked through the offering, not Abraham; You put him to sleep. Therefore, I believe because You knew something he did not, which I see played out later on, You know all.” No, David said, “Behold, Lord, You know it all such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is too high, I cannot comprehend it.” In this declaration of dependence, he says “I am weak, I am insufficient, I am inadequate, I have limitations, BUT GOD... because of this knowledge You have revealed to me I know You are not weak, You are not insufficient, You are not inadequate, You do not have limitations, for it (this knowledge) is beyond me... Therefore, You know it all.

David is not done yet with the beginning of his claim. He takes it a step even further and says,

“Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to Heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. If I take up the wings of the dawn, If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, Even there Your hand will lead me, And Your right hand will take hold of me.”

David acknowledges that even if he chose to attempt to flee from God, he could not. Not that he did not have a "choice" or "could not" flee, but that even with his freedom to choose to flee, he could not escape the presence of Yahweh because He is everywhere. Not just everywhere, but Yahweh is in pursuit of His children! How does David choose to describe the depth and height and breadth of God? He says, "If I ascend to Heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there." Let's take a strategic pause here and ponder on what exactly David said. This next part leads me to the entire claim of my book which is: the believer's Assurance of Salvation is grounded not in human performance but in the unbreakable, sovereign sequence of God's redemptive acts—Foreknown, Predestined, Called, Justified, and Glorified—each a golden link in the chain of grace that secures the soul in eternal Joy. In other words, God's chosen people who believe, cannot and will not lose their salvation. Therefore, whosoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

Now let's talk about Sheol. Sheol is a Hebrew word meaning, "the place of the dead, or the grave." This place of the dead is considered by some not just for unrighteous people, but for righteous people. Stay with me, I have a point to make... Sheol is known to some as a "temporal place of existence cut off from physical life, where the dead wait for final judgement." Again, Sheol is known to some to have both righteous and unrighteous people within it. This alludes to a paradoxically reality within the meaning of the word. It implies that there are two ultimate realities at play. Sheol is also equated to the Greek word Hades in the New Testament. In some translations Hades is intently translated as Hell. The actual Greek word used for Hell is "Gehenna." Gehenna is equated with the same phrase in the book of Revelation which uses, "eternal lake of fire." The reason that Sheol, Hades, and Hell are interchangeable in most translations is because of one idea drawn out of the scriptures. The idea that God's chosen people will not be cut off from God, but will be with God—forever— because of eternal life gifted to them by Jesus Christ, through The Holy Spirit. So, most translations go ahead and translate Sheol and Hades as Hell to solidify the idea that "righteous" people, otherwise known as a believer, a Christian, or follower of Christ, will never be cut off from God, but will immediately be

in Heaven otherwise know as Paradise, with God... This is profound. Why? Because David knew this. David was not saying a resting place for unrighteous and righteous people, but a place of death cut off from God for eternity. How do I know this? Psalm 16. In Psalm 16 David says,

“Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your Holy one see corruption. You make known to me the path of life; in Your presence there is fullness of Joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”

David started out Psalm 16 crying out “help”, “help me God” afraid of death, and by the end of the Psalm he is assured that he will not even see death itself. He says, “you will not abandon my soul to Sheol or let your Holy one see corruption.” Why is this significant?... because Jesus had not come yet. However, David clearly says,

“You make known to me the path of life; in Your presence there is fullness of Joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”

Look at David’s great assurance of faith! David knew Sheol was known as the place of the dead. However, David had tasted of The Holy Spirit. He had tasted The Sweet Bread of Heaven, The Ever-Fresh Living Water — dare I say he overflowed with bellies of Living Water— David looked back to the promise in Genesis 3 for a future seed from the woman to crush the head of the serpent and saw in his present existence it had not happened yet, in consummation. But David knowing he had a tasting joy, and pleasures forevermore in The Holy Spirit, looked to the future promise of The Ultimate King. David trusted and knew that he would not even see corruption... he believed he would not even see death, and that he would be in the presence of God because he was assured. He was assured because he knew God would fulfill His promise of redemption, because God is faithful... and had been faithful to him, even in great adulterous sin with

Bathsheba...Wow! As I said earlier, “what do you mean so what?” This is the good news of the gospel!

This idea of being cut off in a place of dead is found in the New Testament in John 15. Where Jesus says “Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned.” Cut off throughout the Old Testament and the New Testament is ultimately equal to Sheol, Hades or Hell... Final judgement. The idea of being cut off is an idea of ultimatums. This is profound because we know from David, based on his own experience, that no righteous person will be cut off from God because they have the Holy Spirit. We also know Paul says, “for we have not cut you off, but you have cut yourselves off from us.” (2 Corinthians 6:12) And the Apostle Peter says, “God is not willing that any should perish, but that all come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9) God does not cut off people from Himself, sin does. Through our covenantal head Adam, we are all born into sin, inheriting both guilt and a corrupted nature. Therefore, those who are cut off, cut themselves off because they dwell and love the very sin that engulfs them; if they had truly tasted of the surmounting riches of Jesus Christ and The Holy Spirit dwelled within them, they would be in David’s shoes, marveling at God’s incomprehensible character.

This is how we as believers can be sure that we are known and examined, by faith. If you have not experienced this as a believer, you will. If you have not tasted of the Sweet Bread of Heaven and The Ever-Fresh Living Water... you can. Now is the time to repent of your sins and come to the Lord... He will not turn you away if you desire Him. Just plead with Him. In fact, if you feel conviction in your heart, He is already at work in you! So, I urge you to please now if you have not... cry out to Him to taste this sweet eternal life! If you are not ready to receive Christ yet...keep reading. My prayer for you is that God will guide you through the words I am writing to lead you to Himself, so you will know the truth that is, you are a sinner needing a savior... and The Truth will set you free.

Awesomely and wonderfully made by the life and light of man

David's next claim is very interesting to me, because it reminds me of the beginning of the book of John. Not in the sense of parallels in writing. The beginning of the book of John parallels the beginning of Genesis. However, the language that David uses to describe God's ability to be omnipresent here fascinates me. David says,

"If I say, 'Surely the darkness will overwhelm me, And the light around me will be night,' Even darkness is not dark to You, And the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are alike to You. For You created my innermost parts; You wove me in my mother's womb. I will give thanks to You, because I am awesomely and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well."

Let's talk about this "For". Why is that there? Every time you see a "for" or "therefore" or "because", pay attention, for a claim is being made. So, one of David's claims is, "For You created my innermost parts; You wove me in my mother's womb..." Now, look just before this and you will find the claim David is trying to make. David says just before the "for", "Darkness and light are alike to you". Woah... what does that mean? Well, let's read some more, just a little further ahead he says, "If I say, 'Surely the darkness will overwhelm me, and the light around will be night,' Even darkness is not dark to you, (he's about to tell us what his claim means) and the night is as bright as day."

What do you mean, David, the night is as bright as the day for God? How is this possible? Well, to better understand this text we need to look outside the text. It is likely David is making this claim based on Genesis 1:1. He is claiming that God is the source of Light and Life. In fact, he is saying as a result of God's Life, Light is manifested; God's Life is Light. So, here's Genesis 1: 1-5, Moses writes,

"In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth. And the Earth was a formless and desolate emptiness, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the

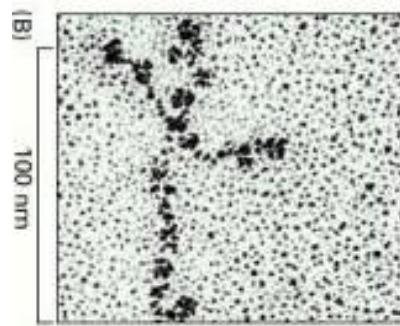
waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light 'day,' and the darkness He called 'night .' And there was evening and there was morning, one day."

In order for us to understand what this means let's talk about darkness. What is darkness? Darkness is the absence of Light. So, in order for darkness to even exist, you must have Light; Darkness is dependent on Light. Therefore, darkness does not overcome Light

There is no "Big Bang", in the sense nothing created something. However, let's say this "Big Bang" was rooted in God, not nothing, and when God spoke, BANG, the universe came into existence. In the beginning God created... that's it. You might be asking, "who created God?" No one, nothing. God is eternal, God is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, God is I AM. (Exodus 3:14) One of the characteristics of God is being totally independent, not needing anything or anyone, self-sufficient (omnipotent). Therefore, God is the source of Life and Light. This goes back to our claim that David made, that "Darkness and light are alike to you." They are alike because God Himself is Life, God Himself is Light. God's very presence, His Spirit, as it says in Genesis 1 is everywhere (omnipresent), with the ability to create Life! This brings me to a side point I would like to make. If God is everywhere, even in darkness His Spirit is "hovering", why be afraid? You should have peace that the God of the universe who is Love, Life, Joy, etc. is there with you in physical darkness — dare I say, even in spiritual darkness, when demonic powers come to prey on your soul; Yahweh is your stronghold. (Psalm 28:7)

David goes on to support his claim by saying what I just said, just differently, remember? He says, "For You created my innermost parts; You wove me in my mother's womb." God's presence was with David in the womb, but more than the womb, down to the very fiber, every cell. Ever heard of Laminin?

When I was twelve years old, I went to a “Student Life Camp” in Daytona Beach, Florida. Louie Giglio was the pastor leading our services. If you know anything about Louie Giglio you should know that he loves astronomy and science. Louie was trying, like I am now, to explain just how big God is, just how involved God is. So, he introduced us to Laminin. Laminin is a protein of the extra cellular matrix, an active part of the basal lamina, a protein network foundation for most cells and organs. Now, I’m no scientist, at least in the formal fashion. However, all you need to know is that Laminin is essential for cell function. However, that is not the best part about Laminin. The best part about Laminin is that this essential protein needed for most if not all cell function is in the shape of a cross.



I love Yahweh; He always provides such imagery for those who seek further understanding! Jesus Christ, The Son of God and also God, was crucified on the cross for your sins. Sin literally means death. Our sin, actions such as: lying, stealing, profanity, hatred, unnecessary violence, coveting, pre-marital sex, adultery, rape, incest, murder, idolatry, etc. are collectively why Jesus had to die in order for His sheep to be able to have a relationship with the Father. I would like to note that Jesus is not obligated to do anything unless He Himself makes a promise of obligation, and He did. In the book of Genesis chapter three in the Garden of Eden, after Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, God made a promise of redemption. In the curse to the serpent, God says in the latter half the promise of redemption, “And I will make enemies Of you and the woman, And of your offspring and her Descendant; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise Him on the heel.” (Genesis 3:15) Just like Laminin is a necessary protein for cell function, Jesus’ death on the cross

was and is necessary for our sins to be forgiven. I don't think David knew about Laminin; however, David did not need to know about Laminin to know that God created his inner most parts; David was known.

David goes on to say, "I will give thanks to You, because I am awesomely and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from You When I was made in secret, And skillfully formed in the depths of the earth; Your eyes have seen my formless substance; And in Your book were written All the days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them."

David gives thanks to the only God who can wonderfully make him, you, and I. He declares that God has wonderful works, and for proof he claims his soul's familiarity with these works as evidence. He has experienced these good works. David does something here that is interesting. To elaborate on the idea that darkness is not hidden from God, he says, "Your eyes have seen my formless substance". David talks about God's eyes. This is called anthropomorphism. Anthropomorphism is the recognition of human attributes. In other words, David is not saying God actually has eyes. God is Spirit, He cannot have physical eyes. However, when David says "Your eyes" he is illuminating, by the power of Holy Spirit dwelling in him, the Omni-Trinity. He is actually saying God sees. Because God is omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent He sees all!

