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Putting On The Whole Armor Of God Part 1

The Divisions in Ephesians

In chapters 1-3 we *sit* in heavenly places. (2:6)

In chapters 4-5 is our *walk* in this present evil world. (Walk appears five times)

In chapter 6 is our *stand* against the wiles of the devil. In this last chapter of Ephesians we find ourselves in a conflict and war and in this war we are told to *stand four times*.

Ephesians 6:10-18

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

In verse 12 is found the **arena** of the conflict - This world. This world is not a play ground, it's a war zone and we are surrounded by God's enemies.

In verse 11 is found our **adversary** in the conflict - The devil.

In verse 12 is found the **armies** of the adversary - Principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world and spiritual wickedness in high places.

In verse 13 is found the **armor** to wear in the conflict - The whole armor of God.

In verse 10 is found our **advocate** in the conflict - The Lord himself.

When you got saved God enlisted you as a soldier and sent you to war. His enemies became yours and we are told to fight the good fight of faith in behalf of the Lord till he returns. God did not save you to play, but to fight and if you go to war you need armor. You can't fight a war and expect to win without armor. You need it for defense and offense. The war Paul describes in Ephesians 6 is real and every Christian is enlisted in this war and we must put on the whole armor of God to win. Every piece of armor is important and if we leave off a piece that is where the devil will attack us.

Before we put on the whole armor of God we must first ID who our advocate is and who our enemies are and their tactics.

Our Advocate

Verse 10

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

This verse tells us who our advocate is and where our strength comes from in this war. Our advocate is the Lord and our strength is in the power of his might and not ours. To be strong in the Lord refers to the word of the Lord. The might and power of the Lord is contained in his word and when you use his word in the conflict you become strong in the Lord.

According to 2 Tim. 3:16-17 the word of God not only thoroughly furnishes you unto all good works, but it thoroughly furnishes and equips you to stand against the wiles of the devil. The word of God is the only power on earth that can successfully defeat satan. The Lord himself proved this when he fought against the devil. When the Lord fought the devil for 40 days in the wilderness in Matthew 4 he didn't use psychology, science, or carnal weapons to defeat him. He quoted the word of God. Every time the devil attacked him he fought back with the scriptures. After quoting the scriptures three times it says, the devil leaveth him alone. You become strong in the Lord and in the power of his might when you know and use the word of God as Christ did in his conflict with the devil.

That is why God said let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom in Colossians 3:16.

Why he said to study and rightly divide the word of truth in 2 Timothy 2:15.
Why he said give attendance to reading the word, exhortation and doctrine in 1 Timothy 4:13.

Why Paul prayed that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment in Philippians 1:9.

As you increase and abound in knowledge of God's word the stronger you become in the Lord. The stronger you become, the more effective you become in fighting against the wiles of the devil. Some people think the power of God comes upon you like a cloud or a mist. That is a religious myth. The power you have in the Lord is determined by your knowledge of the word of God. As you increase in knowledge, you increase in power. Knowledge equals power. Consequently, the ones who know the word of God have more power than those who don't. Many Christians are not strong in the Lord today because they don't read the word, do not study the word, don't hear it and do not memorize the word. They are the favorite targets of the devil. They are the kind that satan deceives and captures.

This is why I place so much emphasis on knowing, studying and reading and memorizing the word of God in this church. There are a lot of churches around here that do a better job of entertaining people than we do. They have more so called activities and entertainment for young people than we do. But entertainment, sports, pizza parties and social activities will not help you overcome the devil. It says that God's people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge, not entertainment. I have seen what happens to people and especially young people who are members of these churches who place all the emphasis on entertainment, sports, and fun. They end up as casualties in this war.

Our Adversary

Verse 11

Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

The Lord is our advocate in this war and the devil is our adversary and we should know our enemy.

The wiles of the devil

The word wiles comes from the Greek word METHODEIA. We get our English word method from this word. To stand against the wiles of the devil means to stand against the methods the devil uses to fight against us. Methods are the ways we use to accomplish our goals. For example, there

is more than one method or way to paint a house. Spray, brush, and roll. Those are three different methods but the end result is the same, the house gets painted.

The devil uses many different methods or ways to fight against us. ***The chief aim of satan is to deceive and destroy and he will use many methods to reach his goals.***

In John 8:44 the Lord said: **Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.**

The Lord shows us two important facts about the devil that we should never forget in this verse.

The devil is a liar.

He is called the father of lies and there is no truth in him. Everything about the devil is a lie and the purpose of a lie is to deceive and mislead people. The devil is a master deceiver. In Revelation 12:9 it says, he deceives the whole world. Every day of our lives we are bombarded with lies from the devil especially in the religious and political arena.

The devil is the god of this world which means he has great religious power and influence. His power over people in the religious world comes by lies and false doctrines called the doctrines of devils in 1 Timothy 4.1-2. When we stand against the wiles of the devil we stand against his lies and false doctrines and we expose the false teachers who teach his lies and false doctrines.

The devil is also the prince of this world which means he has great political power and he uses it to oppose and persecute God's people throughout history. The devil has used political power and evil governments to kill millions of saints in history.

The devil is a murderer.

A murderer destroys life and brings misery. In John 10:10 Jesus said about the devil: **The thief (The devil) cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly.**

In Revelation 9:11 the devil is called Apollyon which means a destroyer. What does he kill and destroy? He destroys and kills ministries, churches,

preachers, saints, testimonies, lives, zeal, minds, morals, convictions, and morale. The chief aim and goal of the devil is to kill, destroy and deceive and he uses many different methods to reach his goal.

The devices of satan

2 Corinthians 2:10-11: **To whom ye forgive any thing, I *forgive* also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave *it*, for your sakes *forgave I it* in the person of Christ; Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.**

The word device means to contrive, to plan, to scheme, to plot and conspire. The devil is an intelligent being who has the ability to scheme, plot, and plan ways and methods to reach his goals which is to deceive and destroy. We should not be ignorant of his devices, plots and schemes for they are revealed in the word of God.

The fiery darts of the devil

Ephesians 6:16:**Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.**

The word fiery means to be inflamed or on fire with something. The devil is inflamed with anger, wrath and hatred for us. When the devil shoots his fiery darts at you he directs his wrath, anger and hatred toward you. The fiery darts of the devil is his wrath, anger and hatred for God's people. The devil hates the Lord and he takes it out on us who follow the Lord. He will use any method available to shoot you with his fiery darts including using one of God's own people to do it! Nothing pleases the devil as much as when Christians fight against other Christians. The apostle Paul was attacked many times by fellow Christians. They lied about him, gossiped about him, forsook him, turned against him, accused him falsely, and called him their enemy. (Gal. 4:16) The devil used Paul's fellow Christians to shoot him with his fiery darts of wrath, anger and hatred. The devil would love to use you to do his dirty work, but don't let him. When you are tempted to lie about a fellow Christian, or gossip about them, or criticize them unfairly or turn against them, you had better realize where that temptation is coming from. That temptation is satanic. That's the devil tempting you to fire one of his deadly darts against one of your own brothers or sisters in Christ. Don't be a *hit man* for the devil.

The devouring power of the devil

1 Peter 5:8: **Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:**

The devil is like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. Most Lions will stop looking for food when they have a full stomach, but the devil's appetite is never filled and that is why he continues to walk about seeking someone to devour. The word devour means to destroy, to consume, to drink down, and to swallow up. Throughout history the devil has devoured people, nations, kingdoms, churches and saints by many different methods. The devil would love to devour you too.

Giving ground to the devil

Ephesians 4:27: **Neither give place to the devil.**

The word for place is translated license in Acts 21:40 which means permission and opportunity. It is translated quarters in Acts 16:3 which mean dwelling and lodging. To give place to the devil is to give him license, permission, opportunity to do his will. It is to give him quarters or lodging in your life. To give place to the devil is to give him a foothold in your life. Wherever the devil finds a weak spot in your life is where he will establish a foothold. A weak spot may be a bad habit you're addicted to, a secret sin, careless use of your liberties, lust and desire, covetousness, false doctrines you believe, carnality that you defend or open sins you practice. He will sift you like wheat until he finds the weak spot in your life and that is where he will establish a foothold and work from there to gain more control in your life. The devil will establish a beach head and then work from there to gain more ground in your life. All the devil needs is a small place or foothold and then he sets out to capture more territory in your life until he devours you or captures you. Don't give him a foothold.

*The chief aim and goal of satan is to deceive and destroy according to Jn.8:44 where he is called a **liar and a murderer**.

*The **wiles of the devil** are the methods and strategies he uses to reach his goals which are to deceive and destroy.

*The **devices of the devil** are his plots, schemes, plans and conspiracies to deceive and destroy.

*The **fiery darts of the devil** are the wrath, anger, and hatred that he directs towards the believer in this world.

*The **doctrines of the devil** in 1 Timothy 4:1-3 are the doctrines of the devil which contradict the gospel and doctrines of grace.

The devil is called:

*A **thief** in John 10:10 for he steals what is valuable such as the souls of lost men and the inheritance of the saints.

*A **murderer** in John.8:44 for he kills and destroys that which is good and holy.

*An **angel of light** in 2 Corinthian 11:14 for he conceals his true identity with an appearance of good.

*A **liar** in John 8:44 for he is the father of lies and deception. He is a master deceiver.

*The **god of this world** in 2 Corinthians 4:4 because of his power and influence in the religious world.

*The **prince of this world** in John12:31 because of his political power and influence in the political world and government.

*A **roaring lion** in 1 Peter 5:6-8 who walks about continually seeking someone to devour, consume and swallow up.

*A **great red dragon** in Revelation 12:3 because of his enormous and fearful power and strength. Michael the arch angel did not even confront him physically. He had to turn him over to the Lord for only the Lord can defeat the dragon. And only the Lord can bind him too.

*The **devil** (diabolis) which means false accuser and slanderer because he accuses God's people before the throne of God day and night according to Rev.12:10. The word satan means the same thing. (The word diabolis translated devil is translated accuser in 2 Tim.3:3 .)

The army of our adversary

Verse 12

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

In this verse is found the **army** of the adversary. The devil is our adversary and he has an army. We not only stand against the devil but his against his army. His armies are seen in heaven and earth

Spiritual wickedness in high places

High places is heaven. There are spiritual beings in heaven that are wicked and satanic.

Colossians 1:16: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

There are thrones, dominions, principalities and powers not only on earth but heaven. Some of them are good but some of them are wicked and evil.

Colossians 2:15: *And (Christ) having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.*

The principalities and powers he overcame and was victorious over were the evil ones who put him to death. He won out over them in resurrection. Some were on earth and some in heaven.

The principalities and powers in heaven that we wrestle with are satan and his angels.

In Ephesians 2:2 it says: **Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.** The devil is called the prince and power of the air and the word for air is the same word translated heaven in other places in the Bible. Satan is a principality and power in the heavens. His throne and dominion are located in heaven and he is not alone. There are other principalities and powers in the heavens who are ruled over by the devil. They are the spiritual wickedness in high places in Ephesians 6:12. There is a chain of command and ranks of authority in the heavens where satan dwells and satan is the prince and king over them all.

Where did these principalities and powers come from?

They are the angels that took sides with Lucifer when he rebelled against God. They were kicked out of the third heaven with him.

How powerful are the principalities and powers?

According to Revelation 12:7-10 the devil and his angels are so powerful that it will take Michael and his angels to cast them out of heaven in the future.

The devils angels

According to Hebrews 1:5-7 and 13-14 the Lord's angels are called ministers and spirits. They are located in the third heaven in physical bodies, but when God sends them to earth they come in the form of spirits that minister unto the heirs of salvation.

The devil has angels in high places and they appear as physical beings, but in the earth they are spirits sent by the devil to do his dirty work which is to deceive and destroy.

1 Timothy 4:1-2 says: **Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;**

Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

This is a prediction of apostasy in the last days. Many will depart from the faith because they will give heed to seducing spirits who teach them doctrines of devils. These seducing spirits are the devil's angels. The devil has sent his angels into the world today in the form of spirits and these spirits seduce people with their satanic doctrines to cause them to depart from the faith.

How can we ID seducing spirits today? How do they appear?

In 2 Corinthians 11 Paul warned us about these seducing spirits. In verse 4 he wrote: **For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or *if ye receive another spirit*, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with *him*.**

The seducing spirits he warned us of in 1 Timothy 4:1 preach a counterfeit Jesus, gospel and spirit and in verses 13-15 he ID's them: **For such *are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore *it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness*; whose end shall be according to their works.***

The devil's angels are called seducing spirits, but they appear as ministers of righteousness. The seducing spirits who teach doctrines of devils in 1 Timothy 4:1 are the spirits of satan working in and through men who appear as the ministers of righteousness. Many of these men are either possessed by seducing spirits or they are highly controlled by them. We can ID them by the false Jesus, gospel and spirit they preach. See 1 John 4:1-3. When we wrestle against the evil men who preach the false Jesus and gospel we are not wrestling against their flesh but with the seducing spirit inside of them.

The rulers of the darkness of this world

These are the devil's army on earth. They are both religious and political. The devil's spirits work through political and religious rulers because he controls both systems. He is the god of the religious world and the prince of the political world and he works though both to bring pressure on the church which he hates. He hates the church because he hates the head who is Christ. He takes out his hatred for the head against the members of his body.

Throughout history the devil and his spirits have used men and women in the political and religious world to oppose, persecute and kill God's people. In the political world he has used evil governments and rulers to kill and destroy millions of saints. He has used political rulers like Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Caesar, Pilate, Herod, Nero, Hitler, Stalin, Mao, Castro, Pol Pot and many more, In the religious world he has used the Roman Catholic Church to kill millions of Bible believers throughout history. He has also used the Muslims to kill millions of saints throughout history and the Hindus and Buddhists also. In Revelation 17 the satanic religious system of this world is said to be, ***Drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.*** (In the 20th century alone 23 million saints have been killed for their faith in Christ)

The religious and political rulers of the darkness of this world crucified Christ and persecuted the prophets and apostles and the saints in both testaments. 1 Thessalonians 2:15 says they both: ***Killed the Lord Jesus, (Four gospels) and their own prophets, (Old Testament) and have persecuted us; (Acts period) and they please not God, and are contrary to all men.***

This verse is a summary of how God's people have suffered at the hands of evil religious and political rulers throughout history.

Read Hebrews 11:34-40 to see the persecution of the Old Testament saints by the religious and political rulers.

Read Mathew 5:10-12, Matthew 23:34-36, and Luke 21:12-24 to see the persecution of the apostles and saints in the early church by the religious and political rulers.

