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The Faith Of Christ Versus The Works Of The Law

Galatians 2:16: Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

In this verse is found the two ways that men sought to be justified in the past and the present. One way is the right way and the other is the wrong way. The right way is the faith of Christ and the wrong way is the works of the law.

The faith of Christ and the works of the law are two different principles by which men seek to be justified. The faith of Christ is based upon the principal of faith without works. The works of the law is based upon the principle of works. They are diametrically opposed to one another. The true way of justification is by the faith of Christ preached by men like Paul. The works of the law is the false way that was preached by the Pharisees in the past and false teachers today.

At one time in their life the Galatians were persuaded to be justified by the faith of Christ preached by Paul. But, later the Pharisees crept into their lives and into the church of Galatia and persuaded them that faith in Christ was not sufficient to be saved, but they had to also keep the law and be circumcised to be saved.

By comparing the faith of Christ with the works of the law you will see how foolish they were for turning away from the faith of Christ back to the works of the law.

The Faith of Christ

The gospel that Paul preached was based upon the faith of Christ. They are so closely related it appears they are the same. According to the gospel of grace and the faith of Christ Paul preached;

*The death and resurrection of Christ paid for our sins in full. His death and resurrection provided a complete and total atonement for all of our sins.

*The sacrificial death and resurrection of Christ satisfied all of God's wrath against our sins. Every ounce of God's wrath and hatred and vengeance against our sins was poured out on Christ on the cross.

*The moment a person believes the gospel of grace all of the merits of Christ's sacrificial death on the cross are put to his account. Anything and everything Christ accomplished on the cross becomes the present possession of the person who believes the gospel of grace. The person who has been saved by grace can with complete confidence say; I know I am saved, present tense.

*The salvation of the gospel of grace is a gift of God and not a reward earned by works, lest any man should boast. It is free and is not conditional upon the works of the person who believes the gospel. In true salvation by grace works, good or bad, have no part in receiving salvation or keeping salvation.

*In salvation by grace, God is the one who did all the works necessary to save us and keep us saved. All of the work he did to save us and keep us saved is imputed to the believer by God himself, by faith alone the moment he believes the gospel and not by the hands of men or by works.

*In salvation by grace God's grace is freely given to all who believe the moment they believe. Grace is not distributed to believers by the hands of men or because of the works of men. Grace is freely given by God himself at the moment of conversion.

*In salvation by grace all sins are forgiven and blotted out and remitted and remembered no more.

*In salvation by grace the believer is secured eternally because of the sacrificial death and resurrection of Christ. His security is not based upon any work he does in life, but because of Christ's death for him on the cross. His death not only saves us but secures us.

*In salvation by grace the believer is justified and cleared from the penalty of all his sins. This means he cannot be eternally condemned or damned to hell for his sins.

*In salvation by grace all charges against the believer are cancelled out by the cross. A believer cannot be charged and penalized forever for his sins, for all charges against him were imputed to Christ who in turn discharged them by his death.

This is the gospel Paul preached. This is the faith of Christ. This is the gospel the Galatians once believed but turned away from. This is why Paul called them foolish.

The Works Of The Law

The works of the law are the opposite of the faith of Christ. The works of the law are the works the Pharisees taught men to do to be justified in the Acts period. Everything Paul says about the works of the law can also apply to any church today who teaches works for salvation. Any church today, who teaches works to be saved, is no different than the Pharisees who taught men to keep the law to be saved in the Acts period.

*The death and resurrection of Christ did not provide a complete and total atonement for our sins. But we must also atone for our sins by the works we do in this life.

*The sacrificial death and resurrection of Christ did not satisfy all of God's wrath against our sins. God is not satisfied unless we do some type of work the church prescribes for us to do.

*The moment a person believes the gospel all of the merits of Christ's sacrificial death on the cross are not put his account. According to them, we must come to the church to receive the merits of Christ's death. The church and its priests and leaders are the ones God entrusted the merits of Christ's death and they and they alone have the power to distribute them to men.

*Salvation is not a gift of God, but a reward earned by a life time of works. It is not free, for it is conditional upon the works the church prescribes for men to do after they believe. According to them, works have as much a part of salvation as faith. Faith is not enough. You cannot be saved without works or kept saved without works.