David then goes on to declare God's sovereignty by talking about Foreordination. He says, "and in Your book were written all the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them." Even before David's birth, when he was a formless substance in the womb with a soul attached, he declares that God had made a path for him to follow. This is amazing. If you are struggling with the idea of purpose, and you feel like your life has no meaning, this should encourage you. God in all His power and wisdom has a specific calling for your life. You are awesomely and wonderfully made! You have value! God cares for your soul and what you do with your life! So, if you are lacking knowledge about what to do with the life you have been given, come!... come now! (Isaiah 1:18) Come and

thirst no more. (John 7) Eat The Sweet Bread of Heaven .(John 6) Drink of His blood. (John 6) Listen to Jesus and He will make straight the path you need to walk. When you seek Jesus, He will give you purpose and life, and all else will follow. (Matthew 6:33) That means a career, money, food, clothing, relationships, peace, love, Joy. —I have seen this lived out, I am not just wasting hot air from my lungs. His essence flows through my veins. His wings have protected me from demonic threats on my life. His power has placed lightning down my spine. His Spirit has used my hands to heal physical ailments; Chew on that Truth.

David elaborates on just how deep God knows you, he says, “How precious also are Your thoughts for me, God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the sand. When I awake, I am still with You.” How amazing is that? That the God of the universe thinks about you and I. God loves you, because apart of being God— in His character— is love; His Love overflows instinctively. You are born of divine overflow, and drawn to eternal intimacy in Him.

I would like to help explain just how amazing this is, but the complexity of God is just so vast. Even I cannot fathom the idea of God’s thoughts for me outnumbering more than the sand on a beach, or desert; My God is an awesome God! I do however think that it is important to highlight that David says even when I wake I am with you. The Lord watches you, and guards you when you sleep. Often I will go to sleep and I’ll have nightmares. In my nightmares, when I begin to be engaged by the spiritual enemy, God will wake me up; sometimes I cry to God in my dreams, please wake me due to my torment from demons, and my inability to retaliate. God commands that I wake, because I am with Him— rather He is with me— and so was it with David.

God is omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient. In other words, God is able to be communed with everywhere, because He is all knowing and all powerful. God sees you. (Genesis 16:13) He knitted you together in your mother’s womb and knows your deepest needs. (Psalm 139:14) And out of the Love that He had for the other members of The Trinity, God sent His

one and only Son to be the perfect living sacrifice, and atone for our sins.
(John 3:16) Because of this you are Foreknown. (Romans 8:29-30a)

CHAPTER TWO: GOD HAS PREDESTINED (DIVINE ELECTION AND THE GLORY OF HIS WILL)

I'd like to continue with a prayer. A prayer that God's providence takes the reins within this chapter in order to communicate this Biblical idea and truth to His satisfaction, so let's do that now. Yahweh Father, I come to You now with total dependence on You. Guided by Holy Spirit, I ask You would give a proper heading in order to communicate clearly — 5X5— this Biblical truth. Help us to kill our flesh, to kill our desires to take control, and explain this chapter how You would see fit. Remove myself from the medium of communication so that whoever reads this chapter might be satiated with wisdom and understanding so that the reality of election might be totally understood. I pray this in Your precious and Holy name, the King of kings and Lord of Lords, my savior, Jesus Christ, forever and ever Amen!

We continue our journey within the verse of Romans 8:29-30.

“For those whom He Foreknew, He also Predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters; and these whom He Predestined, He also Called” (Romans 8:29-30a)

Predestination is a controversial topic within the Church, although totally Biblical. It is controversial, because of the implications that it presents from the text that it derives from. It builds upon the basis of Foreknowledge that because you are Foreknown you are Predestined. By sovereign election, your soul was chosen before the foundation of the world. (Ephesians 1:4) Before we jump into our text of reference, let's provide a definition of Predestination.

A definition

Predestination is the sovereign, eternal act of God whereby, from before the foundation of the world, He graciously and unchangeably determined all things, particularly the salvation of His elect, so that the fullness of His glory might be displayed and the deepest Joy of His people might be secured in Him forever. In other words, Predestination is the loving and Joyful determination of God to bring His chosen people into eternal, soul-satisfying communion with Himself through union with Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 1:4–6; Romans 8:29–30). It is not based on foreseen merit or faith, but upon the good pleasure of God's will—to the praise of the glory of His grace. (Ephesians 1:6) On the basis of Foreknowledge, God knew everything about you before you were born, and according to the purposes of His own will — not according to your potential future choices — He elected you to Holiness so that you might delight in glorifying His eternal name by experiencing Heaven on Earth and The New Heaven and New Earth eternally. (Ephesians 1:4-6; Revelation 21) To experience God's Holy presence on Earth is to experience Heaven on Earth, and to be in Heaven is to be in the presence of God for eternity. For Heaven is not Heaven without the presence of God.

Sovereign implications

Our selected passage of scripture is Revelation 13:8. We are taking a trip to the end of the bible so that we might gain some insight to the beginning of creation. Now then let us view our verse.

“And all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in The Book of Life of The Lamb Who Was Slain” (Revelation 13:8).

A little background information to help ground you, Chapter thirteen of Revelation talks about the dragon of old giving power to the first beast and then the second beast. This passage of scripture is particularly talking about those who do not believe in The Lamb who was slain (Jesus Christ). But it is deeper than just those who do not believe, the verse says, “All who dwell on Earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in The Book of Life of The Lamb Who Was Slain.” Talk about wow... There are serious implications within this one verse.

Implication number one: There is a book of life that was created before the foundation of the world with all the names of those who will not worship the beast. Meaning you are Predestined; you are chosen by God, because you are Foreknown by God .

Implication number two: The name of the book of life that contains all of God's elect is, “The Book of Life of The Lamb Who Was Slain.” This is perhaps the biggest implication. Meaning, before the foundation of the world, before the world had been created, before anyone was ever born, before sin had come into existence, before the opportunity to sin ever came to be, Jesus Christ had already sovereignly been declared slain. In other words, Jesus willingly submitted to death on a cross for your sins that had not yet come to be; this is so powerful! It means God knew sin was a possibility before creating the world, and He calculated the risk and said, "GAIN!" Yahweh allowed sin to come into the world, something that He hates... Now, why would He do that? (we will ponder this more fully in the "sub-section" implication number two, not to be confused with this paragraph).

Implication number three: If your name is not in this book of life founded before the creation of the world, YOU WILL be eternally damned to Hell

because you worshipped the beast and ultimately took pleasure in unrighteousness.

Implication number four: If your name is in this book of life founded before the creation of the world, YOU WILL forever exist in glory with the Son of Man (Jesus Christ) eternally praising His name and delighting in His presence.

(Note: Due to implication three and four being understood, we will only be diving deeper into implication one and two).

Implication number one

Let us again restate the first claim made by the apocalyptic writing of John the Apostle supplied to him by our Sovereign Lord through an angel of the Lord.

“There is a book of life that was created before the foundation of the world with all the names of those who will not worship the beast. Meaning you are Predestined; you are chosen by God because you are Foreknown by God .”

A lot of people hear Predestination and immediately oppose it, because they believe humans have a free will; let's be very clear, humans do have free will. However, I believe that our free will does not trump God's sovereign choice. Let me provide an example.

Jesus calls us to himself

At the age of sixteen I had a crossroad of choices. I began to feel the call to do full-time missions as a Christian. Simultaneously, I also wanted to join the military, specifically the Marine Corps. Ever since I could remember I

wanted to be a Scout Sniper. In fact, I had been in the Delayed Entry Program for almost a whole year as a “Poolee” with the Marine Corps since I was 15. I had been in JROTC since I was a 12-year-old Freshman in Eufaula High School, and before that would play warrior every day and every night. However, I learned about an opportunity in the Summer of 2012 to go to the Dominican Republic for missions in the Summer of 2013. I felt the call to go then from God. However, I dragged my feet and didn’t sign up because I was plagued with an indecisive mind due to lack of knowing my true purpose. Later in September of 2012, I turned 16. This was glorious — as is all things with growing old, even death — it allowed me to go to Passion 2013 in Atlanta, Georgia in January, the New Year specifically. I loved Passion! Over 80,000 people from ages 16-25+ were there worshipping Jesus Christ together. This was in the Georgia Dome — before the Mercedes Benz Stadium — where my passion for Jesus grew even greater. I became very conflicted because I really loved the idea of the military and wanted to be a Marine, but at the same time felt the call to missions. — My love for the military was misplaced in seeking to discover my identity; I felt weak, and desired to be strong. Marines were strong, or so they “appeared.” To a degree, I have discovered otherwise.

I did not understand why God would give me such conflicting passions. However, being a young Christian — lit a flame with embered youth for God — I decided to submit through obedience to the call of God into missionary work. So, I decided to go on the mission trip to the Dominican Republic in the Summer of 2013, and push off my enlistment after graduation. In my mind, I was planning to use this trip as my deciding factor on whether I should do full-time missions or not. When my church group got back from Passion 2013, we were on the stage within our church, Parkview Baptist, sharing about our experiences at Passion. I told my church that I felt the call to missions and wanted to go on the trip to the Dominican Republic. After we finished sharing our experiences at Passion, the leader of the Dominican Republic trip in our church came up to me and said that I waited too late to sign up, and I wouldn’t get my passport in time to go to Dominican Republic and apologized; I was upset to say the least.

I was upset because I did not initially obey Jesus when the door initially opened, so the initial door closed; an opportunity lost. However, rather than waiting upon Jesus for another opportunity — patiently— to go on another mission trip in due time, I took that as confirmation from God that the window for this opportunity had closed and that I was meant to join the Marine Corps. So, I signed my contract as soon as I turned seventeen, with the help of my father, — which he says to this day he only did, because he knew I would just do it when I turned eighteen anyway— and I went to boot camp at Parris Island in South Carolina on September 23rd, 2013.

I wound up serving five years in the Marine Corps Infantry, holding a dual MOS (Military Occupational Speciality) of 8152, and 0311. —8152 MOS is a Security Force Billet. The recruiter sold the contract to me as if they were the S.W.A.T. of the Marine Corps; He exaggerated, highly. Security Forces is glorified Security Guards. Even if you are FAST Company, they too are not trained well; Nonetheless, they serve a purpose. 0311 is a Infantry Rifleman MOS, which is what I actually wanted— All that aside, instead of choosing to do missions later, I made a decision without consulting God and decided to pursue my hedonistic desires over God's ultimate desires for me. My decision caused me lots of pain as you have already read in my introduction. Little did I know that The Marine Corps needs Jesus just as much or more than The Dominican Republic — I thought all Marines were noble— Although this was not God's first choice for me, He still used me for missions in The Marine Corps. Whether I knew it at that time or not, God had planned me for good works before the foundation of the world. (Ephesians 2:10) I learned many painful lessons I will never forget. I became suicidal in 2016 mid-way through my contract and by the end of my five years I became completely burnt out. What originally was a passion of delight was no longer a delight but an obligation of duty — Perhaps this is why "Christians" fall away, because they do not nor never did *delight* in Yahweh God as their *Supreme Treasure*. So, due to misplaced *affections*, they ultimately burn out in their lives overall and "fall" away from the Body out of a sense of *duty* or *obligation* to something they never actually believed in or had tasted the goodness of.

So, at the end of my career, I came to another crossroad. I had another decision to make that every military member faces; To get out or not to get out. This was very hard for me to decide, because being a Marine Corps Infantryman —specifically a Scout Sniper, because of the movie "Shooter" with Mark Wahlberg— was all I had dreamed about ever since I was little. Unfortunately, I had not been afforded that opportunity yet, until the later half of my Marine Corps career; I really wanted to be a Scout Sniper but was very burnt out.

Although, I was burnt out and had been abused spiritually, physically, and emotionally, for me this was the first job I had ever been paid to do, this was all I knew. So, I decided I would stick to all I knew, regardless of the abuse I endured while in — including physical assault by my unit, eight or so Marines— and get an embassy duty package ready. I decided I wanted to travel the world and live the luxury life for a Marine with my own personal chef who would feed me good food, specifically just for me. Simultaneously, while making a contract decision, I had three good friends in my unit who had gone to Assessment and Selection for Marine Corps Special Operations Command (MARSOC). All three got selected to go to further training called Individual Training Course (ITC) . They all three confronted me together in Camp Horno pool and said, “Dude you should try out, if we got selected it’s a guarantee you’ll get selected. Plus, Marsoc is perfect for your mindset, if it would fit anybody well it would fit you.” So, because my friends were selected, and they encouraged me to try out I contacted a Marsoc recruiter and started to get my foot in the door. The only problem I had was I took the ASVAB when I was 15 years old and my GT score was not high enough for Marsoc. So, I had to study and retake the ASVAB. Due to my determination, encouragement, and longing for intimate community, I began doing what any Marine would do, train for selection.