To see the persecution of saints throughout church history by the religious and political rulers of the darkness of this world read, John Foxes Book of Martyrs and David Cloud's book: Rome And The Bible which traces the history of the Roman Catholic Church and its persecution of the Bible and of Bible believers.

The spirit of satan dwells in the political and religious rulers of the darkness of this world and they have fought against and opposed God's people throughout history. It will only increase and abound in what Paul calls **the evil day** in Ephesians 6:13: those days that precede the second coming of Christ.

Putting On The Whole Armor Of God

Part 2

You can't fight the war against the devil and his armies without armor. You must put on every piece to win the battle.

The Helmet Of Salvation

Verse 17 says, **And take the helmet of salvation.**

Every soldier must protect his head because a blow to the head is usually a fatal blow. That is why every soldier is required to wear a helmet. Helmets have saved 1000's if not millions of lives.

To fight the devil we must put on the helmet of salvation. Salvation is like a helmet because salvation keeps us from suffering a fatal blow from the devil in our war against him. Salvation secures us from perishing in hell. It keeps us from being destroyed forever by satan. If you are saved the devil may fight you, attack you, malign you, and accuse you, but he cannot destroy your soul in hell. Being saved is the very best protection you have against the devil, but the salvation that protects us against the devil is all of God and not of us. If the salvation a person wears as a helmet to protect them from satan is based upon their works, the devil will put a hole right through it. Salvation by works is like wearing a paper helmet to war.

The only helmet that can save you from a fatal blow from satan in this war is salvation by the grace of God. Salvation by grace means you get saved by grace and you are kept saved by grace. The devil cannot penetrate that helmet because salvation by grace is all of God and not of us. Only those who are saved and kept saved by grace have divine protection from a fatal blow by satan.

The helmet of salvation also protects our minds from being deceived by the devil. The devil attacks our minds. If a Christian is not grounded and settled in what it means to be saved and kept saved by grace, the devil will use that ignorance to deceive them with many other false doctrines. The majority of people today who believe false doctrines are not grounded in salvation by grace. Get that doctrine right and it will save you from being deceived by all the other false doctrines of the devil. Those who wear the helmet of salvation by grace are not easily deceived by the devil plus they will never suffer a fatal blow from the devil.

This is one reason I preach and teach so much about salvation by grace. I want God's people to see and understand what it means to be saved by grace, so that they will put on the helmet of salvation and save themselves

from the devil when he attacks their minds. Salvation by grace is the only helmet that can successfully protect us from satan.

The Breastplate of Righteousness

Verse 14 says: **Having on the breastplate of righteousness.**

The breastplate is like the helmet, it protects vital parts of the body. The helmet protects the head and the breastplate protects the heart and lungs. The head, heart and lungs are the vital organs in the body. Because of its size a breastplate is the most visible part of the armor. It is the piece that men see the most.

The helmet we wear is called salvation. The breastplate we wear is called ***righteousness***. When we fight against satan and his ministers, the righteousness we hold in front of us for them to see is the righteousness of God. In Philippians 3:9 Paul wrote: **And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.**

The righteousness we have is not ours. Our righteousness is the righteousness of God that we received by faith. God imputes his righteousness to every believer, which makes them as righteous as he is. The righteousness of God is the breastplate we wear when we stand against the wiles of the devil. If you hold up your own righteousness or goodness as a breastplate the devil and his ministers will shoot holes in it because our righteousness is as filthy rags. But if you hold up the righteousness of God as your breastplate he can't penetrate it because it is perfect.

The devil and his ministers cannot condemn you so long as you hold up the righteousness of God as your breastplate.

God's righteousness is perfect and no one can shoot a hole in it. It will protect you from eternal condemnation.

The Girdle Of Truth

Verse 14 says: **Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth**

Your loins are the mid section of the body and the strongest part of the body. Your loins help you to stand and walk and lift. In Bible times a girdle was a large belt worn by men to give added strength to their loins. (See Acts 21:11)

When God said having your loins girt about with truth he is telling us where our strength to stand and fight comes from. Our strength is in the truth.

And what is the truth? Jesus said; **Thy word is truth.**

The Bible is the only book in this world that is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. It contains no errors or mistakes. It is divinely inspired and preserved by God himself. The Bible is the truth and the truth will win when everything else fails. If you try to wrestle against the rulers of the darkness of this world and seducing spirits with philosophy, human reason or the wisdom of men, they will knock you down and step on you. Your strength is in the truth. When you have the truth on your side you can defeat the devil and his ministers. You can overcome every lie and false doctrine they throw at you. You can prevail against the rulers of the darkness of this world and seducing spirits if you are gird about with the truth.

That is why we must read, study and listen to the truth. Saturate yourself with the truth. The more truth you know the stronger you will become because knowledge equals power. Truth is our friend and we should pursue it every day.

That is the purpose of the local church. God did not ordain local churches to entertain people or just to give them a place to go on Sunday. We meet here to preach the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. The truth is our power and strength when we stand against the wiles of the devil. It is the truth that makes us free.

The reason so many Christians are taken captive by the devil these days is because the church has gotten away from the preaching the truth. They preach everything but the truth. My goal is to saturate you with the truth from the time you walk in till you walk out the door of this church. It's the truth that will give you the power and victory over the wiles of the devil and the doctrines of the devil and the devices of the devil.

Good News Shoes

Verse 15 says: **And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.** (Gospel means good news)

An army marches on its feet and if it does not have shoes and boots on it can't move. An army without boots and shoes can't advance against the enemy. It has got to have proper shoes and boots to fight an aggressive warfare. For us to advance against our enemy we must have the proper shoes. Our feet must be shod with the gospel of peace. The gospel is a part of the armor of God. If our feet are shod with the gospel we can make tremendous inroads against our enemies. We can defeat our enemy with

the gospel.

What many do not realize is that the gospel is a weapon. How can the gospel be a weapon? Before you were saved you were an enemy of God according to Colossians 1:21, but God defeated you. How did he do it? By the gospel. When you believed the gospel and were saved you became a friend of God and no longer his enemy. You switched sides in the war.

At one time in his life Paul was God's chief enemy on the earth. (1 Timothy 1:15) He was one of the rulers of the darkness of this world. The spirit of Satan dominated his life and he persecuted and killed many of God's people. (Acts 26:9-11) But God defeated Paul. He overthrew his chief enemy on earth. How did he do it? By the gospel. Once Paul believed the gospel he switched sides. He took sides with God against the devil. He became a soldier in the Lord's army. Christians do not defeat their enemies with carnal weapons. The gospel is our weapon. If we can get our enemies to believe the gospel, they will no longer be our enemies but our friends.

In Romans 12:21 God told us, ***to overcome evil with good.*** We overcome our enemies by doing good to them. What is the best thing we can do for our enemies? Preach the gospel to them, because if they believe the gospel they will no longer be our enemies or God's enemies either.

I think it is ironic that the weapon that defeats our enemies is called the gospel of peace. Whoever heard of peace being a weapon of war but it is. God's enemies can all be defeated by the gospel of peace. The devil and his ministers and spirits can all be defeated by the gospel of peace. When Paul and the apostles went into enemy territories they did not take guns and knives to kill them. They took the word of God and the gospel and 1000's were saved and churches were started. Their former enemies became their friends.

The gospel is a major threat to the devil because when someone believes the gospel look what happens:

He loses another soldier.

His stranglehold on sinners is broken.

His prisoners are set free from his kingdom and are translated into God's kingdom. (Col. 1:13)

He loses another battle.

Our warfare is spiritual and our weapons are spiritual. Our greatest weapon against the strongholds of Satan is the gospel of peace. To some that

seems ridiculous, but God has chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise. When God saved Paul he showed us how to overcome our enemies and his too. He overcame him with grace, love, mercy and the gospel of peace. The gospel that saves sinners also defeats our enemies. If you want to get rid of your enemies don't shoot them or bomb them, preach the gospel to them. If they believe it they won't be your enemy any more.

The Shield of Faith

Verse 16 says: **Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.**

Faith always has an object that it attaches itself to. It is always directed toward something or someone outside of ourselves. Our faith is directed toward God. God is the object of our faith. Paul preached repentance toward God, and ***faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*** (Acts 20:21)

Our faith is in God and especially the promises God made to us in his word. Our faith in the promises of God is our shield in our conflict with satan. When we are under attack from satan we should hold up the promises of God as a shield to protect us from his fiery darts. For every attack there is a promise to defeat it.

When the devil attacks us during a time of financial stress we should hold up the promise that says: My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. (That promise has shielded me through many trials and temptations from satan.)

When the devil oppresses you with worry and cares then claim the promise that says: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

When the devil plants fear in your heart then claim the promise that says: Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

When the devil tempts you by sickness then claim the promise that says: My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.

If you are beset by sin claim the promise that says: If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to

cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If you are suffering tribulation and distress then claim the promise that says: *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*

When men forsake you, then claim the promise that says:

For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

When the devil causes you to fret about your past failures then claim the promise that says: *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

When you worry about your future needs then claim the promise that says: *If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

The promises of God can shield you from worry, fear, trouble, trials and tribulation if you would claim them. The promises of God give us the peace of God that passes all understanding during the war. In his promises God shows us that he is on our side and that he has our best interests at heart. He shows us that he cares about us and loves us and is working all things together for our good. These promises keep our hearts and minds from being overcome by worry and fear and dread. After all, if God be for us who can be against us?

That is another reason why Paul urged his converts to grow in the knowledge and wisdom of God in the word of God. Learn what the promises are and where to find them. When you know them you can use them as a shield to defend yourself from Satan's attacks. For every attack there is a promise to shield you.

You can't fight satan with ignorance. Ignorance will not shield you from satan. Ignorance of God's word and the promises of God will leave you defenseless against the devil's fiery darts. That is why every Christian ought to read their Bible through at least once a year. Reading the word

and knowing the promises of God will shield you from the fiery darts of the devil. That is why the devil will give you a million excuses to leave your Bible closed and stay away from a Bible believing church. A closed Bible in the home of a Christian is the devil's ally. You have no shield to protect you from satan. Trying to overcome satan without reading the Bible is like trying to fight a war without a gun. It can't be done.

The Sword of The Spirit

Verse 17: **Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:**

Hebrews 4:12 says: **For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.**

The sword of the Spirit is a two edged sword. It is for both offense and defense. We defend ourselves against satan by the word of God and we attack his strong holds and false doctrines with the word of God.

Defense

In Matthew 4:1-11 the Lord shows us how to defend ourselves against the attacks of the devil. When the Lord was attacked by the devil he defended himself with the word of God. Every satanic attack was answered by a quote from the word of God. Finally the devil had to leave him alone. This is the best example in all the Bible of how the word of God defends us from satan's attacks.

Offense

Titus 1:9-11: **Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, (churches) teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.**

The word of God in these verses is a weapon of offence. When used properly it convinces the gainsayers, and it shuts the mouths of the unruly, vain talkers and deceivers.

It's called the *faithful word* because when used properly it does what God intends for it to do. Whatever the need is in a person's life the word of God is faithful to meet their need.

If a person is not up to speed doctrinally the word of God is profitable for

doctrine.

If a person has erred from sound doctrine the word of God is profitable for correction.

If a person lacks understanding of what Bible morals are the word of God is profitable for instruction in righteousness and true morality.

If a person's conduct grieves the Spirit of God the word of God is profitable for reproof which is reproofing bad conduct.

The KJB is the inspired and preserved word of God and it is a powerful two edged sword. It can defend you from every attack of the devil as it did for Christ in the wilderness. It can cut to shreds the false doctrines of satan and his ministers. It can shut the mouths of deceivers and gain sayers.

It can educate the uneducated

It can make wise the simple

It can give boldness to the weak

It can overcome all of our enemies

It can comfort the bereaved

It can lift up the fallen

Prayer in the Spirit

Verse 18

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

Notice that prayer is a part of the whole armor of God. It is just as important as all the other parts. If you leave off any part you can't stand against effectively against the wiles of the devil and that includes prayer. You can no more stand against the wiles of the devil without prayer than you can without the sword of the spirit. The warfare we are in is spiritual and we fight it with spiritual weapons and prayer is a great spiritual weapon to overcome the rulers of the darkness of this world and spiritual wickedness in high places.

The most convincing proof of how important prayer is can be seen in the prayer life of Christ and the apostles. They prayed constantly.

Matthew 14:23: **And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.**

Mark 1:35: **And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.**

Luke 6:12: **It came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.**

Jesus Christ is God the Son and he prayed. Do you think you can get by without prayer? Do you think that you can overcome satan without prayer? If the Son of God spent time in prayer every day of his life in this world then shouldn't you? If prayer was an important part of his life how can we neglect it in our life? If he needed to pray how much more do we need to pray?

The apostles

The apostles asked the Lord to teach them how to pray and he did. He not only taught them how to pray, but when to pray. As he prayed continually, so did they.

Acts 1:13-14: ***And when they (the apostles) were come in, they went up into an upper room,...These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.***

Acts 6:4: ***But we (the apostles) will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.***

Our armor is called the armor of God for God is a part of every piece of the armor

The word of God serves as our sword and shield and girdle in our battle against satan. The righteousness of God serves as our breastplate. The gospel of peace and of God is our boots and shoes when we march against our enemies. Prayer in the Spirit of God is our cloud by day and fire by night. (Exd. 13:21) It's our protecting covering.

The Satanic Chain Of Command SATAN

The god of this world
The prince of this world

Working through;
Spiritual wickedness in high places
Satanic thrones and principalities and powers in the

heavens who are fallen angels

Working through;

The rulers of the darkness of this world

Political and religious rulers of the darkness of this world
who have persecuted God's people throughout history

These three bring pressure on:

The Church

The devil opposes us by the religious and political rulers of
the darkness of this world energized by seducing spirits
sent down by the devil to persecute the church he hates

IS THE "RAPTURE" OF THE CHURCH FOUND ONLY IN PAUL'S EPISTLES?

We are told repeatedly by many dispensationalists that the "rapture" as they call it, is found in Paul's epistles only. I have heard this all my life. But is it true? Let's ask the foremost authority who is Paul. Brother Paul, is the "rapture" you wrote about found in your epistles only? Paul answered that question nearly 2000 years ago in 1 Thessalonians 4:15 and 1 Corinthians 15:54-55. In 1 Thessalonians 4:15 when Paul wrote about the coming of Christ for the church and the resurrection of the dead and the translation of living saints, he wrote in verse 15:

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

Do you see what Paul said about Christ's coming for the church? He said; THIS WE SAY UNTO YOU BY THE WORD OF THE LORD. What Paul said to them about Christ's coming for the church was based upon the word of the Lord, which was the Old Testament.