*God did not do all the works necessary to save us and keep us saved. We must participate in our salvation by doing the works the church gives us to do. God did his part and now we must do ours and if we do, we will be finally saved, if we continue to do the works we are supposed to do to the end of our life. In other words, all of the work Christ did to save us is not imputed to us by faith alone the moment we believe the gospel. He did his part and now we must do ours. It's like salvation on the installment plan. Christ made the down payment and we must pay the notes.

*The grace of God is not freely given to all who believe the moment they believe. Grace is distributed to men by the church and its priests and leaders. God deposited his grace to them and they alone have the power to distribute his grace to the faithful for their salvation.

*All sins are not forgiven or blotted out and remitted the moment a person believes the gospel. It's the church and its priests and leaders who forgive sins. You must come to them for forgiveness and absolution.

*The believer is not secured eternally because of the sacrificial death and resurrection of Christ. His security is based upon the works he does in his life. As long as he is faithful and does the works the church tells him to do, he is secure. It's a conditional security based upon the works he does in his life, till the end of his life. Hence, no one can know for sure they are saved until they get to the end of their life.

*The believer is not justified and cleared from the penalty of all his sins. He can be eternally condemned or damned to hell for his sins if he does not follow the laws and ordinances of the church or receive the sacraments of the church.

*All charges against the believer are not cancelled out by the cross the moment he believes the gospel. A believer can be charged and penalized to hell forever for his sins. In other words, a man who professes to believe in Christ can be cast into hell later if he does not do the works the church gives him to do.

This is the cursed gospel of Galatians 1:8. This is the other gospel the Galatians were duped into believing after they believed the gospel of grace.

They swapped a gospel of grace for a gospel of works.

- *A gospel of unconditional security, for a gospel of conditional security.
- *A gospel of free salvation, for a gospel of works salvation.
- *A gospel that forgives all sins once for all time, for a gospel that does not.
- *A gospel where God did all the works necessary to save us, for a gospel that depends upon our works to save us.
- *A gospel that saves us now and forever, for a gospel that may save us later if we are faithful to the laws, rules ordinances of the church till the end of our life.
- *A gospel that frees us from bondage, for a gospel that puts men under bondage.
- *A gospel where Christ forgives all of our sins once for all time at the moment of conversion, for a gospel where forgiveness is dispensed out over a life time by self appointed churches, priests, preachers, and popes.
- *A gospel that delivers all who believe from the wrath of God, for a gospel that holds the wrath of God above the heads of people as a constant threat.

Just as the Galatians turned away from the gospel of grace to a false gospel of works in the past, there are many “professing Christians” who are doing the same thing today. False teachers, the cults and Satan’s ministers in both Catholic and so called Protestant churches are persuading 1000’s of people today to believe the same lie the Pharisees led the Galatians to believe; that faith alone in Christ and in his sacrificial death and resurrection is not enough to be saved. Paul fought these false teachers throughout his ministry and warned us about them. In 2 Corinthians 11:4 he warned us; **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.**

In Paul’s day and today there are men who preach a counterfeit jesus, a counterfeit gospel and a counterfeit spirit. He identifies them in verses 11:13-15. **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.**

Satan has ministers throughout the religious system of this world and the way we detect them is by the gospel they preach. Paul holds up his gospel

as the standard to judge all gospels by in Galatians 1:8 and he says that if a man does not preach it he is cursed of God. He wrote: **But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.**

Paul preached the gospel of grace and anyone who preaches a gospel that contradicts it is accursed of God, no matter how rich his church is or how many members it has or how long it has been in existence.

THE FAITH THAT SAVES

Faith is absolutely necessary for salvation, for without faith, it is impossible to please God. ***But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Hebrews 11:6.***

But the faith it takes to get saved is not just any kind of faith. A person could have faith and still be lost, if he didn't have **saving faith**. What is saving faith? Saving faith is defined in Romans 4:5 which says: ***But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.***

According to this verse a person who has saving faith is one who does not work to be saved, but who believes only to be saved. The faith that saves is a faith free from works. True saving faith is **total faith** in Christ alone for salvation. There are many people who have faith in Christ, but they are not saved because they don't have **total faith** in Christ alone to save them. They have faith in Christ, but they also have faith in *other things* in addition to Christ to save them. Their faith is divided between Christ and other things. Some have faith in Christ, but they also have faith in such things as water baptism, keeping the commandments, living a good life, being faithful to their church, doing good deeds of kindness, or giving to the poor. What's wrong with these things? Nothing, but if your faith is in these things to save you then you do not have saving faith.