I began to ruck run, and hit pool training even harder with more intelligence than most studying for the ASVAB again — I worked as a Water Survival Advanced Instructor for Camp Horno under Sgt. Sully, who later committed suicide after getting selected for EOD... so they said. At the same exact time

I had a Scout Sniper, who was a Hunter of Gunmen (HOG), personally come to me and request me to come be a team leader with snipers for the next deployment with my unit. I thought, “Man, this is my dream! I always wanted to be a Scout Sniper, ever since I was little!” So, I was overwhelmed with happiness. I had three great options in front of me: Embassy Duty, Scout Sniper Team Leader with another deployment, or Marsoc with my buddies. I had the world at my fingertips, and guess what? I became plagued with indecisiveness again. I did not know what I wanted! Each option shined with promises for deep desires I wanted to have met, specifically purpose and calling, but I began to drag my feet.

Eventually, I decided to go big or go home — After a conversation with my sister, who encouraged me to do so — So, Marsoc is what I set my heart on. This was the shiniest opportunity with the most training, the most danger, the most adventure, and most bragging rights which was the most reward. To put it in different imagery, for a Marine, Marsoc was/is considered the Super Bowl of The Marine Corps jobs or another way of saying, they are the 007's of the Marines; they're hardcore! — I wanted to be hardcore — little did I know how hardcore God created me to be; I discovered how dark it gets in 2019, and how hot The Flame can be in 2022 — So, I dropped my Embassy Duty package, told the HOG I was going for Marsoc, to which he said, “Get it, brother!”, and as stated earlier I started putting rubber to the road training hard.

However, I unfortunately was just burnt out emotionally and mentally from lack of help as a platoon sergeant and then squad leader. I had too much responsibility too early on, and not enough training to be able to endure the rigors of combat, so I thought —I learned after getting out of The Marine Corps, that war was within me, a Wild Untamed Raging Fire; regardless of removing myself physically from combat environments, war was all around me...just hidden well by those within it— So, one typical California morning, I remember I was swimming in the pool in Camp Horno training early that morning with full cammies and boots for the long distance swim in the selection course; There was fog over the ridge line. I remember I was

so defeated mentally, but I was still pushing because that's what Marines do.

Pain is weakness leaving the body, push past it. Right? Wrong. Unfortunately some pain cannot be ignored, especially when you implode. Thankfully, the sun rose and dissipated the fog and it shined on my face while I was swimming. I just remember saying to myself, "Casey, you're doing it to yourself. You have been pushing the limits since you joined, just stop and rest." I was tired, and the cracks underneath the surface were beginning to show problematic. I later decided to drop all my options and get out. My Old Platoon Sergeant at the time said, "I quit." — That's what the majority of Marines who stay in for life say to younger Marines to make them feel guilty about getting out of The Marine Corps; They call them quitters.

The rest is history. As you read in my introduction, in 2019 I received the call to ministry again. Since 2019, I have been pursuing God wholeheartedly to the best of my ability by His strength supplied; I should have done this originally. I am currently doing, and have done for a while, full-time frontier missions — no matter the form— as a warrior of Jesus Christ with a Holy mandate to heal His children called to Him since eternity past; I will succeed, because He who is in me, is greater than the world. (1 John 4:4) I say all of this to say that God wanted me to be a missionary, for a season I wanted otherwise; Ultimately God got His way. On the contrary, God didn't want me to stop being a highly trained, highly devoted, motivated warrior ready to go to war and possibly die. No! God just wanted me to do that for Him as a missionary, and that's what missionaries are; Missionaries are hardcore!

Missionaries are the warriors ready to go at a moment's notice to the slums of the world, the extreme humid jungles, the freezing mountain tops, the scorching hot deserts, and possibly die, all for the satisfaction of glory in Jesus Christ and for the Joy and salvation of His Children! And guess what? I couldn't be more thankful, more Joyful, and more dangerous than I am right now, in His sovereign will. God knew that I was made for something

far greater and more impactful than Marsoc — although Marsoc does what they do— I was made for God Himself and for the benefit of the Body of Christ, His Bride, fighting in the cosmic war against the Satan.

You are Predestined and Foreknown before the foundation of the world, for His good pleasure. (Ephesians 1:5) Listen to Jesus and pursue Him wholeheartedly, you will not be disappointed.

Implication number two

Let us again restate the second claim made by the apocalyptic writing of John the Apostle supplied to him by our Sovereign Lord through an angel of the Lord.

“The name of the book of life that contains all of God’s elect is, ‘The Book of Life of The Lamb Who Has Been Slain.’ This is perhaps the biggest implication. Meaning, before the foundation of the world, before anyone was ever born, before sin had come into existence, before the opportunity to sin ever came to be, Jesus Christ had already sovereignly been declared slain. Jesus willingly submitted to death on a cross for your sins that had not yet come to be. Meaning, God had allowed sin to come into the world, something that He hates... why would He do that?”

For this specific implication, my goal is to answer the overarching question that is stated just before this sentence. In order to answer this overarching question, we must ask some more questions.

Why is the Verb, “Has been slain,” when within the visions context The Lamb had yet been slain?

Now, I know what you may be thinking, “Casey, the Apostle John wrote this revelation after the death of Jesus Christ which is why it says The Lamb, “has been slain.” Well, that is true, but that is incorrect

understanding. The context of the passage does not allow that. Yes, Revelation is written after Jesus' death on the cross, but in the passage the vision being received is outside of time, space, and matter. The "revelation" written in words by the Apostle John is a window or Ancient Door into an Ultimate Reality that exists outside time, space, and matter. This is profound, because the reality that exists outside of time, space, and matter was communicated to us in time, space, and matter; A instrument holding paradoxical realities within it known as The Bible. That is why the Word of God is God breathed, inspired by The Holy Spirit. The Bible itself is divinely inspired and inerrant because the message it is communicating in origin is before time, space, and matter; In other words, it's alive! The Book of Life was written before the foundation of the world. That is when the book was named, "The Book of Life of The Lamb That Has Been Slain." Therefore, Jesus had not yet died on the cross for our sins, because only the Heavens existed, an unseen realm. The Crucifixion of Jesus Christ was plan A in God's sovereign plan, and there was no plan B.

Taking a closer look at, "has been slain", it is actually a Participle. A Participle is a verb that is acting as an Adjective. Jesus has been slain; slain shows the action of the subject and is describing how the verb was carried out. Meaning Jesus was killed, and how was He killed? He was slaughtered, which is a brutal form of killing meaning to be butchered or cut up as food.

Has been slain is specifically a Perfect Passive Participle – Genitive Singular Neuter. That means nothing to you now, but it will mean a lot once I briefly explain the Perfect tense. Before we dive into the explanation, remember that a Participle is a Verb acting as an Adjective.

A Verb in the Perfect tense means: the action it indicates is an action that is complete, but it has an ongoing state of being. In other words, a completed action with an existing result in the present time. Let's explain why this is the Perfect tense. Well, there are only two deaths. (Revelation 20:14) There is a physical death and then the second death that all humans will experience if they ultimately choose to indulge in the pleasure of their own sin acting as children of the devil. (2 Thessalonians 2:12) Jesus Christ was

not and is not sinful. (Hebrews 4:15). Jesus Christ lived a perfect life that no human could ever live and claimed to be the Son of God, which makes him equal with God in status. (John 10:30) Therefore, Jesus Christ would not experience the second death because He is God. He is sinless and perfect and has always existed before creation ever came to be, and all of creation was made through Him and nothing was made that was not made through Him. (John 1:3) However, Jesus was 100% human, just as much as He was and is 100% God, meaning He could still experience physical death. Humans can only experience one physical death unless God Himself decides to raise you from the dead in your original Earthly body. (John 11:43) Therefore, Jesus only experienced one physical death. It was one united death on the cross acting as a ransom payment to God Himself in order to satisfy the wrath of God. This is for all humans who effectively embrace Him as Lord and Savior of all. (Matthew 27:46) Therefore, this Verb indicates an action that is complete, and we can experience the effects of the result of this action performed by Jesus Christ on the cross in the now and in the future.

CHAPTER THREE: YOU ARE EFFECTUALLY CALLED (THE SUMMONS THAT AWAKENS THE DEAD)

Even as I write now, I pray and hope that you might receive the effectual call of God through the power of the good news presented. Allow Holy Spirit to work in you by submitting and surrendering to His will. God loves you and desires to adopt you into His family as a Child of God; He wants you to be His people and experience the sweet taste of His glory for an eternity!

A definition

Calling is the sovereign and effectual summons of God, issued in time through the gospel, by which those Foreknown and Predestined are drawn irresistibly into union with Christ—awakened from spiritual death, illumined by The Holy Spirit, and brought Joyfully to saving faith. This call

is not a general invitation but a divine command empowered by The Holy Spirit's regenerating work. The call accomplishes what it declares: the actual, heartfelt turning of the sinner from darkness to light, from self to the Savior. It is the moment when eternity breaks into time and grace makes dead hearts beat with delight in God.

The General Call

Generally speaking, Jesus and I seek to call all people. We seek to call Atheists, Buddhists, Hindus, Pagans, Satanists, etc. As I speak in the lines of this book there is a heartbeat which is the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and there are vessels which flow to the heart of the Gospel proclamation. These vessels shoot forth to the ends of the Earth (or wherever we are present) calling each and every person that comes in contact with the Gospel of Jesus Christ to come and drink, to come and rest, to come and receive life. (John 7: 37-39) In other words, the general call is the sincere and universal proclamation of the Gospel in which God invites all people to repent and believe in Christ, revealing His goodness and holding forth the offer of eternal Joy in Himself—though this call, in itself, is not effectual to salvation apart from the regenerating work of The Holy Spirit.

The Effectual Call

The effectual call is the sovereign and Joyful summons of God, by which The Holy Spirit inwardly and irresistibly draws the elect to Christ through the proclamation of the Gospel—awakening their dead hearts to behold the glory of God and to embrace Jesus Christ as their Supreme Treasure. This call is effectual not because it overpowers unwilling people, but because it creates willing people by replacing their heart of stone with a heart of flesh. (Ezekiel 36:26) —A heart that now hungers for the glory of

God in the face of Christ. Effectually, not everyone Jesus calls will receive the call. Not everyone will go to Heaven, because some go to Hell and are there now. In order to ground my claim, let's examine John 10 and determine whether this effectual call and election is true or not.

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by The Door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by The Door is a shepherd of the sheep. To him The Doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear His voice, and He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out. When He brings all His own out, He goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow Him because they know His voice. A stranger they will never follow, but will flee from Him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.” This figure of speech Jesus spoke to them, but they did not understand what those things were which He had been saying to them. So Jesus said to them again, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am The Door of the sheep. All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am The Door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. “I am The Good Shepherd; The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not The Owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees—and the wolf snatches and scatters them—because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep. I am The Good Shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, even as The Father knows Me and I know The Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And I have other sheep, which are not from this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with One Shepherd. For this reason The Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. No one takes it away from Me, but from Myself, I lay it down. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.”

There is a sheep who is called by The Father; He knows them by name, and they hear His voice . Those who are His sheep will follow Him as He leads them out, because they “know” His voice. They “know” His voice because they are already His; the opposite is also true. Those who are not His sheep do not hear His voice, because they are not His sheep. Let’s take a look at the next passage of scripture in John 10 to confirm this truth.

“Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father’s name, these bear witness of Me. But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish—ever; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.” The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him.”