If so, the next question is, where is this found in the Old Testament? Paul answers this question in 1 Corinthians 15:54-55 where he wrote:

So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this

mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

Notice carefully that when Jesus comes again to change these corruptible bodies into incorruptible bodies verse 54 says; THEN SHALL BE BROUGHT TO PASS THE SAYING THAT IS WRITTEN. Written where? In verse 55 Paul quotes Isaiah 25:8 and Hosea 13:14. Therefore, the word of the Lord in 1 Thessalonians 4:15 according to Paul is Isaiah 25:8 and Hosea 13:14. When Jesus comes again and the dead are raised and the living caught up without dying Paul said, THEN will Isaiah 25:8 and Hosea 13:14 be brought to pass.

When they wrote; O grave where is thy victory? they prophesied of the dead saints at Christ's coming who will be resurrected from the grave. When they wrote; O death where is thy sting? they prophesied of the living saints at Christ's coming who will never taste the sting of death. These two prophecies will come to pass when the Lord comes again for the church.

The mystery in 1 Corinthians 15:51 is not Christ's coming or the resurrection. The mystery is according to Paul: WE SHALL NOT ALL SLEEP. This means those alive when Jesus comes will never die. They will be caught up without dying. But yet this was written down in the prophets Isaiah and Hosea. In Paul's day most people thought all saints would be dead by the time Christ came again, but Paul shows us some will be alive and will never die when Jesus comes. But this mystery is like many others; it's hidden in the Old Testament according to 1 Corinthians 15:54-55.

Dispensationalists tell us that in Paul's epistles alone is found the coming of Christ for the church, but Paul the apostle of the gentiles tells us that it was prophesied in the word of the Lord 100's of years prior to him in Isaiah 25:8 and Hosea 13:14. The hope of the church is found in the Old Testament just like the gospel we preach, justification by faith, righteousness by faith, the indwelling Spirit of God and our inheritance in the kingdom of God many other doctrines. My advice is believe what Paul said and ignore what dispensationalists say about Christ's coming for the church. Paul was infallible in his writings and they are not.

Rome and the Council of Trent

By David Cloud

Some would have us believe that the Roman Catholic Church has changed and that it is no longer the heretical institution that it once was. Ted Haggard, fallen senior pastor of New Life Church in Colorado Springs and former president of the 30-million-member National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), said in October 2005: “New Life doesn’t try to ‘convert’ Catholics” and that the church would never discourage its members “from becoming Catholic or attending Catholic Mass” (*Berean Call*, Jan. 2006). This statement reflects a radical change in evangelicalism but when it comes to Rome, little of significance has changed.

The Council of Trent was a Catholic council held from 1545 to 1563 in an attempt to destroy the progress of the Protestant Reformation. This council denied every Reformation doctrine, including Scripture alone and grace alone. Trent hurled 125 anathemas (eternal damnation) against Bible-believing Christians, including these:

FOURTH SESSION: DECREE CONCERNING THE CANONICAL SCRIPTURES: “If anyone does not accept as sacred and canonical the aforesaid books in their entirety and with all their parts [the 66 books of the Bible plus 12 apocryphal books, being two of Paralipomenon, two of Esdras, Tobias, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, Sophonias, two of Macabees], as they have been accustomed to be read in the Catholic Church and as they are contained in the old Latin Vulgate Edition, and knowingly and deliberately rejects the aforesaid traditions, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA.”

SIXTH SESSION, CANONS CONCERNING JUSTIFICATION: “If anyone says that justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in divine mercy, which remits sins for Christ’s sake, or that it is this confidence alone that justifies us, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA” (Canons Concerning Justification, Canon 12).

SIXTH SESSION, CANONS CONCERNING JUSTIFICATION: “If anyone says that the justice received is not preserved and also not increased before God through good works, but that those works are merely the fruits and signs of justification obtained, but not the cause of its increase, LET

HIM BE ANATHEMA” (Canons Concerning Justification, Canon 24).

SIXTH SESSION, CANONS CONCERNING JUSTIFICATION: “If anyone says that the Catholic doctrine of justification as set forth by the holy council in the present decree, derogates in some respect from the glory of God or the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, and does not rather illustrate the truth of our faith and no less the glory of God and of Christ Jesus, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA” (Canons Concerning Justification, Canon 33).

SEVENTH SESSION, CANONS ON BAPTISM: “If anyone says that in the Roman Church, which is the mother and mistress of all churches, there is not the true doctrine concerning the sacrament of baptism, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA” (Canons on Baptism, Canon 3).

SEVENTH SESSION, CANONS ON BAPTISM: “If anyone says that baptism is optional, that is, not necessary for salvation, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA” (Canons on Baptism, Canon 5)

SEVENTH SESSION, CANONS ON BAPTISM: “If anyone says that children, because they have not the act of believing, are not after having received baptism to be numbered among the faithful, and that for this reason are to be rebaptized when they have reached the years of discretion; or that it is better that the baptism of such be omitted than that, while not believing by their own act, they should be baptized in the faith of the Church alone, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA” (Canons on Baptism, Canon 13).

SEVENTH SESSION, CANONS ON CONFIRMATION: “If anyone says that the confirmation of those baptized is an empty ceremony and not a true and proper sacrament; or that of old it was nothing more than a sort of instruction, whereby those approaching adolescence gave an account of their faith to the Church, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA” (Canons on Confirmation, Canon 1).

THIRTEENTH SESSION, CANONS ON THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF THE EUCHARIST: “If anyone denies that in the sacrament of the most

Holy Eucharist are contained truly, really and substantially the body and blood together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and consequently the whole Christ, but says that He is in it only as in a sign, or figure or force, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA” (Canons on the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, Canon 1).

THIRTEENTH SESSION, CANONS ON THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF THE EUCHARIST: “If anyone says that Christ received in the Eucharist is received spiritually only and not also sacramentally and really, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA” (Canons on the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, Canon .

FOURTEENTH SESSION, CANONS CONCERNING THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF PENANCE: “If anyone says that in the Catholic Church penance is not truly and properly a sacrament instituted by Christ the Lord for reconciling the faithful of God as often as they fall into sin after baptism, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA” (Canons Concerning the Most Holy Sacrament of Penance, Canon 1).

FOURTEENTH SESSION, CANONS CONCERNING THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF PENANCE: “If anyone denies that sacramental confession was instituted by divine law or is necessary to salvation; or says that the manner of confessing secretly to a priest alone, which the Catholic Church has always observed from the beginning and still observes, is at variance with the institution and command of Christ and is a human contrivance, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA” (Canons Concerning the Most Holy Sacrament of Penance, Canon 7).

FOURTEENTH SESSION, CANONS CONCERNING THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF PENANCE: “If anyone says that the confession of all sins as it is observed in the Church is impossible and is a human tradition to be abolished by pious people; or that each and all of the faithful of Christ or either sex are not bound thereto once a year in accordance with the constitution of the great Lateran Council, and that for this reason the faithful of Christ are to be persuaded not to confess during Lent, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA” (Canons Concerning the Most Holy Sacrament of Penance,

Canon 8).

FOURTEENTH SESSION, CANONS CONCERNING THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF PENANCE: “If anyone says that God always pardons the whole penalty together with the guilt and that the satisfaction of penitents is nothing else than the faith by which they perceive that Christ has satisfied for them, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA” (Canons Concerning the Most Holy Sacrament of Penance, Canon 8).

TWENTY-SECOND SESSION, CANONS ON THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS: “If anyone says that in the Mass a true and real sacrifice is not offered to God; or that to be offered is nothing else than that Christ is given to us to eat, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA” (Canons on the Sacrifice of the Mass, Canon 1).

TWENTY-SECOND SESSION, CANONS ON THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS: “If anyone says that by those words, Do this for a commemoration of me, Christ did not institute the Apostles priests; or did not ordain that they and other priests should offer His own body and blood, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA” (Canons on the Sacrifice of the Mass, Canon 2).

TWENTY-SECOND SESSION, CANONS ON THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS: “If anyone says that the sacrifice of the Mass is one only of praise and thanksgiving; or that it is a mere commemoration of the sacrifice consummated on the cross but not a propitiatory one; or that it profits him only who receives, and ought not to be offered for the living and the dead, for sins, punishments, satisfactions, and other necessities, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA” (Canons on the Sacrifice of the Mass, Canon 3).

TWENTY-SECOND SESSION, CANONS ON THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS: “If anyone says that it is a deception to celebrate Masses in honor of the saints and in order to obtain their intercession with God, as the Church intends, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA” (Canons on the Sacrifice of the Mass, Canon 5).

TWENTY-THIRD SESSION, CANONS ON THE SACRAMENT OF

ORDER: “If anyone says that there is not in the New Testament a visible and external priesthood, or that there is no power of consecrating and offering the true body and blood of the Lord and of forgiving and retaining sins, but only the office and bare ministry of preaching the gospel; or that those who do not preach are not priests at all, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA” (Canons on the Sacrifice of the Mass, Canon 1).

TWENTY-THIRD SESSION, CANONS ON THE SACRAMENT OF ORDER: “If anyone says that the bishops who are chosen by the authority of the Roman pontiff are not true and legitimate bishops, but merely human deception, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA” (Canons on the Sacrifice of the Mass, Canon 8).

TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION, DECREE ON PURGATORY: “Since the Catholic Church, instructed by the Holy Ghost, has, following the sacred writings and the ancient tradition of the Fathers, taught in sacred councils and very recently in this ecumenical council that there is a purgatory, and that the souls there detained are aided by the suffrages of the faithful and chiefly by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar, the holy council commands the bishops that they strive diligently to the end that the sound doctrine of purgatory, transmitted by the Fathers and sacred councils, be believed and maintained by the faithful of Christ, and be everywhere taught and preached.”

TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION, ON THE INVOCATION, VENERATION, AND RELICS OF SAINTS, AND ON SACRED IMAGES: “The holy council commands all bishops and others who hold the office of teaching and have charge of the *cura animarum*, that in accordance with the usage of the Catholic and Apostolic Church, received from the primitive times of the Christian religion, and with the unanimous teaching of the holy Fathers and the decrees of sacred councils, they above all instruct the faithful diligently in matters relating to intercession and invocation of the saints, the veneration of relics, and the legitimate use of images, teaching them that the saints who reign together with Christ offer up their prayers to God for men, that it is good and beneficial suppliantly to invoke them and to have recourse to their prayers, assistance and support in order to obtain favors

from God through His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who alone is our redeemer and savior; and that they think impiously who deny that the saints who enjoy eternal happiness in heaven are to be invoked, or who assert that they do not pray for men, or that our invocation of them to pray for each of us individually is idolatry, or that it is opposed to the word of God and inconsistent with the honor of the one mediator of God and men, Jesus Christ, or that it is foolish to pray vocally or mentally to those who reign in heaven.”

POPE PIUS’S CREED

Pope Pius IV (1559-1565) issued a summary of the decisions of the council under the title “Pope Pius’s Creed.” We will quote part of this creed, which has ever since been regarded as an authoritative summary of the Catholic faith:

*“I profess also, that there are truly and properly seven sacraments of the new law ... namely, baptism, confirmation, eucharist, penance, extreme unction, orders, and matrimony, and that they confer grace.

*“I profess likewise, that in the Mass is offered to God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead; and that, in the most holy sacrifice of the Eucharist, there is truly, really, and substantially, the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*“I constantly hold that there is a purgatory, and that the souls detained therein are helped by the suffrages of the faithful.

*“Likewise, that the saints reigning together with Christ, are to be honoured and invoked; that they offer prayers to God for us; and that their relics are to be venerated.

*“I most firmly assert, that the images of Christ, and of the mother of God, ever virgin, and also of the other saints, are to be had and retained; and that one honour and veneration are to be given to them.

*“I also affirm that the power of indulgences was left by Christ in the church, and that the use of them is most wholesome to Christian people.

*“I acknowledge the holy Catholic and Apostolic Roman church, the mother and mistress of all churches. And I promise to swear true obedience to the Roman bishop, the successor of St. Peter, the prince of the apostles, and vicar of Jesus Christ.

*“I also profess, and undoubtedly receive all other things delivered, defined, and declared, by the sacred canons and general councils, and particularly by the holy Council of Trent. ***And likewise, I also condemn, reject, and anathematize, all things contrary thereto, and all heresies whatsoever condemned, rejected, and anathematized by the church.***

*“This true Catholic faith, out of which none can be saved...” (*Miller’s Church History*, pp. 1081-1082).

These proclamations and anathemas were fleshed out in the murderous persecutions vented upon true Christians by Rome, and Trent has never been annulled.

VATICAN II AND TRENT

Vatican II referred to Trent dozens and dozens of times, quoted Trent’s proclamations as authoritative, and reaffirmed Trent on every hand. The New Catholic Catechism cites Trent no less than 99 times. That is my own count. There is not the slightest hint that the proclamations of the Council of Trent have been abrogated by Rome. At the opening of the Second Vatican Council, Pope John XXIII stated, “I do accept entirely all that has been decided and declared at the Council of Trent.” Every Cardinal, Bishop and priest who became a member of the Council also signed that document (Wilson Ewin, *You Can Lead Roman Catholics to Christ*, Quebec Baptist Mission, 1990 edition, p. 41).

Consider a few examples of how Vatican II looked upon Trent:

“The dogmatic principles which were laid down by the Council of Trent [remain] intact...” (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, p. 37).

*“Therefore, following in the footsteps of the Council of Trent and of Vatican I, this present Council wishes to set forth authentic doctrine of divine

revelation” (*Constitution on Divine Revelation*, p. 678).

*“[Christ] is substantially present there through that conversion of bread and wine which, as the Council of Trent tells us, is most aptly named transubstantiation” (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, p. 110).

*“For under this form (leaving intact the principles of the Council of Trent, by which under either species or kind there is received the true sacrament and Christ whole and entire), the sign of the eucharistic banquet appears more perfectly” (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, p. 124).

*“The Roman Missal, promulgated by our predecessor St. Pius V in the Year of our Lord 1570 by decree of the Council of Trent, is universally acknowledged to be among the most useful of the many fruits which that Council brought forth for the good of the Church of Christ” (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, p. 138).

*“When issuing decrees that the Order of the Mass should be revised, the Second Vatican Council ruled, among other things, that certain rites were to be restored to the vigour which they had in the days of the holy Fathers. These are the very words used by St. Pius V in his Apostolic Constitution *Quo primum* whereby he promulgated the Tridentine Missal of 1570 [Trent].