When it comes to faith we must have the right kind of faith, we must have the faith that saves. The faith that saves is not a divided faith. It's not faith in Christ plus good works that saves; its faith in Christ alone that saves.

Saving faith is total and complete faith in Christ alone to save us and keep us saved.

In Romans chapter four God gives us an example of saving faith. The faith that saves is the kind of faith Abraham had. Romans 4:2-3 says: ***For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.***

Abraham was justified and declared righteous by simply believing what God said. In Genesis 15 God made a promise to Abraham about his children and Abraham believed what God said and God declared him righteous because he did. Abraham is important to us today because God has singled him out as an example of true saving faith. In Romans 4:23-25 Paul wrote; ***Now it was not written for his (Abraham) sake alone, that it (Righteousness) was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.***

What was written about Abraham in time past applies to us today for we are justified the same way as Abraham. Note these similarities:

As Abraham was justified by faith alone without works, so are we.

As he was justified without the Law, so are we.

As he was justified without water baptism or keeping the laws of some church, so are we.

As he was justified without taking one sacrament or joining a church, so are we.

The message we believe is different, but the principle is the same. The principle is faith alone in what God has said to us about his Son. God said he delivered Christ up on the Cross for our offenses and sins and raised him again for our justification. If any man will believe this and this alone, God will save him. True saving faith is total faith in Christ alone for

salvation, pardon and eternal life. It's when you place the salvation of your soul into his hands and take your hands off of it.

Read the following verses and notice what they say about faith and about works when it comes to being saved.

Romans 4:5 says; ***But to him that worketh not but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.***

Titus 3:5 says; ***Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.***

2 Timothy 1:9 says; ***God hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.***

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

Galatians 2:16 says; ***Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.***

Romans 4:6 says; ***David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works.***

Acts 16:31 says; ***Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.***

When it comes to salvation the Bible is crystal clear; faith is the one and only requirement to be saved today. There is no work you must do and there is no sacrifice you must make to be saved. God did the work, you do the believing. God made the sacrifice, just believe on the sacrifice.

The Genuine Gift of Miracles

1Co 12:7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

1Co 12:10 To another the working of miracles.

The gift of miracles includes the gift of healing, but it goes beyond healing. A miracle is something obviously supernatural that defies the laws of nature and science. Miracles are not strange happenings or coincidences, sensational events or natural anomalies. Miracles are wrought by God through human agents and they are so extraordinary that they cannot be explained or duplicated.

Miracles in the Bible are also called signs and wonders. For example when God gave Moses and Aaron the gift of miracles they worked signs and wonders in the land of Egypt. When you see what they did you will understand what a real genuine miracle was.

The Book of Exodus

Exodus Chapters:

7 Aaron cast his rod down and it became a serpent. When the sorcerers of Egypt did likewise with their rods, Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.

7 Moses smote the waters of Egypt the streams, rivers, ponds and pools of water became blood.

8 Aaron stretched out his rod over the waters of Egypt frogs came up and covered the land and houses of Egypt.

8 Aaron stretched out his rod and smote the dust of the earth in Egypt all the dust in Egypt became lice and covered man and beast.

8 God sent a swarm of flies to cover the land of Egypt and it says the land was corrupted by the swarm of flies.

9 God smote all the cattle in the land of Egypt.

9 Moses took ashes from a furnace and sprinkled it toward heaven and it became boils which covered the bodies of the Egyptians.

9 Moses stretched out his rod toward heaven and God sent fire and hail upon the land of Egypt which killed and destroyed both man and beast and brake every tree in the field.

10 Moses stretched his rod over the land of Egypt and locusts covered the land of Egypt so that the land was darkened and they ate every green thing in the trees and herbs in the field.

10 Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven and a thick darkness covered the land of Egypt that could be felt. It was so dark that light could not penetrate it.

14 Moses stretched out his rod over the Red Sea and it opened up and nearly a million Israelites walked across on dry ground.

14 When the Egyptians followed after the Israelites Moses stretched out his hand over the sea the waters returned and drowned the Egyptians.

After the Israelites saw the signs and wonders in Egypt and the miracle at the Red Sea the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and his servant Moses.

15 After Israel traveled three days into the wilderness they came to the waters of Marah, but the water was too bitter to drink. Moses took a tree and cast it into the water and it became sweet.