In the last passage it clearly states, “But you do not believe Me because you are not of My sheep. This has huge implications. Implication Number One: You cannot believe in Jesus unless it is granted to you to believe by The Father to begin with. This implication shatters the notion that our salvation hinges on our decisive decision to come to Jesus, when in fact it states here that it does not. Our Justification (restored relationship with God) is made possible by the cross of Jesus Christ, and granted to us as a free gift of grace by The Father. (Ephesians 2:8) Implication Number Two: being called and chosen work hand and hand. You cannot be called if you are not chosen; those who are chosen are called, and those who are not chosen will not be called. So, this begs the age-old question, “How do I know if I am chosen?” To that I answer, no one on this Earth naturally seeks God. (Romans 3:11) We are dead in our trespasses and sins, cut off from God. (Ephesians 2:1) Therefore, if we have any desire at all to love Yahweh Father, then this is due to the transformative work He has begun in us by the power of The Holy Spirit called the new birth or new creation. (John 3: 1-21)

CHAPTER FOUR: YOU ARE JUSTIFIED (DECLARED RIGHTEOUS BY THE RIGHTEOUS ONE)

Before we can have Assurance of Salvation, and taste the sweet precious Life of Jesus Christ daily — with peace— we must first understand what Justification is. So, let's come up with a definition.

A definition

Justification is the sovereign and gracious work of the Triune God by which He redeems sinners from sin, wrath, and death, and brings them into everlasting Joy through union with Jesus Christ—so that He is most glorified in them as they are most satisfied in Him. (John 1:29) Justification is a gift from God, which brings forth abundant life on Earth by The Holy Spirit through regeneration, extending into eternity, where the Saints will enjoy the praise, the presence, and an intimate relationship exposed to the glory of God. (Ephesians 2:8) Now that we know what Justification is, let's answer the question, “when does Justification occur?”

A closer look: When does a sinner become a saint?

The process of Glorification begins with God's sovereign choice based on His foreknowledge, full of mercy, to predestine His Children by His grace according to His purposes and plan. Justification occurs when God calls the dead soul to Himself through the spoken word of God. The Word gives Life — known as regeneration— by the power of The Holy Spirit, and by the decretal will of Yahweh the now alive soul becomes righteous for eternity; otherwise known as Justification. Proceeding regeneration, the transformed soul embraces The Truth that Jesus Christ is Lord — by faith— submitting to His yoke of freedom daily unto Glorification. The process of being made Holy ends with God glorifying His Saints, perfectly, on His second coming and for all eternity with Him. (Romans 8:29-30; Matthew 11:28-30)

How does this look practically?

How the process of Justification actually looks, differs from person to person. Let's view my own walk with Yahweh Father throughout the years. This will not primarily focus on spiritual disciplines or behavior as a Christian because I do not want to associate Justification with works; this is weak evidence. Anyone can say I did this therefore I'm saved. Instead, I will show a timeline overview of my endurance in my faith based on purifying trials of suffering.

(Note: The content i'm about to share is very personal, extremely experiential, and touches dark realities; it's real. I do not seek to hide my flaws from anyone. Sin seeks to hide, and all things will come to The Light in due time. To that I say, I'm only a human. Jesus Christ is The Perfect Redeemer bringing me out of my personal Egypt. The very demon of python that constricted me, I step on with my foot, In Jesus name. I also proclaim life over my family and I, covering us with the blood of Jesus Christ! Additional Note: Every Marine has a different experience during their time of service, my experience is a reflection of the reality I endured).

Seven to seventeen

I was drawn to Yahweh at the age of seven in a Vacation Bible School at my old church Parkview. However, my passion for Jesus really grew at the age of twelve, when I was allowed to be a part of my church's youth group. The youth pastor at the time spoke in a way that I will never forget. He always said things like, "I'm giving you some ammunition to take with you to school," or during his sermons he would be so zealous for Yahweh and yell, "This is the truth, and the truth will set you free!" Even as I write, my heart is stirred for my Lord and savior Jesus from nostalgia. Unfortunately, Satan attacked my youth pastor's marriage. His wife, whom I loved as a mother, wanted a divorce. Coming from a family whose parents were divorced this broke my heart and tested my faith.

Many nights in youth group my pastor, while he shed tears on his knees, would petition Yahweh for restoration in his marriage. We would all corporately pray over him, as youth. Sadly, his marriage was not restored. Because of that one event in my youth, it caused me to lose some fire for my Father, Yahweh. I felt like I had experienced two divorces, because they were my church family. I began to question God's goodness. I asked, "Why would God allow him who is a instrument of good works leading us to Life experience such brokenness?" As a result of the divorce, my churches head pastor relieved him of his position of authority. (1 Timothy 3:5) Our youth group was never the same because of that blow to the body. (1 Corinthians 12:26) But God had a plan, for His Glory. (Romans 11:36) The foundation that was laid down in my life by my youth pastor, through Jesus, shaped me into the man I am today. (Proverbs 22:6) I have been fighting the good fight ever since, and it hasn't been easy.

Seventeen to twenty-two

I came to a crossroad between full time missions and the Marines. I wanted to do both. When I was sixteen, the year I turned seventeen, I had an opportunity to go to The Dominican Republic on a mission trip. However, as you already know I waited too late and could not get a passport in time for the trip. So, at seventeen I chose to join the Marines. Little did I know that as a Christian being apart of the Marines was full time missions.

My first year to my two-and-a-half-year marker in the Marine Corps I was stationed at a nuclear weapons naval base in Kingsbay, Georgia. At the end of my first-year marker, when I was a Lance Corporal, I was assaulted by 8-10 Marines. It was the most pain I have ever experienced in my entire life, physically, and has caused me multiple problems mentally down the road, and to this day, as explained in the Preface. When I asked my rifleman buddy why they assaulted me, he told me, “They told me it was because of your attitude, they just didn’t like you as a person.” My unit didn’t like how I lived my life as a Christian. I took that directly as an attack from Satan. (1 Peter 4:16)

Although physically painful, the real challenge, that was mainly emotional for me in my Marine Corps career, came when I was transferred to a Battalion Landing Team at the end of my two-and-a-half-year marker. This unit was Third Division First Marines (3/1) India Company in Camp Pendleton, California. I went from being four hours away from home to being in the fleet rotation all the way across the country. Not only that but I was immediately made a platoon sergeant, in charge of thirty-two Marines, because I was a Corporal. Typically, during the time I was in The Marine Corps, a Platoon Sergeant was of the rank of a Staff Sergeant and usually had at least thirteen years in the Marines with two combat deployments under their belt; I had two years with no combat deployments. —I was way in over my head— This was no longer deep-water faith in the shallow end. I was thrown into the depths of the pacific, and was told, “if you die, you die.” However, believe it or not the lack of experience in my time in the infantry and the shock of job relocation was not my biggest problem, California was; California was a foreign country to me.

The values that California had and do have as a whole are Anti-Christian — Which means collectively they are Anti-Christ— In California, in The Marine Corps Infantry, you work five to three (In garrison). During the day, every break is a smoke break. Leadership would do pow-wows and say, “smoke em if you got em.” Then you drink starting at three or “beer o’clock,” and you don’t stop until you pass out; this is during the weekdays. The weekends are frat parties on steroids. Marines would bring in girls to

the barracks and commit all kinds of sexual sin like orgies, then they would kick the women out as soon as they were done, with shirts over their heads to shame them. Mix this with tobacco —drugs for some Marines— mortars, machine guns, rifles, explosives, and rockets and you really have a recipe for disaster. This is why the divorce rate in the Marine Corps for enlisted personnel Sergeant and below (E-1 to E-5) is at a staggering 85% —It may be more by the time you have read this book— Total lack of spiritual stability from non Holy living and pursuit in temporal pleasures, mixed with high work volume, too much partying, and hazing culture. Most nights “boots” — new marines— are thoroughly hazed, if not blatantly assaulted like myself. I’m also not even addressing the suicidal ideation and suicide attempts swept under the rug by command. This is the kind of culture where Christians die spiritually; (Jeremiah 51) The new Bablyon lived out in "America's most noble and courageous."

Thankfully, Yahweh showed me grace by placing me in leadership positions all throughout my career. In other words, I had too much responsibility to give into foolish behavior as a leader who should set the example, and then as a Christian living in the world. However, Satan is cunning and uses all things against you, even good intentions. (Genesis 3:1) Because I did not drink alcohol —due to my faith valuing sobriety— I had one of my Marines ask me to be a designated driver. He was celebrating a Marine from Alabama getting out of the Marines, and they planned to go to the club. Because he was from Alabama like me, and because they were going to be drinking, I decided it was best that I became the designated driver. Marines take care of Marines, or they should, I thought.

We went to a club in downtown San Diego, and they were “pre-gaming” or getting buzzed before hitting on women, their idea of a good time. So, while they did that I leaned up against a wall and just watched them to make sure they behaved. While I was standing against the wall, I had a female approach me and say, “My friend over there is turning twenty-one, and celebrating. She wanted me to give you her number because she thought you were cute.” I took the number and put it in my pocket. I was in a relationship, so I knew better. Well, later that evening the girl who gave

me her number approached me and asked me if I would walk her to her hotel, which was right down the road. I told her I would and told my Marines that if they leaved the club to call me and tell me where they were going, because I did not want to have to chase them down in downtown San Diego. I took the girl to the hotel. Once we got to the hotel, she pulled my shirt bringing me down to her level, and began to kiss me; I did not resist, and kissed her back.

I was unfaithful to my girlfriend with a kiss, which gave me a taste of a promise of sin that was sweet. A detail that hasn't been disclosed until now is that I was crippled by pornographic material from a very young age, this encounter in California sparked lustful desires I had fantasized over from a young age. Due to these thorns growing with me in my weak faith I started getting choked out by these temporal pleasures. As a result I chose to keep in contact with this girl from the club. Later on, I was full of shame from the enemy, convicted by The Holy Spirit, and I couldn't bear to face the girl I was in a relationship with. She knew that I was out that night at a club acting as a designated driver, and she did not like the situation. She did not want me to go because of the possible temptations. Due to my behavior over a period of a week, she knew that I had been unfaithful. When she asked me if I had been unfaithful, I admitted what happened. I remember everything about that night. Her father was in the room, whom I grew up knowing as well, and he grabbed the phone and cussed me out; I immediately threw up in a stair well while on the phone from the realization of what I had done to her and the family I sought to become a part of. That night I learned never to flirt with temptation, and the promises of pleasure that sin gives you. I learned that even with good intentions, if you stick your hand in a snake pit you should expect to get bit. (Ecclesiastes 10:8)

This was within the first month of moving to California. During this time, I had relocated away from the south (southern states of America). For the first time in my life, I had become a Platoon Sergeant in charge of thirty-two Marines. I also started to attend Squad Leaders Course (Advanced Infantryman Course) to get certified for deployment, and I had lost the young woman that I was raised with in the church all my life. I was

overwhelmed with multiple fronts of spiritual and mental warfare and became suicidal in ideation. However, within five minutes of the apexed night of my suicidal ideation — due to high alcohol consumption for the first time in my life— one of the squad leaders under me came to my room, opened my unlocked door to ask for a bottle of ketchup, and saw me in tears with alcohol for the first time in my life; thankfully he took away all my knives, and stayed with me for a little while to make sure I was okay. This was the night I learned God was providential and He was with me. (Deuteronomy 31:8) I bought the cross necklace I mentioned in the introduction as a testimony to his faithfulness.

(Note: The Marine Corps became the most unfaithful period of my life time to Yahweh. To this day I have many regrets over the choices I made. I still struggle with the shame from sexual sin that I indulged in while in California after this important relationship ended. The enemy seeks to cover me with shame from this period of time in my life making me feel worthless, and invaluable. But I continually remind myself of who God says I am, rather than what I did. Nonetheless, not even five years of rebellion can compare to the eternal work of the Cross of Jesus Christ; He is sufficient in everyway... Do you believe that today?)