***The employment of the very same words indicates that the two Missals, though separated in time by four centuries, are nevertheless inspired by and embody one and the same tradition. ... In those troubled days St. Pius V was unwilling to make any changes in the rites except minor ones; he was intent on preserving more recent tradition, because at that time attacks were being made on the doctrine that the Mass is a sacrifice present under the eucharistic species”** (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, p. 155).

*“In this way the liturgical norms of the Council of Trent have in many respects been fulfilled and perfected by those of the Second Vatican Council” (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, p. 159).

***“This sacred council accepts loyally the venerable faith of our ancestors** in the living communion which exists between us and our

brothers who are in the glory of heaven or who are yet being purified after their death; **and it proposes again the decrees of the Second Council of Nicea, of the Council of Florence, and of the Council of Trent**" (*Constitution on the Church*, p. 377).

*"The sacrament of baptism cannot be repeated ... and therefore to baptize again conditionally is not allowed unless there is prudent doubt of the fact, or of the validity, of a baptism already administered (Council of Trent, Session 7, Can. 4)" (*Decree on Ecumenism*, p. 445).

*"The Fathers of the Council, **continuing the work begun by the Council of Trent**, confidently entrust to superiors and professors in seminaries the duty of training Christ's future priests in the spirit of that renewal promoted by the Council itself" (*Decree on the Training of Priests*, p. 654).

Friends, beware of the Roman Catholic Church and beware, too, of those evangelicals and Baptists who are affiliating with Rome today, who are speaking of Rome's errors in a soft manner, who are teaching that non-Catholics should join hands with Catholics to solve the social-political issues of our day, who pretend that the Roman Catholic Church has nothing to do with the Harlot of Revelation 17.

"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" ([Rev. 18:4](#)).

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" ([Rom. 16:17-18](#)).

"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" ([2 Tim. 3:5](#)).

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship

hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you” ([2 Cor. 6:14-17](#)).

This article was written by David Cloud of Way Of Life Ministry. His web site for more of his writings and books is: <https://www.wayoflife.org>

Soul Sleep

There are many people who are deceived by the false doctrine of *soul sleep*. They say that when a Christian dies his soul does not leave his body and does not go to heaven. It stays somewhere on earth until the second coming of Christ and then is raised from the dead. Many people who teach soul sleep also teach that when lost people die their soul is dead like a dog. It does not go to hell because they don't believe in hell. These people teach the souls of dead Christians sleeps like a log and the souls of lost people are dead like a dog.

But what saith the scriptures? The scriptures say the doctrine of soul sleep is another false doctrine that we should not be deceived by.

In Philippians 1:21-24 Paul said: ***For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.***

In these verses Paul was in a straight between two options; death and life. The best option as far as he was concerned was death for he said to *depart and to be with Christ is far better*. It would have been far better when you consider that at the time he wrote this epistle he was suffering in a prison in Rome.

Concerning death he said; *to depart and to be with Christ*. This tells us that

when a person dies a departure takes place. Their soul and spirit leaves their body and this world. This means the dead in Christ are not in this world any longer. It also means they are not in their body any longer and they are not even in the grave we bury them in. They have departed. To a Christian, death is a departure from the flesh and the world.

In 1 Timothy 4:6 Paul writing about his coming death said: ***For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.***

Paul's departure was not a trip to another town or nation. He died in Rome and his body was buried in Rome. His departure was his death. His body died, but he departed from his body and from this world. What departed? His soul and spirit. In Genesis 35:18 it says that when Rachel died; ***It came to pass, as her soul was in departing, for she died.***

Every death is a departure. At death our soul will leave our body and this world. They may not go to the same place, but your soul will depart from this world and from your body when you die.

Your physical body is a temporary house. When you die you will move out of it. As a matter of fact you will not attend your own funeral. Your body will be there, but your soul and spirit will be departed and gone.

In Luke 16:20-26 Jesus told us a true story of two men who died and were buried at the same time, but went two different places. He said one man died: ***and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes being in torments.*** The other man died and the Lord said: ***he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.*** Their bodies were dead and buried, but their soul and spirit departed this world. One man went to hell the moment he died and the other to Paradise.

In Philippians 1:23 Paul said that when he died he would not only depart this world, but he told us where he was going after he departed. When you take a trip you depart from one location and arrive at another. Death is a departure from this world into another. Paul tells us where that place is. He said: ***having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:*** When Paul died he expected to go where Christ was. He expected to be with Christ after his departure from this world. Therefore, where Christ is, the dead in Christ go, for the dead in Christ depart to be with Christ when they die.

According to Colossians and Ephesians Christ is in heavenly places. In Colossians 3:1 Paul wrote: ***If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those***

things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.
In Ephesians 1:20 he also wrote that God raised Christ from the dead: ***and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.***

If the dead in Christ have departed to be with Christ, then the dead in Christ are in heavenly places with Christ. Therefore, the dead in Christ are not in the grave yard. They are not in their bodies. They are not even in this world. Their soul and spirit are in heavenly places with Christ. Paul expected to go to heavenly places when he died, because that is where Christ is.

Heavenly places is a big place so what place in heaven are the dead in Christ? The answer is: the Heavenly City New Jerusalem because that is the present location of Christ. In Hebrews 12:18-23 Paul wrote:

But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

In these verses Paul describes the Heavenly City New Jerusalem. He opens the door and gives us a view of who occupies that heavenly city. Every city has a population and these verses describe the occupants of New Jerusalem. If you could look inside the city you would see:

****An innumerable company of angels***

So many angels they cannot be numbered.

****God the Judge of all***

This is God the Father seated on his throne surrounded by angels. See Revelation 4:2-3, Daniel 7:13

****The church of the first born which are written in heaven***

God has given the church the name of Christ for he is the first born or first fruits of the dead: See Colossians 1:18, Acts 26:23, 1 Corinthians 15:20-23. Their names are written in New Jerusalem for they are citizens of that city. See Ephesians 2:19.

****The spirits of just men made perfect***

They are the dead in Christ. They are called *the spirits of just men made perfect* because they are justified and their souls and spirits are now in heaven. They are the family of God in heaven. (See Ephesians 3:14-15)

****Jesus the mediator of the new covenant***

This shows us where in heavenly places Christ is located. He is now in the Heavenly City New Jerusalem and the spirits of just men made perfect are with him. So, where do the dead in Christ go when they depart from this world? These verses show us plainly that they go where Christ is, the Heavenly City New Jerusalem. They now occupy that city with God the Father, God the Son and all the holy angels.

What about the souls of the lost? In Luke 16 the lost man who died went to hell and in hell he began to suffer. Luke 16:23-24 says: ***And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.***

This man was not dead like a dog. He suffered in hell after his death. (Anyone who says this is a parable should not be taken seriously.)

In Revelation 20 John said: ***And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.***

These verses give us a preview of the coming judgment of the dead. After these dead people are judged they are cast into the lake of fire. This shows us beyond a shadow of doubt that when lost people die they do not cease to exist. They will be judged after they die and cast into the lake of fire after they die. Death is not the end of a person's existence. You will spend eternity somewhere. These people will spend eternity burning in the lake of fire. What about you?

Soul sleep is just another doctrine of the devil designed to take the fear of death and hell out of the minds of lost people. This false doctrine also steals the comfort from the minds of saved people who have loved ones who have died in the Lord. It is of great comfort to me to know that my son,

mother and father are now in the Heavenly City New Jerusalem with Christ, the angels, the Father, and the spirits of just men made perfect. Don't be deceived by the false doctrine of soul sleep and shame on you professed Christians who teach this lie!

TEMPTATION

In 1 Thessalonians 3:5 Paul wrote: ***For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.***

The word temptation means; *enticement to evil by arguments, by flattery, or by the offer of some real or apparent good. That which is presented to the mind as an inducement to evil. It's something or someone who lures and entices you to do wrong or evil.*

Temptation is something every Christian will have to put up with till the second coming of Christ. When God saved you from sin and hell he did not save you from temptation. As long as you live in this present evil world with an old nature you will be tempted and enticed to do that which is wrong and evil. Temptation is a constant problem that comes in many forms and it's something we must gain the victory over if we expect to live a victorious life in this present evil world.

Many Christians have fallen and become unproductive Christians because of giving into temptation. In the parable of the sower and the seed (Luke 8) the sower sowed seed on the rocks and it says: ***They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.*** From these verses we see the danger of giving into temptation. It can cause a Christian to fall and not get up. Therefore, every Christian ought to be able to recognize temptation when they see and hear it and know how to overcome it.

(1) Temptation Is Not Sin

Hebrews 4:15 says: ***For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.***

Many assume that because they have the desire to commit sin they are

guilty of sin. They assume the desire itself is sin. Some people even go as far to say if you have temptation to do evil you are lost. But that can't be so Christ himself was: ***In all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*** Jesus Christ was tempted with every temptation we have ever had. Any and every thing that tempts us tempted him. He had temptations we know nothing about. To have temptation is not sin. Sin is giving into temptation which Christ did not do. He has a perfect record against sin and temptation. That is why it is important for us to see how he overcame temptation in his life. If we follow his example we too can overcome temptation.

(2) Temptation Is Universal

In 1 Corinthians 10:13 Paul wrote: ***There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man.***

Temptation is common to all men. All men and women have the same common temptations. It does not matter what your race, sex, color, nationality, financial standing is we all have common temptations. What tempts you tempts me and vice versa. Some folks deny they are tempted to commit the same sins as other men. People who say such things are self righteous, proud and deceived. The fact is, all men have the same common temptations to commit the same sins. Your temptation is not a special case. There are millions just like you who wrestle with the same temptations you have.

Because temptation is universal we cannot hide from temptation. We will find it at home, in school, on the job, in the store, in prayer, on the internet, while you witness and even in church. Where ever the world, flesh and the devil are present, temptation is present. It's universal.

(3) Temptation Feeds on Lust

James 1:13-15 says: ***Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.***

The reason we give into temptation is because we choose to out of our own lust. The flesh and the Devil know the things we lust after and they tempt us according to our lusts and desires. They know our track record and what gets our attention. They know what pushes our button. When the Devil tempts us he will tempt us with the things we lust after. He will work on our private lusts and desires, for he knows what they are. And if we give into temptation it's because we choose to out of lust.

Giving into temptation is a choice we make and we have no one to blame but ourselves. It's not because of our environment, education, ignorance, mother or father, sister or brother or friends or because of a full moon. We give into temptation because of our own selfish lusts. No one puts a gun to our head and makes us give into temptation.

(4) Temptation Comes In Three Categories

1 John 2:16 says: ***For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.***

In this verse is found the three areas in our lives in which we are tempted. When you are tempted by the world, flesh or the devil they will tempt you by one of these three methods:

The lust of the flesh - *Temptations that appeal to the body.*

Many temptations appeal to the body. Temptations that appeal to the body are those things that appeal to the five physical senses. The things you see, hear, smell, taste and touch.

The lust of the eyes - *Temptations that appeal to the soul.*

The eyes are the windows of the soul. Temptations that affect the soul are those that appeal to the imagination, thoughts, conscience, mind, memory, reason and affections. Many sins begin in the mind and imagination before they are acted out in the flesh. (See David- 2 Sam.11:2)

The pride of life – *Temptations that appeal to the spirit.*

Temptations of the spirit appeal to pride, wisdom, intellect and many of them are religious in nature.

Every temptation you will ever have will fall into one of these three categories. These are the same three areas in which the devil tempted Adam and Christ. In Genesis 3 when Satan tempted Adam and Eve to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil it says this about the tree:

*When the woman saw that the tree was good for food - **Lust of the flesh.***

*That it was pleasant to the eyes - **Lust of the eyes.***

*A tree desired to make one wise - **Pride of life.***

Adam and Eve gave into temptation even though they lived in a perfect environment under ideal conditions.

When Satan tempted Christ in the wilderness in Matthew 4 it says:

*Command that these stones be made bread - **Lust of the flesh.***

Cast thyself down - Pride of life.

Sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them - The lust of the eyes.

Christ was tempted by the devil 40 days and nights under the worst conditions and circumstances. He was tempted in a barren wilderness after he had fasted 40 days and nights and was weak and hungry. But he did not give into temptation. Why? Because he used the only weapon that can defeat the devil, which is the word of God. When tempted by the devil by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life Jesus responded to each temptation by quoting the scriptures. Each time the devil tempted him Jesus said; *as it is written*. Finally the devil gave up and left him alone.

This shows us the word of God gives us the advantage over the devil no matter what the conditions or circumstances we may be under when the devil tempts us. This is why every Christian ought to read their Bible through at least once a year to learn what verses to use to overcome the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and the pride of life. The scriptures Christ quoted matched the temptations of the devil. If the Son of God used the word of God to overcome temptation, do you think you can overcome temptation without it?

(5) Temptation Tries Our Faith

James 1:2-3 says: ***My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations: Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.***

Temptation puts our faith on trial. It puts it to the test. How we handle temptation is a barometer of our faith. If you want to find out what kind of faith you have just notice how you respond to temptation. You will find out what kind of faith you have by how you respond to the temptations in your life. If you give into temptation your faith is weak. If you overcome temptation your faith is strong.

God will allow you to be tempted as he did Christ to show you what kind of faith you really have. You will never know how strong or weak your faith is until it gets tested by temptation. You may think you are strong when the truth is you may be weak. Temptation will teach you.

(6) Temptation Is Greater At Certain Times, Places and People

The Devil picked the worst ***time and place*** to tempt the Lord. He tempted him during a 40 day fast in a barren wilderness when he was weak and hungry. The Devil knows the best time and place to tempt you and there are times and places when temptation is much greater.

Times

Even though there are certain times it seems temptation is greater, the reality is, the devil tempts us at all times. He tempted Adam in paradise, but he tempted Christ in the wilderness. He tempts us when we are defeated and yet when we are victorious. He tempts us when we are financially broke and yet when we are financially secure. He tempts us when we are sick and yet when we are well. He tempts us when the bottom falls out and yet when everything is going right. He tempts us at all times and that is why we should never let our guard down.

Places

There are places every Christian ought to stay away from because temptation is much greater in those places. If you go into those places you are going to be too weak to overcome temptation. It obvious temptation is much greater in places like bars, night clubs, strip joints and gambling joints. It is much greater on the beach, which in south Alabama are nothing more than legal nudist colonies. There are even some carnal churches that will tempt you to do evil by their lack of moral convictions. They are worldier than the world. Stay away from any place, even a church, where you know you will be tempted by the lust of the flesh.

People

There are certain people we need to stay away from for when we are around them they tempt us to sin. When I got saved I lost every friend I had, but I thank God I lost them, because if I would have stayed around them they would have pulled me back into the world with them again. There are people you know right now who tempt you when you are around them. Even carnal Christians and preachers can tempt you. There are people and even Christians you must be friends with at a distance.