16 When the Israelites became hungry God sent manna from heaven in the morning and quails to eat in the evening and did so for 40 years. They had bread and meat to eat every day.

17 When there was no water to drink Moses took his rod and smote a rock and water came out of the rock for the whole congregation to drink.

In Numbers 16 Moses spoke the word and the earth opened up and swallowed a group of people who had rebelled and conspired against him.

In Numbers 21 when the Jews were bitten by fiery serpents and died, Moses made a fiery serpent of brass, put it on a pole and all who looked upon it were healed.

In Joshua 10 Joshua asked the Lord to cause the sun and the moon to stand still in the heavens so that he would have enough light to defeat his enemies which came to pass. They stood still for almost a whole day.

Elijah and Elisha

1 Kings Chapter:

17 Elijah prayed and it did not rain or even dew for 3 years in the land of Israel which caused a famine.

17 God sent Elijah bread and flesh in the morning and evening to eat with ravens during the famine.

17 Elijah caused a handful of flour and a very little oil to last for over a year for a widow woman and her son during the famine.

17 Elijah raised a boy from the dead.

18 In a contest with the prophets of Baal Elijah called down fire from heaven to consume an altar of sacrifice satuated with water he had built.

18 Elijah caused it to rain again after three years of famine.

19 Elijah fled from Jezebel and God fed and gave him water to drink by an angel from heaven.

2 Kings Chapter:

1 Elijah called down fire from heaven twice to destroy his enemies.

2 Elijah was caught up into heaven in a whirlwind without dying.

After he left, Elisha took his place and he worked many more miracles than Elijah because he was given a double portion of his spirit.

2 He parted the waters of the Jordan River and walked across on dry ground.

2 He healed the waters in Jericho by casting salt into it.

2 He pronounced a curse on forty two children who mocked and blasphemed him and two she bears came out of the woods and killed them.

3 He filled the barren dry wilderness of Edom with water.

4 He caused a number of empty vessels to be filled with oil which a woman took and paid off a debt to keep her sons from becoming slaves.

4 He caused a woman who was barren to conceive and have a child.

4 When the child died Elisha raised him from the dead.

4 There was a famine in the land and the prophets were eating pottage out of a pot and it became contaminated and they could not eat it. Elisha sprinkled a little meal in the pot and it was cleansed and then a man came into the place where they were eating and brought them an abundance of food for them to eat.

5 He cleansed Naaman the leper by telling him to dip 7 times in the river Jordan.

5 He pronounced a curse of leprosy to come on Gehazi his servant for lying and being covetous.

6 One of the prophets dropped a borrowed ax head into the water and Elisha cast a stick into the water and the ax head swam to the shore.

6 Elisha smote the Syrians with blindness.

7 There was a great famine in Samaria so bad that people were turned into cannibals to survive. By the word of Elisha the famine ended in one night.

7 Elisha pronounced a curse of death on a man and he died because he mocked a prophecy that Elisha made.

9 Elisha pronounced a curse of death on Jezebel and described exactly how she would die and it came to pass.

Christ and the Apostles

Throughout his ministry Christ worked major miracles and so did the apostles. They healed multitudes of sick people, gave sight to many blind people, caused the deaf to hear, the lame to walk, and raised people from the dead.

In John 2, Jesus turned water into wine.

In John 6, Jesus fed 5000 people with five loafs of bread and two small fishes.

In John 6, Jesus walked on water.

In Mark 4, He caused a storm of wind and waves to cease immediately.

In Mark 8, Jesus fed 4000 people with 7 loaves of bread and few small fishes.

In Mark 11, Jesus pronounced a curse on a fig tree and it died immediately.

In Acts 28, when bitten by a deadly viper Paul shook it off into a fire without being harmed.

In Acts 5, the apostles escaped prison without opening the prison doors.

Most of the miracles in the Bible happened in three relatively brief periods of Bible history. In the days of Moses and Joshua, during the ministries of Elijah and Elisha, and in the time of Christ and the apostles. None of these periods lasted more than a hundred years.

All three periods of miracles were times when God gave his written revelation, the scriptures to men. They were given when Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible which contain the law. Elijah and Elisha introduced the prophets. And when the apostles wrote the New Testament.

The purpose of the miracles was to convince the people in these three periods of time to believe what God was saying through these men and to convince them to believe what was being written.