Twenty-two to Present

Well, as I stated earlier in sub-section, “Seventeen to twenty-two,” I suffered from mental illness from getting assaulted. In 2019, about eight months after I got out of the Marines, I was having panic attacks, massive anxiety, and insomnia. Naturally, I decided it was best to see a psychiatrist. After explaining to the psychiatrist what I just explained to you, she told me I was suffering from symptoms of PTSD. Around this time, I attempted to begin another relationship with a girl who was in my sister’s wedding; I really thought that she was the one for me. Then I found out that she was playing both sides of the field, and was unfaithful with me with another man. After what happened to me in the Marines with my previous

girlfriend, this blow really did a number on my will and mind. I became so low, this time however I knew suicide was not the answer. I felt like I had no escape from my pain after all, how do you escape your own body? After what happened I had the husband of a friend of my sister's — Erik Von Bergen — contact me about doing a Bible study devotional; I agreed to the Bible study.

I was so low and had been so foolish that when I started to do this Bible study, I saw the Light of Jesus Christ shine through my darkness. (1 Corinthians 3:18) I was so low and felt so much pain that when I started to read my Bible every night, I felt the effects it had on my heart and mind; I could feel, like medicine, the effects of God's word changing me from the inside out. Jesus had given me a way out of the prison of my body, and it's abuser, me. He gave me Himself; He baptized me with Spirit and Fire. (Isaiah 46:4; Matthew 3:11-12) From that point on instead of taking medication that caused more problems than helping (at the time), I would use the Bible coupled with intimate prayer to treat my symptoms by addressing the root of the problem, my relationship with Jesus Christ or lack of relationship I should say. Each time I panicked, I would read. Each time I had anxiety, I would read. Each time I had insomnia, I would read.

The communion I experienced through God's word alone healed my broken heart and reduced my symptoms of PTSD within my mind, and body; however I am not fully healed today. That Bible study led to a day called April 14th, 2019, where I truly learned that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life; (John 14:6) However, Satan has continued to attack me. As you saw from the Preface, 2020 was a dark year for me...2022 was darker in different ways. But God has the final say so. (Psalm 73:26) I am currently pursuing a degree in Biblical Studies and Yahweh has blessed me every step of the way. I have a wife who loves Jesus. I also have been blessed with two children on Earth, and two with our Lord Jesus, perfected in glory. He has taken what was intended for evil and made it for His glory. (Genesis 50:20) He restores!

For those of you out there that are in the dark, who are: broken, lonely, addicted, ashamed, scared, lost, and feel abandoned please know that The God of the universe cares about your situation. Please know that The God of the universe wants to help you. Please know that The God of the universe is the solution to your problem. This doesn't necessarily mean that He will fix your situation entirely, He may, but this does mean He will walk with you through your situation. Jesus Christ will sustain you in your time of need as you depend on Him. (Isaiah 46:4) Our dependance on Him is how we come to know Him, and it is our knowledge of Him, gained through our experiences, that transforms us; it does not stop. I will forever marvel at the glory of Jesus Christ.

Just like a muscle you must exercise your faith. Your faith must be active not passive. (James 2:18-22) It was these deep-water moments that showed me I could rely on Jesus and how to rely on Jesus. (Matthew 14:28-29) I once had an individual ask me how I knew that The Lord willed my path, and I said, "I know The Lord has called me to go, because where He has called me to go is so far out of my comfort zone that it requires me to fully depend on Him."

CHAPTER FIVE: YOU WILL BE GLORIFIED (THE FUTURE HOPE THAT CANNOT FAIL)

Now that Justification has been defined and explained practically the question, “what is Assurance of Salvation?”, can be answered. Assurance of Salvation is The Spirit-wrought confidence that one belongs to Christ and will be kept by Him forever—a confidence grounded not in the strength of one’s faith, but in the sovereign grace of God, the finished work of Christ, and the soul’s awakened delight in Him as Supreme Treasure. Do not confuse Assurance of Salvation with Eternal Security. They are very closely related, so much so you could say they are, “joined at the hip,” however they are distinguished from each other. We will talk about Eternal Security more in chapter six. For now let's talk about Glorification, and how it pertains to assurance.

A definition

Glorification is the climactic act of God’s sovereign grace in which He fully conforms His elect to the image of Christ—body, soul, and affections—so that they may eternally delight in the radiant glory of God, unhindered by sin, suffering, or death. It is the final link in the *ordo salutis*—the golden chain that began in Foreknowledge and Predestination, was secured through

Calling, Justification, and now reaches its consummation in the believer's complete transformation and everlasting joy in the presence of God.

Can we be assured of salvation while on earth?

Throughout my years as a Christian, I have heard two answers to the question, "Can we be assured of salvation while on earth?" The first answer is: you can absolutely know you are saved while on Earth. The second answer is: No one really knows for sure until they are dead. The truth is we all can know that we are saved while on Earth. In fact, Jesus Himself says you can know. (1 John 5:13) If an individual can know that they are a sinner and need Justifying, then the same must be true that an individual can know that they are a Saint and have peace with God. Let's look at the hymn Blessed Assurance.

The opening line to the hymn Blessed Assurance states, "blessed assurance, Jesus is mine." Fanny Crosby, the woman who wrote this hymn, was no doubt a mature believer of Jesus Christ who knew she was saved. Why do I say this? Well, there are some clues within the hymn's first stanza that infer this. Let's begin with this first line, "blessed assurance, Jesus is mine." Crosby is expressing solidified peace. She has blessed assurance which roots from the fact that Jesus is hers and she is being Glorified. Without Jesus being hers and the experience of Glorification, she would not have this assurance. However, they reinforce each other, because whoever has Jesus, has The Father, and whoever has The Father also has The Holy Spirit. (John 14:26) Those who have The Holy Spirit produce Fruit of The Spirit, thus affirming the promise given by the Father through The Son. (Galatians 5:22-24) Therefore, she has blessed assurance on the promises of God from the producing of Fruit of The Spirit; Jesus is hers. (Ephesians 1:4-10)

Getting to the root of the matter

You may be asking, "well how does Fanny Crosby know Jesus is hers?" That's a good question. However, a better question is, "apart from Fruit of

The Spirit reinforcing that Jesus is indeed hers, how does she know that Jesus is indeed hers?" I'm glad you asked. Let's take a look at Hebrews 11:6.

"And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him."

No one can come to Christ without faith. Fanny Crosby knows that Jesus is hers because she has faith in the promise of God that she will be saved. (John 3:16) You may have heard that seeing is believing. Although, there may be some truth to the fact someone may believe in something once they see it, there is also truth in the fact someone may see something once they believe it. The first is a matter of signs and the second is a matter of faith. According to Hebrews 11:6 we must first believe, and if you believe you will be saved. (Acts 16:31) Although, someone can see signs and believe, someone can also see signs all day and not believe. The Israelites who were delivered out of Egypt are a prime example of this. (Exodus 32:7-10) Without faith you will not be saved. (Ephesians 2:8)

How does this look practically?

Chapter four's practical focus was on the endurance of my faith through purifying trials. However, that was just a snapshot of the life of a Christian. The Christian life is not just about suffering but also about Joy. The reason that I talked about suffering is because suffering and joy as a Christian work hand in hand. Both realities are true and coexist. —*Because of my willful sinning, I was dying spiritually in a prison that I made acting as my own God. As a result my transformed natured was being suffocated. I began to drown and I was gasping for oxygen in my spirit, and Holy Spirit grabbed hold of my soul through The Rock of Ages. I rested on The Rock out of the waves of the pitch black ocean in His word. While on the solid foundation of eternity, I unearthed the Ninefold Veil—* We have briefly already talked

about how Glorification sounds by examining the first line of the first stanza of “Blessed Assurance.” Now, let’s talk about how this actually looks in life.

An experience with the supernatural

In the year of 2022, during January, I saw a movie with my wife. This movie was based on a book and was supposed to be about God’s redeeming love. However, the producer made the movie overly dark and erotic which took away from the real intentions of the book, a Gospel presentation. The movie is about a girl whose mother got pregnant out of wedlock, and the father did not want the baby. The father asked the mother to “take care of it”, in other words an abortion. However, the mother did what was right and endured the pregnancy. Well, this mother gets no support from the birth father, so she ends up choosing to do prostitution as a last resort to provide for her daughter — a testament to the ability to desire good while still choosing to do evil. As a result, her mother catches a disease, and dies early in the movie.

This young girl at the age of eight is alone and on her own. As a result, the mother’s prostitution manager or pimp takes the daughter exploiting her by trafficking her into prostitution. The girl was given no choice and is indoctrinated into the life of prostitution at eight — a witness to generational curses; in other words, reaping what you sow through previous generations— Later in the movie, there is a man who is a Christian seeking communion with God through prayer. At the end of his prayer time, he lays a request at God’s feet for a woman to marry.

This man, who is a farmer, then goes to town to sell crop and while in town sees this woman walking the streets. He says aloud, “God you have a sense of humor”, meaning he believed God had chosen this woman to be his wife. He later finds out she is a prostitute, and really understands the Lord is calling him to live a life like the prophet Hosea. The prophet Hosea was commanded to marry a prostitute named Gomer by Yahweh to symbolize

Israel's unfaithfulness to Him, and also symbolize His faithfulness to Israel. So, he courts her or pursues her. Eventually, under the right circumstances, the woman decided to marry this farmer. The rest of the movie is about their new marriage and the struggles that they endure together.

I tried to keep the details minimal. Like I said, this movie was overly dark, and had some erotic scenes which really took away from the message of God's redeeming love. The producer does not emphasize God's redeeming love, but only brushes over it... My point is, this movie was dark and heavy, and really weighed on my mind.

As disclosed earlier I have a history of porn addiction, and sexual immorality; I sought intimacy that I did not have with my mother in these disgusting acts of abomination. At the time I watched the movie, it had been many years since I watched porn for pleasure. However, the movie being so dark and heavy, attacked my mind— This is a testament that demonic powers can and will use anything to destroy you. I laid in bed that night feeling something I hadn't felt in a very long time. Lack of joy, lack of peace, lack of purpose; I felt like my identity as a Child of God had been stripped from me. The next day I went to school, and I was not okay. I sat in my first class at Liberty University with hundreds of students in this general class, and began to cry. As a grown man and former infantry Marine, I do not cry often, but this movie reminded me of my addictive past. After class I sat in the Veteran Center at my school, and wrote a prayer in my journal; I pleaded with God to not leave me.

This was my prayer, "Heavenly Father, I am broken. After watching this movie and seeing the perspective of sex trafficking, I am plagued by my past. My mind ponders on the fact I watched pornography, which saw its consummation through barking at with burning lust for the sensual pleasure of the thought, and the act of sex with these women. However, now I am revolted, now I have disgust, now I have regret. I felt something I hadn't felt in a long time, spiritual death, numbness, association with fornication. I used to do that... I used to want that... I used to crave that... I feel unclean, dirty, like trash, disconnected from the identity You gave me. Please don't

leave. Please live through me. Please revive me as I stand paralyzed by my sin. I love You Lord, amen.”

After praying my prayer, Yahweh spoke to my heart to open up His word. So, I reached in my backpack and pulled out my Bible. I opened it to the Psalms for encouragement in my time of need. I read the first Psalm that says “Blessed is the person who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the Law of The Lord, And on His Law he meditates day and night. He will be like a tree planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season, And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers.” (Psalm 1)

I prayed another prayer, “Yahweh help me delight in your law making me like a tree planted by streams of water that yields much fruit, and never withers away.” Once I read the first Psalm, I began to search for appropriate scripture within the Psalms, and I came to Psalm eighteen. Psalm eighteen begins like this, “I love You, Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my savior, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call upon The Lord, who is worthy to be praised, And I am saved from my enemies.” (Psalm 18)

I read the entire psalm and could not help but shout, Hallelujah! You are worthy! Thank you for my redemption! Thank You for dying for my sins! And for the first time in my life, I experienced something I had never experienced to this degree before. Great sadness co-existing with Great Joy within me; I was dead, but His life —not mine— was pouring out of my soul filling me with His Great Joy. The contrast of the two were so clear. In my past I had experienced great sadness and then Yahweh took away my sadness and gave me Great Joy, but I had never experienced them simultaneously; This is not a natural occurrence. To experience both great sadness, and experience Great Abounding Joy, simultaneously, is a supernatural work. I again experienced from a different angle the paradox that I was a sinner, broken, dirty, surrounded by death yet at the same time God had declared me righteous, clean, alive and complete in Him. I was

assured of my salvation by the Joy of the Son living in me. I could actually feel His Joy overcoming my sorrow; my pain did not go away, but He sustained me with His Joy. — I had rivers of living water flowing from my heart because of the assurance Jesus gave me through His word that I was indeed redeemed and being glorified; (John 7:37-38) this later led to Living Water flowing from my belly to the Body of Christ. — another story for another day.