2 Timothy 2:22 says: ***Follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.***

Proverbs 13:20 says: ***He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.***

The people you keep company with have an effect upon your morals whether you are aware of it or not. Friendships are contagious, so make sure you pick the right ones as Paul and Solomon said.

(7) You Cannot Overcome Temptation By Yourself

Resolutions, promises, 12 step programs, turning over new leafs all have some merit, but by themselves they have no lasting power. The world, flesh

and the devil have a way of getting around these things. Temptation is spiritual warfare and cannot be won in the flesh or the power of the flesh. If you are trying to defeat temptation in the power of your flesh, you will fail. Jesus Christ overcame temptation with the word of God. It's the only weapon that can successfully overcome temptation. David said; ***Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee.*** This tells me that the word of God can keep you from sin. The word of God also assures us that we can overcome sin and temptation.

In Romans 6 the believer participates in the death of Christ. We were baptized by the Spirit into his death and his death is counted as our death. We are told to reckon ourselves to be dead with Christ especially when it comes to sin. Why? Sin has no power or influence over a dead man. Nothing has any power or influence over a dead man. You can't get a dead man to follow you, talk to you, walk with you, agree with you, listen to you, or do anything you tell him to do. Dead men do not respond to any thing or any one. That is why God baptized us into Christ's death. God made us partakers of Christ's death, so that sin will have no power or influence over us, for nothing has power or influence over a dead man.

How do we respond to sin and temptation? We respond as dead men which is no response at all. It's the only response that works and we can do it. Sin does not have dominion over true believers according to Romans 6:14, because we are dead to sin. If it does not have dominion over us then we can have victory over every temptation the world, flesh and the devil throws at us. We need to believe what God says in Romans 6 about sin and our freedom from it and act upon it by faith.

(8) God Limits Our Temptations

1 Corinthians 10:13 says: ***There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.***

God will not allow you to be tempted above or beyond what you are able to bear. Every temptation you have had in the past or will have in the future can be overcome.

(9) There Is Always A Way To Escape Temptation

1 Corinthians 10:13 says that God: ***Will with the temptation also make a way to escape.***

Be honest, if you think back on the temptations you gave into in the past

there was a way to escape it. There is always a way you can escape every temptation. You may have to get up and run as Joseph did, but there is always a way out. But most of the time we are not looking for a way out, but an excuse to give in.

(10) We Can Be Guilty Of Tempting God And Others

1 Corinthians 10:9 says concerning Israel in the wilderness: **Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.**

The world, flesh and the Devil will tempt you to commit certain sins that will in turn tempt God to chastise you if you commit them and one of them is fornication. In Romans 14:13 Paul said: ***That no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.*** This is a warning that we should never tempt a brother in Christ to do something that will cause him to stumble and fall. Many weak Christians have stumbled and fell into sin, even deep sin, by the temptations of carnal Christians and preachers.

How to Overcome Temptation

*If temptation feeds on lust, we must overcome lust to overcome temptation.

Galatians 5:16: ***This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.***

*If temptation is greater at certain places and around certain people, we must be careful about the places we go and the company we keep.

Psalms 110:63: ***I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.***

*If temptation is spiritual warfare only God can win the battle against temptation.

2 Peter 2:9: ***The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations.***

Hebrews 2:17-18: ***Wherefore in all things it behoved him (Christ) to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.***

*If Christ won the victory over temptation then we must fight against it the way he did with the Word of God.

Psalms 119:11: ***Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.***

Ephesians 6:16-17: ***Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.***

Hebrews 4:12: ***For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.***

*If temptation tries our faith we need to develop a strong faith to overcome temptation.

1 John 2:14: ***I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.***

The All Things of Romans 8:28

Romans 8:28 says: ***And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.***

Next to John 3:16, Romans 8:28 is probably one of the most quoted verses of scripture in the Bible. It is a verse that millions of saints have found comfort and assurance in. It's a promise that soothes our hearts and minds in the midst of pain, sorrow, sickness and death. It's like a soft pillow for a weary head. Many a Christian has claimed Romans 8:28 as a prayer promise when unexplained things happen in their life. I have claimed it many times.

The common interpretation of Romans 8:28 is all things means everything, including bad things. It's true that God can take something bad and turn it into something good. God can take life's lemons and turn them into lemonade. Fanny Crosby is probably the best hymn writer of all time. She wrote some of the greatest hymns ever written. This modern contemporary, charismatic 7-11 music (7 words 11 verses) can't hold a light to her songs of praise. But what many people do not know is that she was

blind. When she was young a doctor made a mistake when operating on her eyes that left her blind most of her life. The doctor who made the mistake grieved for years for what he had done to Fanny. Late in life she happened to meet the doctor and he began to weep and apologize for what he had done. But she stopped him and said that had it not been for her blindness she could have never written the beautiful hymns she wrote. This is an example of how God can take something bad and make it work together for our good.

But, even though God can make bad things work together for our good, the all things of Romans 8:28 is not everything. Sin never works together for our good. Idolatry, adultery, fornication, lying, stealing, covetousness work against us, not for us. The consequences of sin are always bad and no good can come from sin. Sin pays wages and the wages is always bad. The all things of Romans 8:28 do not include sin.

The all things of Romans 8:28 must be interpreted by its context. A text without a context is a pretext. Romans 8:28 must be interpreted by the verses that precede it and those that follow after. The all things that work together for our good in Romans 8:28 are found in this chapter. There are a number of blessings and promises in this chapter that work together for our good and they are the *all things* of Romans 8:28.

Freedom from the Condemnation of the Law

Romans 8:1 says; ***There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.***

The condemnation in this verse is the eternal condemnation of the law. In chapter 7 Paul writes about the law and how it condemns those who break it. The law does not save today, but it still condemns those who transgress it. But according to Romans 8:1 there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. The law cannot condemn them even though they broke the law. Why? Because the law condemned Christ in our behalf. The wrath of the law was poured out on Christ. He suffered for every commandment we broke and we broke all of them. We deserve to be condemned to hell for breaking the law. But God in his love punished Christ on the cross for what we did. We did the crime, but he paid the fine. We broke the law, but he suffered the penalty. Once a person trusts Christ as their savior God puts them in Christ and he counts his death as theirs. Galatians 3:13 says; ***Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law,***

being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.

Christ allowed the law to curse him, condemn him, and execute him in our place. That is why there is no condemnation to those in Christ. If you are in Christ the law has already condemned you when it condemned him. Once the law condemns a man it has no more power over him. We are dead to the law, and the law can't do anything to a dead man. Freedom from the eternal condemnation of the law is one of the things that work together for our good in Romans 8:28.

The Indwelling Spirit of God

Romans 8:9 says: ***But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.***

When a person is born again they receive three things from God; his life which is eternal; his nature which is divine, and his Spirit who is Holy. By receiving the Spirit believers become the temple of God according to 1 Cor.6:19 and the habitation of God in Eph.2:22. They also become a part of Christ's body; are given a guarantee of resurrection according to Romans 8:11; are led by the Spirit according to Romans 8:14; have an inner witness of salvation according to Romans 8:16; and intercession by the Spirit in verse 26. For these reasons and more the indwelling Spirit of God is one of the all things that work together for our good in Romans 8:28.

The Adoption of the Father

Romans 8:15-16 says: ***For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.***

Adoption works together for our good because:

(a) It makes us a child of God

Ephesians 1:5 says; ***Having predestined us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.***

God has only one begotten Son, all the rest are adopted. Being born again does not make you a child of God, adoption does. But an adopted Son is as much a son as a begotten son. He is not a lesser son than a begotten son. All of God's adopted sons are placed on equal footing and standing as his begotten Son. An adopted son can cry Abba Father just like a begotten son. He has as much claim to the Father as a begotten son.

(b) It makes us an heir of God

Galatians 4:7 says; ***Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.***

The children in God's house are heirs to his inheritance. The inheritance of God the Father has been passed down to all of his adopted sons. What's his has become ours. If you are an adopted son of God you have inherited God the Father's; righteousness, Spirit, grace, love, peace, mercy, word, power, wisdom, kingdom, gifts, glory, promises, comfort, holiness, life, armor etc. We have this inheritance now. It is free. We cannot lose it. It cannot be changed and it is not subject to an inheritance tax.

The Suffering of the Saints

Romans 8:17-18 says: ***And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.***

Suffering is one of the bad painful things of Romans 8:28 that work together for our good. That does not seem possible, but it is true. But how does suffering work together for our good?

(a) It is through suffering we gain patience, experience and hope.

Romans 5:3-5 says; ***And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope.***

(b) Suffering will work together for our good in the future because all suffering for Christ's sake in this life will be rewarded and the reward will exceed the suffering.

2 Corinthians 4:17 says: ***For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.***

2 Timothy 2:12 says: ***If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.***

When you compare the glory of the rewards with the suffering it took to gain them, the glory will far out weigh the suffering. God always gives us more than what we deserve. The rewards will exceed the suffering a million times. The rewards will be so glorious that most Christians will regret they didn't suffer more and that they didn't have but one life to suffer. And a lot of Christians will regret not suffering at all.

The Manifestation of the Sons of God

Romans 8:19-21 says: ***For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.***

The whole creation, including us, is waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. The sons of God are the angels and saints who will come with Christ at his second coming. The manifestation of the sons of God at the second coming of Christ is the hope of the whole creation because then and only then will we be delivered from the bondage of corruption. The bondage of corruption is the curse we suffer as a result of Adam's sin and our own sins. By the sin of Adam and our own sins we became subject to the bondage of corruption. Sin cursed the whole creation, man, plant and animal. We all suffer for what he did. Sin touched every area of our lives. Sin brought death to our spirit, soul and body. Sin corrupted our hearts, minds, emotions, understanding, thoughts and our bodies. We suffer damage to every part of our body, soul and spirit. But when the sons of God are manifested at the second coming of Christ the whole creation will be delivered from the curse and corruption and damage of sin. This is one of the all things of Romans 8:28 that will work together for our good in the future.

The Intercession of the Spirit

Romans 8:26-27 says: ***Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.***

We have an infirmity in our flesh. It's the old nature of sin that dwells in our flesh according to Rom.7. It has clouded our minds and understanding as to how to pray and what to pray for as we ought. (See Rom.7:19-21) Many times in our lives we are faced with problems, circumstances and tragedies that completely overwhelm us. We are confused as to why they happen. They are so overwhelming that we don't know how we should pray about them. They confuse us and bewilder us to the point of despair.

There were many times during my son's sickness that I could not pray. As we watched him get worse I had a hard time knowing what to pray for. His

sickness so overwhelmed me that there were times I would get down to pray and could not say a word. I have never felt so helpless in my life.

When you are overcome by grief and despair it is very hard to understand the will of God. It seems like God vanishes from the universe. You can't see his hand or sense his love or compassion. But the Spirit knows what God is doing at all times and he knows why things happen the way they do. He knows our real needs at a time like that. And he helps our infirmities by teaching us how and what to pray for as we ought. I have noticed that people who have gone through pain and tribulation in their lives have a more powerful and spiritual prayer life than others. The Spirit intercedes for them and assists and teaches them how to pray and what to pray for. And when they pray it's according to the will of God and not theirs. (Matt.26:39-44)

The Election of God

Romans 8:29-33 says: ***For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.***

These verses give us a full picture of the whole process of election. There is more than one part to election and each part works together for our good.

The whole process of election or predestination begins with ***foreknowledge***. It means to have knowledge of something before it happens. Only God has foreknowledge for only God knows the future. What did God foreknow that caused him to predestinate or elect you who are saved? He foreknew you would believe the truth of the gospel when you heard it. 2 Thessalonians 2:12-13 says: ***That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.***

In these verses both damnation and election are based upon faith.

Those who do not believe the truth are damned according to verse 12. Those who believe the truth are chosen and saved according to verse 13. Those who God foreknew would believe the gospel he chose and the ones he foreknew would not believe the gospel he did not chose. It's just that

simple. (All men have the ability to believe or reject the gospel. If not, how could God condemn a man for not believing if he could not believe, or if God did not “*give him faith to believe*” as some teach)

Foreknowledge works together for our good for those he foreknew he ***predestinated***. Predestination works together for our good for it means that God elected or chose you. The ones who he predestinated are the ones he elected.

Predestination also works together for your good, for those who God predestinated he ***called***. The gospel is an open invitation for all men to be saved. Even though God calls all men to be saved by the gospel, only “the called” answer. “The called” are those God predestinated. The ones he predestinated are those he foreknew would believe the gospel.

Being one of the called works together for our good because the ones he called he ***justified***. We are justified when we answer God's call to believe the gospel. Justification works together for your good for;

(1) Only the justified have peace with God

Rom.5:1 says; ***Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.***

(2) Only the justified are delivered from the wrath of God

Rom.5:9 says; ***Being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.***

(3) Only the justified are heirs of eternal life

Titus 3:7 says; ***That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.***

(4) Only the justified are forgiven of all sins

Acts 13:39 says; ***And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses***

(5) Only the justified are glorified

Rom.8:30 says; ***Whom he justified them he also glorified.***

The last step in the process of election is ***glorification***. If you have been elected you have a guarantee you will be glorified. That is the reason the word is used in the past tense, for as far as God is concerned it's a done

deal. To be glorified means you will be totally conformed to the image of God's Son according to verse 29. The main goal in election is to conform you into the image of God's Son. His will is to make you like Christ in every way: body, soul and spirit. When we are conformed into the image of his Son the whole process of election will be completed.

The all things of Romans 8:28 includes the election of God and every part in the process of election works together for our good. The blessed Trinity has, is, and will work all things together for our good. God is in us and for us and he is actively working things together for our good. It may not seem that way at times, but he is.

In view of Romans 8:28 Paul asks the following questions.

If God be for us who can be against us? (Verse 31)

God has demonstrated that he is for us throughout this chapter. If the Godhead is on your side working all things together for your good, who can be against you? Who is greater than God? If they come against you, they will come against God.

How shall he not with him also freely give us all things? (Verse 32)

In view of what God has done, is doing and will do, should there be any doubt that he can supply our every need? If God went as far as to give up his prize possession on the cross for us, will he close his hand and shut his ear to our temporal needs now? If the cross is any indication of what God will do for us we need not worry about house notes and water bills.

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? (Verse 33)

You can't bring a charge against the elect because all charges against the elect have been dismissed. God charged Christ for our sins who discharged them by his death and shed blood.

Who is he that condemneth? (Verse 34)

In this verse is found four reasons why the elect cannot be condemned. The death of Christ satisfied all of God's just demands against their sins. The resurrection of Christ is the proof that God was satisfied with the payment Christ made. The presence of Christ in heaven is the everlasting reminder of the security of the elect for the elect are seated with him and to condemn them is to condemn him. The intercession of Christ secures the

elect, for he ever liveth to defend and protect the elect from every attack made against them. (Heb.7:25)

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? (Verse 35)

When God foreknew, predestinated, called, and justified us we were dead in trespasses and sins. If God did all those things for us when we were dead in sin, is there anything that can separate us from his love now that we are justified? If God loved us when we dead in sins, how can anything separate us from the love of God now that we are justified?

Romans 8 is one of the most blessed chapters in the Bible and Romans 8:28 is one of the most blessed verses for the Christian. It assures us when we are in doubt. It comforts us when we are in pain. It gives us hope when we give up hope. It encourages us when we are discouraged. It wipes the tears from our eyes. It puts joy back into our heart.

Memorize it and hide it in your heart because you will need it time and time again in your walk with the Lord. Thank God for the promise of Romans 8:28!

The Best News You Ever Heard

*If you are ready for some good news, here it is, but first **The Bad News.*** The hunger of every soul is to know God personally, whether we are willing to admit it or not. We were created by Him to have fellowship with Him. The heart of mankind yearns for something more, something beyond ourselves. We long to know the one who created us. This is evident in the fact that every human culture, no matter how remote, has some form of religion, and worships some kind of "god." Animals don't do this. Some species of animals in the wild have very sophisticated societies. But none of them seek to worship a creator, or some Divine being they cannot see. Yet this is ingrained into the fabric of humanity. Why? *"Because He hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring."* (Acts 17:26-28). Animals were created by God. But humanity alone is God's "offspring," having been created in His image.

The problem is, there is a huge obstacle between us and the Creator. It is called "sin." Sin is a transgression of the law of God. Sin is everything we do of our own free will that is contrary to God and His nature, which is entirely good. God is the source of all "goodness." Without Him, there is nothing but chaos and evil. Our sin separates us from God. *"Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."* (Isaiah 59:1-2).

The Apostle Paul wrote, *"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,"* (Romans 3:23). The immediate result of our sin is that God has withdrawn from us. A holy God can't have fellowship with unholy people. God's nature demands truth, righteousness, and justice. Yet, we willingly choose what is contrary to these things. In doing so, God allows us to experience the natural consequences of our choices, and His withdrawing from us. He does this so that we will come to our senses, yearn for His goodness, and seek Him with all our hearts.

Even in spite of our rebellion, God still demonstrates His goodness toward man from a distance, through His creation, and often through direct intervention in our lives. He is calling us through both our circumstances, as well as that inner need to know Him that He has placed in every human being. We have a choice to make. We can begin to seek Him as we experience the contrast between His goodness and the results of our sin. Or, we can resist Him, deny Him, and even learn to hate Him.

Death is a consequence of our sin, *"For the wages of sin is death,"* (Romans 6:23). If we continue to reject God's ongoing efforts to bring us to our senses, so that we seek Him with all our hearts, He will eventually give up. In the end, we will be raised from the grave to face the final judgment, where the permanent sentence of death will be pronounced. This is what the Bible calls "the second death." *"Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire",* (Revelation 20:15).

We also know from experience, and from the Bible, that we are incapable of living a life consistent with God and His nature. Therefore, we are incapable of pleasing God by our own merits. Mankind is in an utterly hopeless situation unless God takes the initiative to rescue us. And that is precisely what He wants us to realize. Once we have come to terms with our dire situation, we are ready for the "good news."

The Good News

The Bible is not a book about hopelessness and condemnation. It is God's message of love to mankind. Its core message is the "good news" (Gospel). The Apostle Paul summarized the Gospel like this: *"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (in our place)"* (Romans 5:8).

The Apostle John explained the core message of the Bible this way: *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God,"* (John 3:16-18).

The Apostle Peter concludes: *"Christ also suffered for us.... Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.... Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed,"* (1 Peter 2:21-25). The essence of the Gospel is God's rescue mission for those who are doomed and hopeless.

God has provided the means of our salvation, the death of His Son in our place. That once for all sacrifice provided the legal basis for our pardon from sin. But, each and every person needs to receive God's forgiveness through a personal encounter with Him. In this encounter, by means of His Spirit, God not only pardons all our sins, He also fundamentally changes the heart of the individual. The old life, which is contrary to God, is put to death and a new life begins. Jesus called this transformation the "new birth." When a very religious man named Nicodemus came to Jesus he was told by Jesus, *"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,"* (John 3:3). Nicodemus was puzzled by Jesus' words, not knowing what He meant and so Jesus explained: *"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water (First birth) and of the Spirit, (Second Birth) he cannot enter into the kingdom of God,"* (John 3:5). His race, religion and genealogy was not good enough. Being born of water which is the first birth was not enough, he needed to be born again by the Spirit of God which is something God alone can do in the human heart.

The Gift Of God Is For You

God loved you so much, He sent His only Son to take the judgment and penalty for your sins. Jesus loved you so much, He volunteered to suffer in your place, to satisfy the penalty due for your sins and the sins of the whole world. He did this in order to offer you:

- *Complete forgiveness and pardon of all your sins no matter how bad they may be.
- *Adoption into the family of God, making God your own Father, and you His son or daughter.
- *A new start, what the Bible calls being "born again," free from all guilt.
- *His Holy Spirit to live within you, to guide you, comfort you, and help you live right.
- *Peace, joy, and contentment in this life even in difficult circumstances.
- *The resurrection of your body to immortality (eternal life) at Jesus' second coming.
- *An eternal inheritance in His coming Kingdom.

How To Respond To God's Gift Of Love

The Bible calls salvation "the gift of God." You cannot earn it. You cannot do anything to deserve it. You must simply receive God's gift in the manner He prescribes. If you are tired of the life of sin, and desire God's free gift of salvation, here is how He said to receive it: ***"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved," (Romans 10:9-13).***

Simply put your full and complete trust in Christ alone to save you and keep you saved and call on the Lord and ask him to save you. It is as simple as that. When you meet these conditions, God takes care of the rest according to His promises. You will become His child. Your relationship with God will instantly change, from His being your judge, to being your Father.

If the Spirit of God has been prodding you to obey the good news, if you

believe the Word of God presented in this article, then right now where you are, as you are, receive Christ as your Savior and allow him to save you and change your life today. Call on the Lord in prayer and ask him to save you for he has promised that: *Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.* Then you should seek fellowship in a Bible believing local church that teaches you how to follow the Lord in your new life.

This world system is coming to an end rapidly. We see it crashing down around us now. Jesus is coming back, as He promised. And when He does, He will purge the earth of the wicked, and establish His Kingdom. Those who have been reconciled to God through the death of His Son will inherit his Kingdom. The curse will be removed from creation, and there will be peace on earth, as God Himself will live among men. Don't wait to be reconciled to God. Procrastination could spell your doom.

THE CHURCH AND THE TWO ISRAELS

Many dispensationalists say that Israel is totally fallen, cast away and set aside and the church has no relationship with Israel. But, what does Paul say about this? Does Paul agree with this? Did he say they are totally fallen and cast away and did he say the church has no relationship with Israel today?

In Romans 11:25 he wrote: ***For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.***

Paul said that blindness in part is happened to Israel. What does this imply? It means the blindness is not total. Some were blinded, but some were not blinded.

In Romans 11:7 he wrote: ***What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.***

In this verse there are two groups of Jews. One group is blinded and the other is not. That is why Paul said the blindness was in part. The election in Romans 11:7 are the Jews within the nation of Israel who believe on Christ and they are a part of the elect remnant of Jews who have believed God throughout the Bible.

Paul gives a short history of the elect remnant of Jews who believe what

God says in Romans 11:1-5: I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

Throughout the Bible there has always been an elect remnant of Jews who believed and obeyed God. In Elijah's day there were 7000 Jews who believed God and did not worship Baal like the rest of the Jews in the nation of Israel. In Paul's day there was an elect remnant of Jews who believed God by believing on Christ. He calls them the election of grace in verse 5 and he was one of them.

What this means is there are two Israels. The unbelieving apostate Jews who never believed or obeyed God and the believing Jews who have always believed and obeyed God. In Paul's day and today they are the Jews who believe on Christ. So all Israel is not blinded and or cast away or set side today. That is why it is wrong to say all Israel is fallen and cast away and set aside. There is an elect remnant of believing Jews within the church that believing gentiles are one body with.

Their Names In the New Testament

- *They are called a little flock in Luke 12:32.
- *A fruitful nation in Matt.21:43.
- *A holy nation and a chosen generation in 1 Peter 2:9.
- *They are the election of grace in Romans 11:5.
- *In Romans 11:16-17 they are the branches that were not broken out of the good olive tree. Paul shows us that gentile believers are grafted into the olive tree along with them and partake of the root and fatness of the tree with them.

The Book of Ephesians:

- *They are the Jews who first trusted in Christ of Eph.1:12.
- *They are the commonwealth of Israel of Eph.2:12 that we are made nigh to in Eph. 2:13.
- *They were the ones who were nigh to God in Eph.2:17.
- *They are ½ of the two of Eph. 2:15.

*They are members of the new man in Eph.2:15.

*We are reconciled together with them in one body in Eph.2:16.

*They are the saints and household of God in Eph.2:19 that we are now fellow citizens with.

*We are fellow heirs and members of the same body with them in Eph.3:6.

*They are a part of the fellowship that was a mystery from the beginning of the world in Eph.3:9.

These Jews in the church at Ephesus are the same ones who were not blinded or cut off in Romans 11. They are the election of grace who believed God and on Christ his Son in Romans 11:6.

Paul calls them the ***Israel of God*** in Galatians 6:15-16: ***For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.***

Paul shows us that there is a true Israel of God today and this epistle was written to them. So all Israel is not cast away or set aside. The Jews who believe on Christ are God's Israel today and we gentiles are one body with them.

This means there is a relationship between the church and Israel. The Israel of God is one half of the church which is Christ's body. If you say the church has no relationship with Israel as a nation you are right. But if you say the church has no relationship with Israel period you are wrong.

And this is where many dispensationalists err. They fail to see that there is an Israel of God today and it's not a political nation or state. It is a spiritual nation of Jews who have believed on Christ who are a part of the true Israel of God throughout the Bible.

So how does Paul define Israel? He says that they are not all fallen and cast away. He says there is an Israel of God today which he calls the election of grace and the Israel of God. He says we are one body with them.

The Dead In Christ

In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 Paul wrote: ***But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus***

died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

The reason Paul wrote these words was because of the ignorance in his day concerning the dead in Christ and the resurrection of the dead. He said; *I would not have you to be ignorant, brethern, concerning them which are asleep.* In Paul's day and today there is much ignorance and misinformation concerning those who have died in the Lord. A while back a Christian lady asked me if I knew what happens to Christians when they die. It was not her question that amazed me, but the fact that she had been a member of a fundamental church for over 30 years. After attending that church for 30 years she still did not know what happens to Christians when they die. The Saints in Thessalonica were ignorant of the dead in Christ too for they were sorrowing over them as if they had no hope of seeing them again.

Death brings grief and sorrow. God knows how we grieve over the loss of loved ones. He designed these bodies to grieve. Grief is a natural emotion. It worries me when people do not grieve. But, God does not want us to be overcome with grief or be paralyzed with grief, so he has given us a mountain of information about the dead in Christ to help us overcome grief and sorrow.

In verse 18 he said; *comfort one another with THESE WORDS.* And when we read the words Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 4 and other passages, it takes our grief away. We can live with it and continue to function as Christians. Paul had many friends and helpers to die, but he continued to serve the Lord in spite of the grief he suffered. He did not allow his grief to paralyze him. He knew their loss was temporary and he did not treat it as permanent. He knew he would see them again.

What can we know for sure about the dead in Christ?

(1) The Dead In Christ Have Departed

In Philippians 1:21-24 Paul wrote: ***For to me to live is Christ, and to die***

is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.

The subject of this verse is death. Paul was in a straight between two options; death and life. The best option as far as he was concerned was death, for he said: *to depart and to be with Christ is far better*. This tells us that when a person dies a departure takes place. They leave their body and this world. This means the dead in Christ are no longer in this world or their body or even in the grave we bury them in. They have departed. Death is a departure from the flesh and from this world.

In 2 Timothy 4:6 Paul writing about his coming death said: ***For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.***

The departure Paul wrote about in this verse was not a trip he was planning to go to another town or nation. He was in Rome when he wrote this epistle and he died in Rome and his body is buried somewhere in Rome. His departure was his coming death. His body died, but he departed from his body and from this world. What departed? His soul and spirit. You have a body, soul and spirit and when you die your soul and spirit will depart and leave your body. There is an example of this in Genesis 35:18 when Jacob's wife died. It says: ***And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, for she died.***

In this account of her death we see that death is the separation and disunion of soul and body. We see that at death the soul departs from the body. We see that the soul does not die with the body, but goes elsewhere. We see the soul lives in a separate state, and never dies. We see the soul goes into another world.

Every death is a departure. At death you will leave your body and this world. We will not all go to the same place, but you will depart from this world and from your body when you die. Your physical body is a temporary house. When you die you will move out of it. As a matter of fact you will not attend your own funeral. Your body will be there, but your soul and spirit will be departed and gone. At death a person's spirit and soul are loosed from their body.

In Luke 16:20-26 Jesus told us a true story of two men who died at the same time and were buried at the same time, but they went two different places. He said one man died: ***and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes being in torments.*** The other man died and the Lord said: ***he was***

carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. Their bodies were dead and buried, but their soul and spirit departed this world. One man went to hell the moment he died and the other to Paradise. The dead in Christ have departed.

(2) The Dead In Christ Have Ascended

In Philippians 1:21-24 Paul wrote: ***For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.***

Paul not only said that when he died he would depart this world, but he told us where he was going. When you take a trip you depart from one place and end up in another. Death is a departure that leads us from this world to another. If you are a real Christian who has truly been born again, Paul tells us where that place is. He said to depart ***and to be with Christ.*** When Paul died he expected to go where Christ is. He expected to be with Christ after his departure from this world. Therefore, where ever Christ is, the dead in Christ go, for the dead in Christ depart to be with Christ when they die.

If we can locate the place where Christ is, we can find out where the dead in Christ go, for when they die they depart to be with Christ. We know exactly where Christ is. In Ephesians 1:20 Paul says that Christ sits at the right hand of God in heavenly places. If the dead in Christ have departed to be with Christ, then the dead in Christ are in heavenly places with Christ. To be with Christ means to be where he is. This verse tells us he is in heavenly places. So where do the dead in Christ go when they depart this world? To heavenly places. Therefore, the dead in Christ are not in the grave yard. They are not in their bodies. They are not even in this world. They are in heavenly places with Christ. Paul expected to go to heavenly places when he died because that is where Christ is.