This is what it means to be a Christian; to be broken, ashamed, guilty of sin, and deserving of death by a Holy God. Experiencing crucifixion with Christ becoming an adopted son or daughter of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. In turn we sing, “Blessed assurance, Jesus is Mine.” (Romans 8:14-17) We sing the song of the redeemed! Hallelujah! This is The Truth of the word of The Lord, He is I AM... So, do not wait any longer, come... Come now!

CHAPTER SIX: THE GOD WHO CHAINS GRACE TOGETHER (THE AUTHOR, SUSTAINER, AND FINISHER OF SALVATION)

Both Justification and Glorification have common ground. The common ground at its foundation is Eternal Security. As stated in chapter five Eternal Security is not to be confused with Assurance of Salvation. They are similar yet distinguished; one is the fruit, the other is the deep eternal roots that produce the fruit. So, what is Eternal Security? Eternal Security is the unbreakable reality that all whom God has sovereignly chosen, redeemed by Christ, and regenerated by The Spirit will be preserved in faith and brought to everlasting glory—because their salvation is upheld not by the constancy of their devotion, but by the delight God takes in magnifying His own grace in their eternal Joy. Eternal Security rests on the promise of God that if a lost soul becomes Justified adopting the identity of "Saint," God will be faithful to also glorify them with Jesus in his second coming (Romans 8:29-30) .

A closer look

As you can see, both Assurance of Salvation and Eternal Security share Fruit of The Holy Spirit as an indicator one is true. However, with

Eternal Security, the distinguishing factor rests on the promise of God to complete the good work He has started in the Saint known as Glorification, (the process of being made holy), not the fruit in and of itself. This is done by empowering the Saint to willfully choose Jesus daily. (Philippians 1:6) Eternal Security rests in the promise that if you confess with your mouth and believe in your heart that Jesus Christ is The Son of God —the second member of The Trinity, who died on the cross for your sins, rising from the dead— that you will be saved. (Romans 10:9-10) You are trusting, by faith, that Jesus is who He says He is; because He is who He says He is, you can be sure He will keep His promise to glorify you with Him in all of eternity.

Regeneration is the new-birth. Justification is the gift of grace from God that reconciles the sinner to Himself making them a new creation. Glorification is undergoing the perfection process of the Saint ultimately resulting in that perfection upon being face to face with Jesus, forever enjoying His good pleasures. — Assurance of Salvation is knowing the Saint is Justified by experiencing the process of Glorification identifying Fruit of The Spirit in the Saint's life as evidence of being born again. Eternal Security is the inability to reverse, by sin or unfaithful living, the declaration of righteousness by God; believing since the Saint is Justified and being Glorified that the saint, will no matter what, be ultimately Glorified to perfection. (Romans 8:30)

Let me reassure you that even if you do not have peace of The Spirit in your life this does not mean that you are not eternally secure with Jesus. Although peace is an indicator, it is not the deciding factor; Peace can be robbed. Satan is out and about seeking to devour you like a lion. (1 Peter 5:8) Your Justification cannot be undone by you or Satan. Nothing can remove you from the hand of God. (John 10:28-30)

Confronting lies, the false Christian

Now that we have discussed what Eternal Security is, let's discuss what it is not. Eternal Security is not one time praying a prayer and because

you pray this prayer you are set and going to heaven and can sin all you want; this is known as Free Grace Theology. I have heard many people who claim to be Christians say, “I was baptized. I prayed a prayer when I was younger and attended church,” and these so called “Christians” live a life full of sin. This is not Eternal Security; this is not even Christianity. This is a lie and creates false Christians who are deceived by Satan.

Paul says to the church of Corinth, “do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the Kingdom of God.” (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

One, going to church does not make you a Christian. It is not enough to just be a part of a community of people who claim to be born again, or to be born of Abraham's lineage, a “true Jew” by pedigree. You must first be born again; you must be the community itself, the Bride. Jesus said to Nicodemus, the teacher of Israel, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and The Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” (John 3:6)

Two, saying a prayer does not save you, although prayer is highly useful and effective. If a prayer saved you, then all you would have to do is say a prayer and you are good; that is works based salvation. You are only saved by grace through faith alone. (Ephesians 2:8) It is not the prayer that saves you, but the Person who you are praying to. Saying you believe in Jesus Christ every day of the week does not prove your belief. If you do not live a life of Holiness then it is likely you do not believe and are not saved. Even the demonic powers believe and tremble before Him. (James 2:19) You must be Holy. (1 Peter 1:16) If a lost soul has been saved by Jesus, they would live a Holy life; because if the lost soul is Justified by Jesus — no longer lost, but found through sovereign adoption — they have The Holy Spirit in them. (Ephesians 1:13)

Lastly, baptism does not save you. The common verse used by those who believe baptism is salvific is the verse from John just stated, “Jesus answered, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and The Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.’” (John 3:5) As we know, Jesus said this to the teacher of Israel, Nicodemus. It is likely that Jesus was referring to the scroll of the prophet Ezekiel, which says, “Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and bring it about that you walk in My statutes, and are careful and follow My ordinances.” (Ezekiel 36:26)

So, in Jewish culture water was associated with ceremonial cleansing or purification by the blood. (John 3:25) Not that water was salvific, but that this ceremonial cleansing or purification was associated with the process of regeneration, new life; (Titus 3:5) Jesus knew this association and was revealing this need for innocent blood to atone for sins to provide that new life, regeneration. A little further down in John chapter three, John the Baptist says, “A person cannot receive not even one thing unless it has been given to him from Heaven;” (John 3:27) confirming, amongst all other things, that the ceremony of purification was not salvific. To solidify the case of water baptism as not being a necessary component of salvation, we can look to the extreme case of the thief on the cross. If water was such a necessary component for salvation, then we could safely assume that Jesus would not have said to the thief, “Truly I say to you, today you will be with Me in paradise.” (Luke 23:43) The thief was going to be in paradise because of the promise of Jesus alone; experientially, the blood of Jesus covered him imputing righteousness to him. Furthermore, baptism is an act of obedience; it is an expression of faith; a means of grace. (Acts 16:31) It was and is done in accord with repentance, with confession of sins, as an identifier with the Christian faith. I believe it also infers that you belong to, and are under the direct care of the covenant community. (Matthew 3:6; Acts 16:31; Genesis 17: 11-14) If you believe in Jesus, you will be baptized—dare I say you will baptize your children, "babies," even. Not because

they are regenerate, but because you hold fast the promises given to you by Yahweh that He will effectually call your children to Himself in His sovereign timing— However, just because you are baptized with water does not mean that you are born again. Water baptism is a physical expression of love for Jesus, and obedience to the command of Jesus to be baptized; it is a mirror and window into the ultimate spiritual reality at work.

(Note: There is no explicit command in the New Testament to baptize infants. There is much to discuss about this topic, to which I say, this book's intent is not specifically seeking to defend that argument).

Confronting lies, loss of salvation

Then there is the Christian who has lived a life that displays The Fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, but has a season of unfaithfulness —This was me. During this season of unfaithfulness, they are running from God. These Christians are losing vigilance and becoming comfortable in their worldly environment, which ultimately leads them to become conditioned by sin. The next thing you know they are practicing sin such as, but not limited to, idolatry. Their job has become their primary concern, their husband or wife, or girlfriend or boyfriend has become their primary concern, schoolwork has become their primary concern, sports has become their primary concern, games, television, money, etc. Does this born again believer become unborn? Is this Christian who has in the past lived a faithful life of holiness to God, but now is unfaithful temporarily, still alive spiritually?

I argue that this individual is still born again if this season of unfaithfulness is temporary and leads them to repentance by conviction of The Holy Spirit; I argue that this individual is still born again if their relationship with Jesus Christ is enflamed by His faithfulness—by any holy means. You might be asking, “how long of a season of unfaithfulness can someone endure and still be a spiritually alive?” This is a good question, however the wrong question. That question hinges on the Christian and the

idea that our Justification is based ultimately on our faithfulness, which is not biblical. Does our faithfulness come into play with our walk with the Lord? Yes. Does our salvation hinge ultimately on our faithfulness? No.

Our salvation hinges on, as we discussed earlier in “a closer look,” the promise of God. (John 3:16) Our faithfulness— in other words perseverance— is a byproduct of The Holy Spirit within us. (Philippians 1:6) So, the seeming problem derives from the text itself. If The Holy Spirit is continually in you glorifying you, you will continually be faithful abiding in Him, so logically you could conclude if you are unfaithfully sinning The Holy Spirit is not in you. Although this is true thought, in this case we are targeting individuals who have a season of unfaithfulness after years of continual faithfulness to Jesus. So, this individual is willfully living in sin, but still believes Jesus is Lord and savior. This is the area where lines can be blurred if overlooked, and false declarations can be concluded. So, let's distinguish the line by looking at the Biblical evidence.

Here are a couple of paraphrased texts to consider when discussing whether becoming unregenerate is Biblical. One, our faith rests on the promise of God that whoever believes Jesus is the Son of God and died for our sins, rising from the dead, will be saved. (John 3:16) Two, every one of us has the responsibility to choose Jesus Christ daily or we will fall into sin. (Genesis 4:6-7) Three, if we are faithless, He remains faithful because He cannot deny Himself. (2 Timothy 2:13) Lastly, if we do not remain attached to The Only True Vine of Life (Jesus), we are like branches that wither up and are thrown away. They are then picked up and tossed into the fire to be burned. (John 15:6)

The seeming problem lies within the last text. Branches who do not remain attached to Jesus and produce good fruit will wither up, and be thrown away and then tossed in the fire. This text suggests —when taken out of proper context— that we can indeed become unregenerate if we are not faithfully producing fruit. However, we already know that the entire process of salvation does not ultimately hinge on our faithfulness but God's faithfulness. So, let's take a closer look at this text.

Jesus says, “Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Remain in Me, and I in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself but must remain in The Vine, so neither can you unless you remain in Me. I am The Vine, you are the branches; the one who remains in me, and I in him bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in Me, he is thrown away like a branch and dries up; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.” (John 15:2-6)

At first glance you could easily focus on the first verse that says, “every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away...” This is one approach to interpretation that acts as a common theme through this entire passage; the seeming focus is on the branch not producing fruit. However, this is not the focus. The real focus is on Jesus. He says, you are already clean because of My words spoken to you (the effectual call of God to wake up; regeneration)... Remain in Me and I in you... The branch cannot bear fruit unless it remains in The Vine... Apart from Me you can do nothing...

So, you see the focus is not on the branch but **The Vine (Jesus)**. The Vine is what determines if the branch has fruit. Every branch is paradoxically apart of The Vine (we will discuss this a little further in just a moment). If the branch remains attached to The Vine, it will bear much fruit. If the branch does not bear fruit, then this means the branch is not attached to The True Vine. In other words, if the “Saint” does not produce Fruit of The Spirit, then the “Saint” was never a Saint to begin with. (1 John 2:19)

I now want to draw your attention to a key part of the text that is overlooked. In order to do this, we must first go to Matthew thirteen. There are three parables that I want to look at, you may have heard of them, the wheat and the weeds, the dragnet, and the parable of the leaven. Before we begin, I want to make special note that from my Biblical worldview — Covenantal Mysticism with an Emphasis on Christian Hedonism— God is not a contradiction. In other words, God does not contradict Himself in

what He says. A quick point to note is that these upcoming parables are **ultimatums**. In other words, these parables address the condition of the believer or non-believer starting in the past leading to the present but finishing **ultimately** at the end of the age when there is no time left for repentance and reconciliation. Therefore, those who are being kept or gathered to be burned in the fire only experience this upon physical death leading to the second death or during the final return of Jesus. Okay, let's continue, first with the parable of the wheat and the weeds.