Heavenly places is a big place. Where in heavenly places is Christ located? In Hebrews 12:18-23 Paul tells us exactly where Christ is located in heavenly places.

He wrote: ***But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of***

just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of Abel*.

In these verses, Paul describes the heavenly city New Jerusalem. It's the same city John describes in Revelation 21-22 where he saw it coming down from heaven to the earth in the future. Paul opens the door a little and gives us a view of who occupies the heavenly city New Jerusalem today. Every city has a population and these verses describe the occupants of New Jerusalem.

If you could look into the city you would see:

(1) *An innumerable company of angels*

There are so many angels in that city that you cannot count them. They are innumerable, that is without number.

(2) *God the Judge of all*

That's God the Father. He is there seated on his throne surrounded by angels, seraphs and the elders.

(3) *The church of the first born*

Jesus Christ is the first born from the dead and his church is called the church of the first born. It is named after him. Who are they? In this same verse Paul identifies who they are. He calls them the *spirits of just men made perfect*. The spirits of just men made perfect are the dead in Christ. They are called *the spirits of just men made perfect* because they are justified and their spirits are now in heaven.

According to Ephesians 3:15 the church of God has members in heaven and earth. The church of God on earth are those still alive. The church of God in heaven is the spirits of just men made perfect who are the dead in Christ. They are the heavenly members of the church for they now occupy the heavenly city New Jerusalem.

(4) *Jesus the mediator of the new covenant*

In Ephesians 1:20 Paul said that Christ is seated at God's right hand in heavenly places. Now you know where he is located in heavenly places. He is in the heavenly city New Jerusalem with his Father, the angels, and the dead in Christ who are the spirits of just men made perfect. The dead in Christ have ascended to be with Christ in heavenly places and that place in heaven is the heavenly city New Jerusalem.

My mother and father are in that city. My son Julius is in that city. Some of you have relatives in that city. The dead in Christ are not in the grave yard. You may visit their grave, but remember they are not there. You are visiting someone who is not home

The dead in Christ are not in some fictitious place called purgatory either where they are suffering for their sins. Purgatory is just one of the many lies of the devil to deceive people about the dead in Christ. It is just another money making religious racket of the devil.

The Bible makes it clear that the dead in Christ are with Christ in the heavenly city New Jerusalem.

(3) The Dead in Christ Are Awake With Christ

If the dead in Christ are with Christ in the heavenly city New Jerusalem are they awake and conscience or are they asleep and unconscious?

Many people today have bought into the false doctrine of soul sleep. They teach that when you die your soul goes to sleep and remains unconscious until the second coming of Christ. Some teach that the soul sleeps in the grave yard with the body. Some teach that the soul goes to heaven but remains asleep and unconscious in heaven until the second coming of Christ.

But what saith the scriptures? The Bible says the body is what sleeps and the soul and spirit are very much awake and conscience in heaven. The word sleep is a metaphor that is used to describe death. A dead man is like a man that sleeps. A man who is asleep is like a dead man. That is why sleep is used to describe the death of someone. When we look at the body of dead man he appears as if he is asleep. But the question is what part of the Christian sleeps when he dies because a Christian has a body soul and spirit?

The scriptures show us the answer. In the next few verses notice carefully these people whose bodies are dead and yet they are awake and conscience.

Matthew 17:1-3 says: ***And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.***

The man to exam closely in these verses is Moses. Peter saw Moses along

with Elijah on this mountain. Moses died and God himself buried him in Deuteronomy 34:6, but here on the mount of transfiguration he is seen by Peter, James and John speaking to Jesus. It says: ***And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.***

Here is dead man speaking to Jesus. But how can a dead man speak if he is asleep and unconscious? The fact that Moses is seen speaking to Jesus shows you that when a believer dies, it's not his soul and spirit that sleeps, it's his body. Moses body was buried by God himself, but here he is seen in his soul and spirit speaking to Christ. Peter was an eyewitness to the fact that Moses was very much alive and awake and speaking to Jesus in Matthew 17. His body was in the grave, but his soul and spirit were with Christ talking to him in Matthew 17 100's of years after he died.

In Revelation 6:9-11 it says: ***And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:***

And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

This is one of the incidental proofs in the Bible that the soul does not cease to exist at death and that the soul does not cease to be conscious or does not sleep until the resurrection. The souls of these martyrs are still in existence; they remember what had occurred on the earth; they are interested in what was taking place; they are engaged in prayer; and as manifesting a desire for God to avenge the ones who killed them.

Their bodies were dead and asleep. They lost their lives for Christ's sake. But their souls were awake praying and asking God to take vengeance on their enemies. And the Lord speaks to them and says there were more martyrs in the future like them, but in the end he would take out his vengeance on those that killed them.

Revelation 15:2-4 says: ***And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name,***

***stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.
And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.
Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.***

Here is another group of martyrs in the future who will lose their lives on earth for the sake of Christ and the gospel and John sees them in heaven singing and praising God. How could they sing and praise God in heaven if their souls were asleep? These saints are awake and conscience in heaven. It's their bodies that sleep in the grave, not their souls.

In these verses we have seen the dead in Christ speaking, praying and singing and praising God after they die. This shows us beyond a doubt that the dead in Christ are awake and conscience.

But what about the lost? Many people believe that when lost people die they are dead like a dog and no longer exist. But what saith the scriptures? They tell us that lost people have something in common with saved people when they die: they are awake and conscience and can feel and speak and talk.

In Luke 16 the Lord tells us a story about a lost man who died: He said the man died and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes being in torments. The Lord said he cried out in pain and said he was tormented in the flames of a fire and begged God for water. His body was dead, but his soul and spirit were in hell and fully conscience.

It does not matter if a person is saved or lost; when they die it's their body that sleeps, not their soul and spirit. Their soul and spirit leaves their body and they are awake and conscience. They speak, see, feel, and communicate. The doctrine of soul sleep is another lie of the devil.

At this moment the dead in Christ are in the heavenly city New Jerusalem with Christ, talking with him and enjoying his presence and singing his praises. But the lost are in hell crying in agony and pain suffering torment in a fire that will never go out and begging God to give them water and pleading to get out and God will not hear them.

(4) The Dead In Christ Will Descend With Christ

In 1 Thessalonians 3:13 Paul prayed that God would establish the hearts of the saints; ***Unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.***

This verse says that when the Lord comes again he will come with all his saints. Paul's prayer for the saints in Thessalonica was for them to be blameless and holy when Christ comes again with all his saints. It should be our prayer also to be holy and harmless when he comes with all his saints. But who are these saints who will come with Christ? In 1 Thessalonians 4:14 Paul tells us who they are. He wrote: ***For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.***

This verse shows us two things: When saved people die they go to be with the Lord and when he comes again they are the saints who will come with him. In 1 Thessalonians 3:13 the saints who will come with Christ at the second coming are the dead in Christ of 1 Thessalonians 4:14. When the Lord comes again he will not come alone. He will come with his angels and with his saints. The saints who will accompany him when he comes again are the dead in Christ.

If they come with him in the future, they must be with him now. The saints who will come with the Lord in 1 Thessalonians 3:13 are the saints who have died and departed to be with Christ now. At the second coming the Lord will come with his saints and for his saints. He will come ***with*** the saints who have died and he will come ***for*** the saints who are still alive. It is two aspects of one event.

Even Enoch who was a prophet before the flood knew about the coming of Christ with his all saints.

Jude 1:14 says: ***And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints.***

He said the Lord will come with ten thousands of his saints. Not ten thousand, but ten thousands which is an indefinite number. It may be millions if not billions. But 1 Thessalonians 4:14 shows us who they are; it's the dead in Christ.

The dead in Christ are not in the grave yard. The dead in Christ are now in heaven with Christ. The dead in Christ are not asleep or unconscious; they are awake and conscience. The dead in Christ will not remain in heaven; they will descend with Christ when he comes again.

(5) The Dead In Christ Will Be Reunited With The Alive In Christ

In 1 Thessalonians 4:16 Paul wrote: ***For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.***

When the Lord comes again there will be a great reunion in the air. God will gather together his saints from one end of heaven to the other and from one end of the earth to the other. The dead in Christ from all ages will be united with those who are still alive when the Lord comes. Once we are united together we will never be separated again. It says: *so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

This was written to comfort the saints whose loved ones had died. Our separation is just temporary because one day we will be gathered together to meet the Lord in the air and from that day forward there will never be another separation between the saints of God.

In John 14:1-3 Jesus said: ***Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.***

The question you need to ask yourself is this: when I die and my spirit and soul depart from my body, will I ascend into heaven or descend into hell? Your soul and spirit will live in either heaven or hell forever. Death is not the end. It's the beginning of eternity. It will either be an eternity enjoying the blessings and riches of living with God and the saints and the angels forever in the glorious kingdom of God; or it may be the the misery of suffering in the fires of hell with the devil and his angels.

God is not willing for anyone to perish in hell. God will have all men to be saved and to live with him forever. He has done all that is necessary to save you and to keep you saved, so you can live with him forever. God sent his Son down to this earth to suffer and bleed and die for the thing that keeps you out of heaven; **your sins**. You and I are guilty of breaking the law of God which means we are guilty of every sin God's law condemns. The penalty of breaking the law of God is death, the second death in hell.

By dying for our sins Christ paid the penalty for them in full. Therefore, there is no work you must do to be saved. There is no sacrifice you must make to be saved. Christ did all the work to save you and to keep you saved when he died on the cross in your place. All that God asks you do is to believe what he has already done for you and then call on him and ask him to save you.

Take a look at this offer God made to you in Romans 10.

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

THE ETERNAL SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER

The Scriptural Reasons Why Every Christian Is Secure Eternally

(Written for teachers)

Eternal security simply means "***once saved always saved***". It means that each and every person who truly believes the Gospel of Grace has a *guarantee* that they will spend eternity in the Kingdom of God. In this present age, there is no chance a believer can lose his salvation for any reason. Because of sin and apostasy a believer can lose many things today, but not his salvation. The same God who saves sinners, secures their salvation after he saves them.

For The Following Reasons Every True Believer Has Eternal Security

SALVATION BY THE GRACE OF GOD THE FATHER

Ephesians 2:8-9 says; ***For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.***

Titus 3:5 says; ***Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.***

Rom. 4:5 says; ***But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that***

justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

According to these verses salvation is not based upon the works or performance of the sinner either ***before or after*** he believes the gospel. If God saved you because you did certain religious works and performed certain good deeds ***along with believing***, your salvation could never be attributed to grace. If God saved you in view of your good works and good deeds ***after you believed*** the gospel, your salvation could not be attributed to grace. ***If works play a part in receiving or keeping salvation, it is not by grace.***

In true salvation by grace, God took the works out of salvation and made faith the only requirement to be saved. When Paul said "*not of works*" that means you don't work to gain it or keep it. Those who God saves by grace through faith, without works, are kept saved the same way.

In Romans 11:5-6 Paul wrote; ***Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.***

According to these verses grace cancels out works and works cancel out grace. When it comes to salvation both cannot operate at the same time because they are diametrically opposed to one another. They are totally different principals and you cannot be saved by both at the same time.

If salvation is by works then it is totally by works without an element of grace in it. If it is by grace it is totally by grace without an element of works in it. If salvation is based upon your works or behavior either when you believed the gospel or after, it is not by grace.

This is an important fact, when it comes to eternal security, for if God keeps you saved by grace without works, how could you possibly lose your salvation? ***If you didn't do any work to gain or keep it, then you can't lose it.*** If you could lose your salvation because of bad works, it was never by grace to begin with and Paul was a liar when he said it is; "*the gift of God, not of works*".

A gift is given freely and unconditionally. It is freely and unconditionally given and freely and unconditionally kept. If I gave you an automobile as a gift would it really be a gift if you paid me for it? If I gave you an automobile as a gift, is it really a gift if I took it back from you because I didn't like the way you treated it after I gave it to you? No.

OUR IDENTIFICATION WITH GOD THE SON

In Galatians 3:27 Paul wrote; ***For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.***

Being baptized into Christ by the Spirit we put on Christ; that is, ***we became identified with him.*** Prior to being identified with Christ, we were identified with Adam. In Romans 5 God makes it clear that in the Garden of Eden the one man Adam acted in behalf of all men. We were identified with Adam and being identified with Adam what was said of him was true of us. Consequently, when he sinned we sinned with him. When he rebelled against God, we rebelled. When death passed upon him, it passed upon us. When he was condemned, we were condemned with him. His acts and the consequences of his acts were put to our account as if we did them ourselves.

But now we are identified with Christ which means what is true of Him becomes true of us. In view of our identification with Christ Paul wrote in Galatians 2:20; ***I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.***

This verse says we are dead and yet alive at the same time. How can this be? Because we are identified with Christ. Being identified with Him, God counts Christ's death as our death and His life as our life. The death we have experienced in this verse is Christ's. The life we live in the verse is Christ's. As His death is accounted as ours, His Life is accounted as ours. ***He now lives for you as He once died for you.***

This is an important fact when it comes to eternal security. For if Christ lives for us, then how could we possibly lose our salvation, for he lives a perfect, sinless and holy life. He died for us, that's salvation. He lives for us, that's security.

I have heard people say that you got to "live it" to be saved and if you don't "live it" you will lose it. If that is true, then I know my salvation is secure because Christ "lives it" for me

THE SEALING OF GOD THE SPIRIT

A seal denotes many things in the Bible.

A seal can be:

(1) A Mark Of Ownership

In Revelation 7:3 God will put a seal in the foreheads of the 144,000. That seal will be His name according to Rev.14:1. That seal will be a mark of ownership. It will identify the 144,000 as God's people and separate them

from those who are not.

In Ephesians 1:13 Paul said; ***In whom ye also trusted, after ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.***

God has put a seal on us. This seal is a mark of ownership and the seal is the Holy Spirit of promise. He gave us the Holy Spirit to declare that we belong to Him, for He gives the Holy Spirit only to those who do. (See Rom.8:9) The seal of God is not in our foreheads, it's in our hearts. It's the Holy Spirit of promise and it is God's mark of ownership.

(You can see the seal of the Spirit in a person's heart by the fruits of the Spirit in their lives)

(2) To Preserve And Secure To A Future Time

At the second coming of Christ, God will cast the Devil into the bottomless pit and will shut him up and set a seal upon him, that he should not deceive the nations no more for a thousand years. (See Rev.20:1-3) The seal God will set upon him is for preservation and security. It will preserve and secure him in the bottomless pit with no chance of getting out. This seal shows us something about the seal of God. ***It shows us that any thing God seals remains sealed the whole time that He designates it to be sealed.*** If the devil will be sealed for a 1000 years, you can rest assured, he will not come out of the pit one minute before the 1000 years is finished.

In Ephesians 4:30 Paul wrote; ***And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*** This is a seal of preservation and security. God has also designated how long we are to be sealed; ***"till the day of redemption"***. The day of redemption is the coming of Christ, when our bodies will be redeemed. If we are sealed unto the day of redemption, then we are preserved and secured unto the coming of Christ, which means we cannot lose our salvation. ***As long as we are sealed, we are secure.*** If we are sealed unto the day of redemption, we are secure unto the coming of Christ for the church. What about after then? We won't need security after the day of redemption, for in that day God will give us glorified, sinless bodies that cannot and will not sin again.

THE FORGIVENESS OF ALL SINS

Colossians 2:13 says; ***And you being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.***

In Acts 13:38-39 Paul said; ***Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness***

of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

All is all. All is not part. All is not 50% or even 99%. All is 100%. All is all without exception and distinction. If God forgave you of all sins and trespasses without exception and distinction, what sin could He send you to hell for? If God could send a believer to hell for sin, then He did not forgive him of all sins like He said He did. God does not lie and if he has forgiven you of all sins, your salvation is secure and there is no possibility of you going to hell if you are saved.

The sins that God forgives He also forgets. Hebrews 10:17-18 says; ***And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.*** If God does not remember your sins no more after He forgives them, how could you lose your salvation?

THE IMPUTATION OF NO SINS

In Romans 4:7-8 God said; ***Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.***

To impute means to charge someone with something such as a crime, a debt, faults, blame or sin. According to Romans 4:8, God does not impute sin to our account: He does not charge us with sin. Why? Because He imputed our sins to Christ's account. He charged Him for our sins who in turn suffered and died for them. (See 2 Cor.5:19-21) If God does not impute sin to our account or charge us for sin, how could we possibly lose our salvation?

Those who say you can lose your salvation, believe you lose it because of sin. They say that through sin a Christian can forfeit and lose his salvation. But, if sin is not imputed to your account, how could you lose it then? If sin is completely taken out of the way and is no longer held against you, then what could possibly cause you to lose your salvation? Nothing! The fact that God does not charge or impute sin to the believer's account, assures me that we are secure eternally in Christ.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

In Rom.5:1 we are justified by faith. In Rom.5:9 we are justified by the blood Of Christ. In Rom.4:25 we are justified by the resurrection of Christ. In Rom.3:24 we are justified by the grace of God. In Acts 13:38-39 we are

justified from all things.

What does it mean to be justified? In our case, it means ***to be free and clear from the guilt and penalty of all sins.***

How were we made free from the guilt and penalty of all sins? Through the death and shed blood of Christ on the cross. The cross is how and where we are justified, for on the cross, ***Christ assumed the guilt of our sins and paid the penalty for them.*** If Christ assumed the guilt of our sins and paid the penalty for our sins, how could God judge and condemn us to hell for our sins? God can't judge us for sins He has already judged. God cannot condemn us to hell for sins He has already condemned. God judged, convicted, sentenced and executed Christ for our sins, once for all time. He can't do it again, for that would be double jeopardy.

If you ran a stop sign and got a ticket, but someone paid the ticket for you, can the judge make you pay it again? No. ***The law cannot punish you twice for the same crime.*** When Christ died on the cross, He died for all of your sins. God punished Him for the sins and crimes you committed against Him. If God punished Christ for the sins and crimes you committed, can He turn around and punish you in hell for your sins? NO! Why? Because He already punished Christ for them. Once your sins were paid for they are forgiven and you are pronounced justified and God cannot charge you with those sins again.

OUR SEAT IN HEAVENLY PLACES

In Ephesians 2:6 God said that He; ***Hath raised us up together, and made us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.***

When Christ sat down at God's right hand, it signified His work and labor was done and that His sacrifice is sufficient to forgive us of all sins. If God allowed us to sit down with Him in Heavenly places, what does this imply about us? There is no work for us to do, to get saved, or to stay saved. If there was work for us to do to gain or keep from losing our salvation, God would never allow us to sit down. We would still be standing and working, as far as salvation was concerned.

The fact that God has allowed us to sit down in Heavenly places, tells us there is no work to be done to keep from losing our salvation, and it tells us we are secure eternally in Christ.

THE PROMISE OF GOD

In John 10:27-29 Jesus said; ***My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.***

My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

This is a promise that God made to all those who belong to him. And once God makes a promise he must keep it for he cannot lie or go back on a promise. Num:23:19 says; ***God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?***

If God promised to give you eternal life, but later on took it away from you he would be lying. If God promised to give you eternal life He is obligated to give it to you and never take it back from you again. If he could take it away from you, it was never eternal life to begin with. Eternal life is just that, it is eternal. If you have it 10 years and God took it back it is not eternal life.

OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AS SONS

Hebrews 12:5-8 says: ***And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.***

Our relationship with God is that of sons. He is our Father and we are his sons. If you have a son or daughter and they disobey you, what do you do with them? Do you disown them? Do you stick them in a fire and burn them to death? No! You chastise them.

What does God do with his sons when they disobey him? Does he disown them? Does he stick them in hell fire and burn them forever? No! He chastens them. What would you think of a father who would take his own son and stick him in a fire and burn him to death? Would you say he was a kind, gentile, compassionate and loving father? No! He would be an evil monster. Would you do that to your son or daughter? No! But yet there are people who say that God will do that with his sons. These heretics who teach you that you can lose your salvation are actually saying that God will cast his own children into the fires of hell to burn forever. What kind of a God is that?

THE NEW BIRTH

John 3:3-7 says: ***Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of***

God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

Once your child is born can he become unborn? It is impossible for a child to become unborn once he is born into this world. It is ridiculous to even think that a child can become unborn, but yet those who teach you can lose your salvation are saying in effect that a Christian can become unborn after he is born again. It is clinical insanity to think a child can become unborn and it is religious insanity to think a believer can become unborn after he is born again into God's family.

In closing, let it be clear that God did not give us eternal security as a license to live in sin. He did not give us eternal security to give us permission to be carnal and lazy. Eternal security does not mean God will not chastise you for sin either. He chastens every son He receives (See Heb.12:5-11, 1 Cor.3:17, 5:1-5, 11:29-32). Also, even though we cannot lose our salvation there are certain blessings, rewards and crowns we can lose because of sin, apostasy, carnal behavior and laziness.

Rewards - Col.2:18, 3:24-25, 1 Cor.3:11-15

Reigning with Christ -2 Tim.2:12

Crowns - 2 Tim.4:8

Inheritance - 1 Cor.6:9-11

The Practical Influence Of Eternal Security In Our Personal Lives

Sound doctrine always has a practical influence on the personal lives of those who believe it. Sound doctrine changes people's lives for the better. It makes them better Christians and this is true of the doctrine of Eternal Security.

(1) Eternal Security Allows Us To Serve God Without Fear Of Losing Salvation

He gave us eternal security to take the burden of keeping and maintaining our salvation off our shoulders, so we can serve Him without fear of losing our salvation. It's not easy to serve God in this present evil world and it would be much harder to serve Him if we had to worry about losing our

salvation. But that's one burden we don't have to carry, for God took care of that by giving us eternal security. Our salvation is completely in His hands. We don't have to worry about keeping it, or maintaining it. We can get on with serving Him without fear of losing it.

Paul said in Philippians 1:6; ***Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Christ.*** God's work is to keep you saved, till the day of Christ. Your work is to serve Him, live for Him and hold forth the word of life, until the day of Christ. (Philp.2:16)

(2) Eternal Security Prevents You From Frustrating The Grace Of God

In Galatians 2:21 Paul wrote; ***I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.***

The word "*frustrate*" means; to defeat, to disappoint, to bring to nothing, to nullify, and to render of no effect. The works of the Law and the works of the flesh, religious or moral, frustrate and nullify the Grace of God. In true salvation by Grace, salvation is *received and kept* by Grace through faith, without works. If you try to *gain salvation* by works of any kind you frustrate the Grace of God. If you try to *keep saved* by works of any kind, you also frustrate the Grace of God. A man who teaches that you can lose your salvation frustrates the Grace of God just as much as the man who teaches works to gain salvation.

One reason God gave us eternal security is to prevent us from frustrating his Grace. Eternal security eliminates the need to work to keep yourself saved. If you have eternal security and know it, you will not frustrate the Grace of God by working to keep yourself saved. If you have eternal security you may work, but not to keep yourself saved. (See Eph.2:10)

(3) Eternal Security Keeps You From Making The Cross Of Christ of None Effect

According to Galatians 2:21, works not only frustrate the grace of God, but they make the cross of Christ of none effect.

For God to save you and give you eternal life all of your sins must be paid for in full. When Christ died he died for all of your sins, past, present and future. He died for all of your sins without exception and distinction. If you could be saved by another way than by the cross, Christ died in vain. His death was useless and unnecessary if you could gain salvation and keep salvation by another way. If you could gain or keep salvation by keeping the law, Christ died in vain. If you could gain or keep salvation by any kind of works, Christ died in vain. Why would God subject His only begotten Son to

such misery, agony and such a horrible death, if you could get saved and stay saved by another way? Therefore, any man who says you can get saved or stay saved by works is saying in effect that Christ died in vain.

Eternal security will keep you from such blasphemy because eternal security is based upon the death of Christ. We are eternally secure because Christ died for all our sins without exception and distinction. Because He died for them all, they are all paid for. ***The sins that Christ paid for are the ones He died for.*** If He died for them all, then they are all paid for. If they are all paid for, *what sin can God send you to hell for now?* Receiving and keeping salvation is based upon the death and shed blood of Christ. He not only died to save you, but He died to keep you saved. But if you could be saved by another way, He died in vain. Believers who have eternal security know it's Christ's works that saved them, and it's Christ work that keeps them saved, and you will not find them working to keep themselves saved.

(4) Eternal Security Prevents Us From Boasting

Ephesians 2:8-9 says; ***For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.***

One reason God *saved you and keeps you saved* by grace and not by works it to keep you from boasting in your salvation. For by grace ***are ye saved*** lest any man should boast. For by grace are ye ***kept saved*** lest any man should boast. It is not of works to get saved, lest any man should boast and it is not of works to keep saved, lest any man should boast. God took the works out of *receiving and keeping* salvation, lest any man should boast.

We are saved and secured by the grace of God, which leaves us no room to boast. How can we boast in something that was given to us as a gift? And how can we boast in something that we don't have to work to keep? Salvation by Grace keeps us from boasting in getting saved by works. Eternal security keeps us from boasting in keeping our salvation by works. We can take no credit in receiving or keeping our salvation because it is all by grace and not of works and that's one of the reasons why it is hated and despised by the religious system. Man by nature is proud of the flesh and does not like to be told that his works don't count and are no good. Religion is based upon the works of the flesh. And when you take works out of receiving and keeping salvation, you destroy most religious systems. That's

why they hate the Gospel of Grace and preach another gospel, and why they hate eternal security and teach you can lose it. Their gospel always has an element of works in it to please their flesh. The so-called salvation they preach must be carefully maintained by works to satisfy their carnal flesh.

The Gospel of Grace and eternal security eliminates all boasting. We can take no credit in receiving it or keeping it because they are both by grace through faith, without works.

(5) Eternal Security Keeps Us From Falling From Grace

Galatians 5:4 says; ***Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.***

We are saved by the principle of grace. That principle says we are saved by grace without works and we are kept saved by grace through faith without works. If you deny either one of these principles you are fallen from grace. To fall from grace means you deny that grace is the principle by which we are saved and kept saved. It is to apostatize from the principle of grace.

There are two ways in which men fall from grace. A lost man falls from grace when he tries to gain salvation by works. A saved man falls from grace when he tries to stay saved by works. Catholics and Cambelites are fallen from grace because they do not believe we are saved by grace through faith only. The Galatians were fallen from grace because they didn't believe we are *kept saved* by grace through faith only. They were led to believe they had to work to keep from losing their salvation. (See Gal.3:3)

If you have eternal security and know it, you will not fall from grace like the Galatians, for you know that in Christ you are complete and nothing can add to or take away from it. (See Col.2:10) People who get caught up in a system of works trying to keep something they can't lose are either lost or very deceived. Paul called the Galatians "foolish" (See Gal.3:1) ***It is foolish to work for something that is a gift and it's foolish to work to keep something you can't lose.***

The Galatians were fallen from grace because they were ignorant. Most lost people are fallen from grace because they are blinded by the Devil, the god of this world. (See 2 Cor.4:3-4).

(6) Eternal Security Magnifies The Grace Of God

In Ephesians 2:6-7 Paul wrote; ***And hath raised us up together, and***

made us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

In the ages to come, God will shew the exceeding riches of His grace in those He saves by grace. God saved you by grace and keeps you saved by grace so that He gets all the credit and glory in the ages to come.

If works played any part in receiving or keeping salvation, God would not get all the credit and glory. If works played any part in your salvation, you would have reason to boast, and if you could boast, God's grace would be belittled. God saved you by the *Gospel of Grace* lest you boast in gaining salvation by works. God gave you *eternal security* lest you boast in keeping your salvation by works. Your salvation is totally by the Grace of God, so that if anyone gets the credit, it will be God and His grace.

(7) Eternal Security Humbles The Flesh

Paul writing about himself in Romans 7 said; ***For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.*** (Rom.7:14-20)

Paul paints a picture of the struggle every Christian has with the flesh in these verses. Our flesh is so corrupt that God had to give us eternal security to keep us from losing our salvation. If it were up to you and your self efforts to keep and maintain your salvation, you would lose it within 24 hours. The greatest Christian who ever lived said; ***For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.***

Our flesh is so corrupt that it will not obey God and cannot please God. With flesh like that who could possibly keep and maintain their own salvation? We are so bad and corrupt God had to give us eternal security, for if He didn't, His Kingdom would be unpopulated in the ages to come.

Eternal security is not given to good people, it's given to people who are so corrupt they could not possibly keep and maintain their salvation on their own. This is why it is such a hated doctrine, for when you claim eternal security, you are admitting you are corrupt. Those who hate the doctrine do not believe they are corrupt. They believe they can do what Paul said he could not do. They believe the flesh is good and capable of gaining and keeping salvation. Eternal security is an enigma to self righteous people,

but it is a blessing to sinners like Paul and us.