“The Kingdom of Heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. And the servants of the Master of the house came and said to Him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?’ He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ So the servants said to Him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ But He said, ‘No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, ‘Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’” (Matthew 13:24-30)

I have asked many people if they could interpret or summarize this parable, how would they do that. All the people I have asked immediately say, “the good wheat is collected in the barn and the bad weeds are gathered to be burned.” This is a true statement, but I believe it is a weak interpretation of the whole parable itself. Let's continue with the parable of the dragnet.

“Again, The Kingdom of Heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 13: 47-50)

Again, I asked people if they could interpret or summarize this parable, how would they do it. Every one of them immediately said, “the good fish are kept and the bad fish are tossed into the fire.” Again, this is a true statement, but I still believe that is a weak interpretation of this text. Lastly, let’s look at the parable of the leaven.

“He told them another parable. ‘The Kingdom of Heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened.’” (Matthew 13:33)

Again, I asked people if they could interpret or summarize this parable, how would they do it. Every one of them immediately said, **The Kingdom of Heaven** is like flour that has all become leavened. In other words, this dough had no yeast, yeast was added, and now the dough has risen and become leavened. To which I say, “Exactly!”...

Now, you may be saying, “I’m not following your point Casey.” Let me explain. In the parable or analogy of The True Vine almost always people draw their attention to the branches, good branches that abide and are kept and bad branches that do not abide and are burned. Why? Because they want to be a good branch that bears fruit, so they listen to hear, “what do I have to do to be a good branch”. The same is true in the other parable of the wheat and weeds and the dragnet. People immediately focus on the wheat and the weeds, and the fish in the net, the good and the bad. Why? Because they want to be good wheat, or they want to be a good fish. So, they think, “what do I have to do to be good wheat or a good fish.”... They are thinking about themselves! Man centered! They aren’t listening to the totality of the parable, they do not have ears to hear or eyes to see, they are not paying attention.

What was the last parable I quoted? **The Parable of The Leaven**, and how was it summarized? **The Kingdom of Heaven is this...** which is the point! The parables are not about the wheat or the weeds or the good or bad fish, those are only details describing the topic being discussed, which is

traditional of Jewish scribes. Jesus was using a Hebrew literature technique, which is to describe every detail surrounding the topic of discussion in order to reveal the topic itself. The parables are **ultimately** about the kingdom of heaven at the end of the age! Jesus says this, does He not? He says, “The Kingdom of heaven is like”, “ Again, The Kingdom of Heaven is like[...]”, and a third time, “The Kingdom of Heaven is like[...]” Therefore, Jesus is focusing on The Kingdom of Heaven, not the wheat or the weeds, or the good or bad fish. That is my point! Now, I want to make another point. There are three things, all three parables have in common. There is one field, one net, and one flour. Therefore, there is **ONE** kingdom, and apart of that kingdom is the world, i.e. everything, and it is Jesus’. Don’t believe me? Jesus reveals the truth in the same chapter... here is what He says.

“He answered, ‘The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of The Kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send His angels, and they will gather out of His Kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.’” (Matthew 13:43)

There it is at the beginning of the explanation. The field is the world. He’s not specifically addressing the wheat and the weeds, He is talking about **The Kingdom of Heaven**, which is the world and it's parallel spiritual reality. How careless of us to think it is about us! We are not the focus of the Bible, Jesus is! Apart of The Kingdom of Heaven is the world because all dominion in Heaven and on Earth belong to Him. (Psalm 22:28) Therefore, because the world and everything in it belong to Him, it is His kingdom, and His kingdom will be purged of the evil one and his followers at the end of the age.

Another point I want to make is there—from the beginning— are good wheat sown by Jesus and bad weeds sown by the accuser. There are good fish born of Jesus and bad fish born of the satan. They are all together in the world! One world, one kingdom. So it is with the parable of The True Vine. There is **one vineyard**, with **One Vinedresser**, and **One True Vine** who supplies Life. No other vine supplies life but The True Vine. Within the vineyard there are good branches and bad branches. The good branches are born of Jesus and bear fruit because they are attached to **The Only True Vine of Life**, and the bad branches ultimately born of Satan do not bear fruit because they do not remain attached to The Only True Vine of Life. We know from my Biblical Worldview that God is not a contradiction. So, why would He contradict Himself here in the Apostle John's interpretation of the gospels when He so clearly explains the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen? It would logically make sense that He would remain consistent. I am Yahweh and I do not change. (Malachi 3:6) Therefore, the vineyard is the world, The Vinedresser is Yahweh Father, and The True Vine is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and there are good branches who are His children and bad branches who are children of the devil. The good will be kept and the bad will be gathered together to be tossed into the fire where there is eternal conscious torment for sins committed against an infinite Holy God. (Matthew 13:42)

Now, you may be thinking, “Casey, this does not address the fact that the bad branches originally were a part of the vine according to the parable.” I was hoping you might make that statement. This problem is easily resolved with the doctrine of Common Grace. Common Grace is the sovereign and undeserved kindness of God by which He restrains evil, bestows temporal blessings, and reveals glimpses of His goodness to all people—elect and non-elect alike—so that even in a fallen world, His glory might be displayed and His Joy dimly echoed, though not yet fully embraced. Meaning all humans whether born again or not can and do experience the Common Grace of God. For example, every part of the world and every human that is alive in that world experiences the sun rising in the sky as the dawn approaches. Every human has experienced God's Common Grace,

that is to be alive, and enjoy His creation while you exist. (John 1:16) So it is with the wheat and the weeds, and so it is with the good fish and bad fish.

The wheat and weeds both experience common life given to them by the field, and both fish experience the common life given to them by the body of water. However, this life is only temporal, only God's elect experience abundant saving life through His Saving Grace eternally by regeneration. This explains why the good are kept and the bad are not, because the good have been given true life that is eternal and the bad have never experienced true life that is eternal, because if they had they wouldn't be able to resist such pure goodness of life. — Saving grace is the sovereign, undeserved favor of God that effectually redeems sinners through the person and work of Jesus Christ, awakening dead hearts to delight in Him, uniting them to Christ by faith, and preserving them unto eternal glory. It is grace that does not merely offer salvation but accomplishes it—planned by The Father, purchased by The Son, and applied by The Holy Spirit. It is the active power of divine love that not only forgives, but transforms; not only Justifies, but satisfies.

The details described are rooted in the promises of God; God has a people! You cannot do anything to be a good fish, or good wheat. That was the point of the parables. The parables were spoken to deter people who practiced lawlessness and were self-righteous thinking, “What must I do to earn prosperity? What must I do to earn eternal life? What must I do to earn Heaven?” It was intended to mask the truth from the truly wicked, so the truly wicked would not receive that truth. That Truth is you can do nothing! So, repent and believe in Jesus Christ The Son of God who came into this world in the flesh to take away the sins of His people. He says, “I am The Way, The Truth, and The Life no one comes to The Father except through Me.” (John 14:6)

Don't believe that these details are rooted in the promises of God? I have more for you who do not believe thinking, “I choose; I ultimately determine my destiny!” Jesus has a word for you who say this. Let's look at the parable of The Good Shepherd as we have already discussed. It's within the

book of John chapter ten, and Jesus is addressing Pharisees of unbelief. The Pharisees of unbelief who see the son of God and His works of wonder but still do not believe, who think they ultimately self-determine their destiny and can-do things to earn Justification, and who think that they play apart in the regeneration of their hearts. Jesus says, “You do not believe because you are not among My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of The Father’s hand. I and The Father are one.” (John 10:29)

He says, “You do not believe because you are not My sheep!” Therefore, those who believe and recognize His voice following Him are His sheep, and His sheep will produce fruit. They produce fruit because they have or will have The Holy Spirit within them. Those who do not believe do not recognize His voice because they do not know His voice, because they are not His sheep; they love the devil and his ways (John 8:44). Likewise, those who are **ultimately cut off** from The True Vine do not believe and never did believe, they are bad branches of the devil. Therefore, the question is not, “how long of a season of unfaithfulness can someone endure and still be a spiritually alive?” but, “Within this season of unfaithful willful sinning, does the individual sinning still show evidence of sincere Fruit of The Holy Spirit in them by a heart of conviction?” In other words, “does this person know what they are doing is wrong, and feel the weight of conviction.” If the answer is yes, then there is still evidence that The Holy Spirit is at work within them, (1 John 4:19) and they will ultimately produce fruit because God is faithful, meaning they are born again. (2 Timothy 2:13) If the answer is no, that is a **VERY DANGEROUS** place to be, and there is a problem. Let’s ask one more important question to address this problem.

If you believe that Jesus has Justified you, (Romans 8:30) and you believe that He died for your sins, (John 3:16) do you think that this season of unfaithful willful sinning is greater than Jesus’ death on the cross causing you to become unborn again? If the answer is yes, then you should ask yourself if you really believe in the wonder working power of the cross that

washes your sins white as snow. (Isaiah 1:18) If you really believed then you would rest on His promise, and trust that “it is finished,” (John 19:28-30) and that “no one will snatch them out of My hand.” (John 10:28)

Let me reassure you if you have doubts about whether you are born again or not, thinking somehow you have undone the eternal work of Jesus Christ, you have not. Your faith does not hinge on you, it never did! It is a gift of God given to you that you receive through faith, and even that very faith is a gift of God. It is fruit of the Holy Spirit produced by grace by God who chose you according to His own purposes. By grace you have been saved through faith and this is not a work of your own so that no one may boast. (Ephesians 2:8) Jesus Christ is the perfect sacrifice, and His death is sufficient for all sins past, present and future, no matter how great (Hebrews 10:12) —Although sin is deathly serious, which is why Jesus had to die, His blood is more valuable than your sin is evil— Jesus’ death would not have wonder working power able to wash your sins as white as snow if His death did not cover all sins, including seasons of unfaithfulness. This is why God is the one who sees to our Glorification, not us. (Romans 8:29-30) If it were up to us, we would never make it to the end. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)

Confronting lies, addressing Christian apostasy

What about the so called “Christian” who walks away from the faith having been in the church all their life, publicly professing to be a born again, and has done many seemingly good works in the name of Jesus, like a pastor. As we have already discussed this idea hinges on the fact that church, good works, and saying Jesus is Lord saves you; it does not. (Ephesians 2:8) Jesus makes it very clear that He knows the heart of man, even pastors who seemingly are strong Christians.

Jesus says, “Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your

name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; leave Me, you who practice lawlessness.’” (Matthew 7: 21-23)

Here Jesus clearly sees through their act. He targets works such as: prophecy, casting out demons, performing miracles. He then goes straight to the condition of the heart and calls them “lawless,” meaning the law is not written on their hearts .(Hebrews 10:16) This goes back to the section “Confronting lies, the false Christian,” where it quotes 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, addressing lawless sinners who will not enter The Kingdom of Heaven. Those who seemingly walk away from the faith never to return practice lawlessness, because they do not see and savor Jesus. They are still blind; dead in their trespasses .(Ephesians 2:1) They are not His sheep. If they truly were ever alive and could see, they would remain faithful, even if there is a temporal season of unfaithfulness, because God is ultimately faithful. (Deuteronomy 7:9-11) They are His sheep .(John 10:27-28) Therefore, since they have left the "church," they were never of the Bride. (1 John 2:19)

Be honorable; live holy

Most Christians, if not all, at one point in their walk with the Lord have been unfaithful. This is not desirable and dishonors God. As a Christian we are called to walk the walk, and talk the talk, least you should cause your brother or sister to stumble . We will all be held accountable if we cause our brother and sister to stumble. In fact, Jesus says if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. If your eye causes you to sin pluck it out. For it is better to enter The Kingdom of Heaven with one hand and one eye than to be thrown into Hell with both. (Mark 9:43-49)

Does this mean that we should go and cut off hands and pluck out our eyes? No, however, at the same time, yes! Jesus being the Holy God that He is understands that sin is so evil, so treacherous, such a disease, that it actually would be better to do that. It would be better to lose a limb or an eye which

prevents you from sinning that to actually spend an eternity in Hell with both eye and limb.

How does this look practically?

As born again believers of Jesus living in a fallen world we will unfortunately continue to sin until we are with Jesus. However, we have been given The Power to overcome that sin, and we should be sinning in a decreasing pattern each day. I would suggest that because The Father sees us as Glorified already, we should adopt His mindset of how we view our identity. In other words, fix your gaze upon the reality that will be to us, but already is to The Father; Greater Vision. As we mature in our faith, we will see how our heart changes, specifically our disgust with sin. In turn we will fix our eyes on Yahweh Father and say, "with Your faithfulness I will no longer sin again." As you know, from chapter five's, "how does this look practically," that throughout my lifetime have struggled with pornography. However, unlike chapter five's experience where the Lord fills me with joy, there have been multiple occasions within my life as a mature Christian, I have still succumbed to watching a brief video for seconds for sinful pleasure feeling total shame.

When I gave in to temptation in the moment, I was like a drug addict, catching a high off the temporal pleasure that it offered. However, almost immediately once I was finished and sometimes during, I would become extremely convicted. I would feel shame, unclean, guilty, and I would cry alone in my room. I would cry out to God to fix me because I had a problem. I would cry for Him to fix me because I was broken; to change my hearts desires to love this sin no more —My wife is aware of this struggle, and continues to help me by encouraging me to inform her when I am being tempted.

I realized I was sinful, and that I could not change my depravity. So, I just had to trust in Jesus to do the job I couldn't do myself, no matter how hard I tried. I had to make the choice to take and eat The Sweet Bread of Heaven. I had to choose to drink/apply the most valuable blood to ever exist. To love the most valuable treasure of Heaven. To embrace the most glorious reality in the universe that has ever existed. Or eat a mud pie from a trash can. (John 6:51-57) As you can see from Chapter five's, "how does this look practically," Jesus healed me of that sin. He did it by giving me new heart. Through hours of continual prayer. He taught me how to love Him and find my ultimate satisfaction, and pleasure in Him. However, I could not have chosen to love God or enjoy Him properly if He had not first empowered me to do so. (Romans 3:10-12) Although there have been times and will be times, we all slip, we should repent and cling to the cross. We should all trust that if we sin as His Children, that He has searched our hearts knowing every part of us and has declared us righteous; (Psalm 139) God will finish His good work He first started in us by glorifying us with His Son Jesus Christ in His second coming .(Romans 8:29-30)

12-DAY DEVOTIONAL: DEVOTIONS FOR THE ASSURED

Day 1: Known Before You Were Born

Scripture: Romans 8:29a

You were not a stranger to God before your first breath. Before you ever sinned, spoke, or suffered—He knew you. Not in the way one might know facts or foresee events, but in the tender, covenantal intimacy of divine love. To be foreknown is to be eternally chosen for delight. You were not discovered. You were desired.



Prayer

Yahweh Father, thank You for knowing me before I knew You. When I doubt my worth, remind me that Your love was not a reaction to my performance but a decision rooted in eternity.



Reflection

Let your assurance today rest not in your faithfulness, but in the ancient Joy of the God who first delighted in you.



Meditation Questions

- How does knowing God foreknew you deepen your sense of security?
- What lies do you believe about your identity that this truth corrects?
- How can you live today from a place of being known and loved?

Day 2: God's Purpose, Not Yours

Scripture: Romans 8:28

Life often seems fragmented, but God is weaving every thread for a divine purpose. Even what seems meaningless or painful will be used for your good. The promise is not that all things are good, but that all things work together for the good—for those who are called according to His purpose.



Prayer

Yahweh Father, remind me that Your purposes are perfect, even when I don't understand. Help me to trust that You are at work in every detail.



Reflection

Nothing in your life is wasted. Everything is woven by the wisdom of your Redeemer.



Meditation Questions

- What areas of your life feel purposeless right now?
- Can you recall a time God used hardship for your good?
- What does it mean to be called according to His purpose?

Day 3: Predestined to Be Like Christ

Scripture: Romans 8:29b

You are not merely saved from something—you are saved **to** Someone. God's goal is not just your escape from wrath, but your transformation into the image of His Son. This is the golden path of Christlike conformity.



Prayer

Jesus, mold me into Your likeness. Let every Joy and sorrow shape me into a clearer reflection of You.



Reflection

God predestined you to share in the very beauty of His Son.



Meditation Questions

- How is God shaping your character to look like Christ's?
- Where do you resist being conformed?
- What does Christlike living look like in your daily habits?

Day 4: Called by His Voice

Scripture: Romans 8:30a

The calling of God is not a vague invitation—it is a divine summons. His voice awakened your dead heart and drew you to Himself. This is not general, external preaching only, but the inward, effectual calling of The Good Shepherd who knows His sheep by name.



Prayer

Lord, thank You for calling me out of darkness and into Your marvelous light. Help me to live worthy of this calling.



Reflection

God's call is not merely to believe, but to belong—to Him.



- How did God call you personally?
- What distinguishes God's effectual call from a general message?
- How do you live differently knowing you've been summoned by grace?

Day 5: Justified by Faith Alone

Scripture: Romans 8:30b

To be justified is to be declared righteous—not by your works but through faith in Christ. God does not overlook your sin; He counts it as punished in Jesus. His righteousness is now your covering. You don't earn Justification. You receive it.



Prayer

Yahweh Father, I rest in the righteousness of Christ today. Thank You for declaring me right in Your sight, even when I feel so undeserving.



Reflection

Justification silences the voice of condemnation—forever.



Meditation Questions

- Do you live like you're trying to earn God's approval?
- What lies do you believe about your guilt or shame?
- How does Justification change the way you pray, work, or worship?

Day 6: Glorified Already

Scripture: Romans 8:30c

Paul writes of Glorification in the past tense because it's as sure as finished. Though not yet seen in fullness, your Glorification is sealed. Your future is secure, your body will be raised, and your Joy will be endless.



Prayer

Lord, give me hope rooted in the certainty of my Glorification. Let my sufferings today be shaped by the glory You promise tomorrow.



Reflection

You are not waiting to **see** glory—you are destined to **be** it.



Meditation Questions

- Why do you think Paul speaks of Glorification in past tense?

- What assurance does this give you in your daily struggles?
- How can Glorification shape how you view your body, your trials, and your eternity?

Day 7: Nothing Wasted

Scripture: Romans 8:28

Every tear, every loss, every delay is under sovereign construction. God does not merely react to life's circumstances—He orchestrates them for your good and His glory. Not one detail is wasted. Trust His weaving.



Prayer

Yahweh Father, help me trust that You are always working. Even when I don't see the thread, I believe in Your hand.



Reflection

Even the broken pieces are part of the masterpiece.



Meditation Questions

- Where have you seen God redeem something painful in your life?
- What situations are hardest for you to believe are purposeful?

- How would trusting in divine sovereignty change your response to hardship?

Day 8: Secure in God's Love

Scripture: Romans 8:35–39

Nothing can separate you from the love of God—not sin, not suffering, not death. This love is not fragile or fickle—it is anchored in Christ's victory and covenantal fidelity. You are held by Love that conquered death.



Prayer

Jesus, Your Love is my anchor. Let nothing—neither fear, failure, nor the future—shake my assurance in You.



Reflection

God's love is not dependent on you holding tight, but on Him never letting go.



Meditation Questions

- What are you tempted to believe can separate you from God's love?
- How does God's love secure your identity?

- What does abiding in His love look like practically for you today?

Day 9: Adopted as Sons

Scripture: Romans 8:15–17

You are not merely tolerated—you are adopted. God has brought you into His family with full rights as heirs. You call Him Abba. You share in the inheritance of Christ. This is not religious duty—it's relational delight.



Prayer

Abba, thank You for bringing me into Your household. Let me walk today with the confidence of a beloved child.



Reflection

You are no longer an orphan, abandoned. You are an heir, found, and fully known.



Meditation Questions

- What does it mean to relate to God as Father, not just Lord?
- How does adoption change your sense of identity and belonging?
- Do you live like a slave to fear or a son/daughter of grace?

Day 10: Groaning with Hope

Scripture: Romans 8:22–23

All creation groans—and so do we. But our groaning is not hopeless. It is the ache of anticipation, not despair. We wait not in dread but in longing, knowing we are being renewed as we await redemption.



Prayer

Spirit of God, help me to groan in hope. When the pain is deep, remind me that glory is near.



Reflection

Even your groans are heard by the God who promises glory.



Meditation Questions

- What do you most long to see redeemed in your life?
- How does hope change how you handle disappointment?
- Can you identify a Holy longing that points to eternity?

Day 11: The Spirit Helps in Weakness

Scripture: Romans 8:26

When you don't know how to pray, the Spirit does. When you are weak, the Spirit intercedes. You are never left alone in silence. Divine help is already at work within your cries.



Prayer

Holy Spirit, thank You for interceding when I am speechless. Strengthen my heart to rest in Your help.



Reflection

Your weakness is not a barrier to God—it is His invitation to help.



Meditation Questions

- Have you ever felt too weak to pray? What happened?
- What comfort does it bring to know the Spirit intercedes for you?
- How can you rely on the Spirit more intentionally today?

Day 12: More Than Conquerors

Scripture: Romans 8:37

You are not just surviving—you are more than a conqueror through Christ. The battle is real, but the outcome is secure. Victory is not earned—it is given through union with Jesus, who overcame all.



Prayer

Jesus Christ, precious treasure of Heaven, let me walk today in the confidence of Your victory. Make me a living testimony that nothing can defeat what You have redeemed.



Reflection

You don't fight **for** victory. You fight **from** it.



Meditation Questions

- Where in your life do you feel defeated?
- How does being 'more than a conqueror' change your mindset?
- How can you embody victorious joy today?

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THE NINEFOLD VEIL

By Casey Boothe

***Love** bears swords in silence, bleeding in Joy as it binds the broken. It speaks not always in words, but in wounds that shine.*

***Joy** dances on battlefields, a flame untouched by ash. It sings in minor keys, weeping only to water the roots of glory.*

***Peace** does not flee the fire— it sits within it, a throne among coals, where storms kneel to listen.*

***Patience** walks without clocks, crossing deserts with no end in sight. Its breath is stillness in motion, a waiting that moves mountains.*

***Kindness** wounds pride with gentleness, a whisper stronger than thunder. It bends the sword and disarms the soul with a smile.*

***Goodness** hides in obscurity, a lantern veiled in fog. It plants gardens beneath the gallows and turns graves into granaries.*

***Faithfulness** bleeds unnoticed, each vow carved deeper than the last. It repeats the sunrise when no one looks east.*

***Gentleness** holds a lion by the mane, soft enough to cradle a storm. It carries kingdoms in its palms and never shouts to be heard.*

***Self-control** bows where others rule, mastering empires by surrender. It lays down the crown to take up the cross.*

All speak in silence. All burn without consuming.

Each virtue is a window, and together, they are a door.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Casey Edwin Boothe is an aspiring theologian, writer, and founder of Treasuring Truth Ministries. Casey embraces Covenantal Mysticism with an emphasis on Christian Hedonism, and is passionate about the glory of God. Casey seeks to illuminate the unbreakable promises of Scripture through theological reflection, biblical exposition, and poetic expression. He writes with a heart enflamed by

Serious Joy in God and a mind anchored in His Word, aiming to help others treasure truth and experience the assurance found in Jesus Christ through Expository Exultation: Oracles of Joy.