The knowledge that God gave to Moses and the apostles and prophets by divine revelation has been committed to writing. Once they were committed to writing the revelations ended and so did the need for miracles to convince people to believe.

Today, everything God wants you to know is written in the Bible. Every mystery has been revealed and written down in the word of God. Every doctrine that God wants you to believe has been revealed and written down in the Bible. God is not revealing any new mysteries or doctrines by divine revelation today for the Bible is complete. God does not and will not give you a miracle to convince you to believe him. You must believe what he says by faith and not by sight.

In this article you have seen a sample of the miracles of the Bible. Comparing them with what you see and hear on charismatic TV and radio what do you think? What we see today is a scam and a joke compared to the real thing found in the Bible. Bank tellers are taught to spot counterfeit money by being educated in what true money looks and feels like. In the same way once you see what real miracles look like it is easy to spot the counterfeit. What we see and hear today are counterfeit miracles designed for one thing; to relive you of your hard earned cash. Don't let these religious con artists fool you!

THE GOSPEL OF THE CIRCUMCISION AND UNCIRCUMCISION IS THE SAME

Galatians 2:7-9 says: ***But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.***

Many extreme dispensationalists teach that Peter and Paul preached two different and opposing gospels at the same time. They say Peter preached salvation by works and warned believers they could lose their salvation, whereas they say Paul preached salvation by grace and eternal security. The verse they use to "prove" Peter and Paul preached two different and opposing gospels is Galatians 2:7 which says, Paul preached the gospel of the uncircumcision and Peter preached the gospel of the circumcision. But does this prove their gospels were different? What saith the scriptures?

When Paul preached the gospel of the uncircumcision to the gentiles what did he preach? He wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4: For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.

When Peter preached the gospel of the circumcision to the Jews what did he preach? He wrote in 1 Peter 3:18: For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

When Paul preached the gospel of the uncircumcision to the gentiles what did he preach? He wrote in Ephesians 2:8-9: 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.

When Peter preached the gospel of the circumcision to the Jews what did he preach? He said in Acts 15:10-11: Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

When Paul preached the gospel of the uncircumcision to the gentiles what did he preach? In Colossians 1:14 he wrote: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

When Peter preached the gospel of the circumcision to the Jews what did he preach? He said in 1 Peter 1:18-19: Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your

vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

It is obvious from these scriptures that their message was identical. They both preached the sacrificial death and resurrection of Christ for sins and sinners. They both preached salvation by grace through faith without works. They both preached redemption by the blood of Christ.

Their message was the same; it was the audience that was different. The background of the gentiles Paul preached to was totally different from the Jews Peter was sent to. Paul preached to gentiles who did not know the true and living God and knew nothing of Christ and who worshipped idols most of their lives. See Romans 15:20-21.

The Jews Peter preached to came from a very religious background. They spent most of their lives under the Law of Moses observing laws and ordinances and offering animal sacrifices for sin. But, even though their backgrounds were different, they believed the same gospel as you can plainly see in the verses mentioned above.

The Gospel Of The Grace Of God

Galatians 1:15 says that God separated Paul at birth; ***But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace.*** When God saved Paul He said; ***he is a chosen vessel unto me.*** (Acts 9:15) In 2 Timothy 1:9 Paul said that God had given him; ***a holy calling before the world began.***

These verses and others tell us that Paul was a special person with a special calling. But what makes Paul so special? Why did God single him out from all others? Why did God choose him before he was born and even before the foundation of the world? It's not the man himself that is special, it's the *message* God gave the man that is special. What was so special about the message God gave to Paul? In Galatians 1:11-12 Paul wrote; ***But I certify you brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*** The Gospel Paul preached was given to him by divine revelation because according to Romans 16:25 it was a mystery; ***kept secret since the world began.*** The Gospel Paul

preached is called ***The Gospel of the Grace of God.*** (See Acts 20:24) In this article you will see the blessings and benefits of the Gospel of the Grace of God.

The Blessings And Benefits Of The Gospel Of Grace

(1) The Gospel Of Grace Declares That Men Are Saved By Faith Alone In The Death And Shed Blood Of Christ.

In the Gospel of Grace God took the works out of salvation and made faith the only requirement to be saved.

Romans 4:5 says; ***But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.***

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.***

(2) The Gospel of Grace Declares God Now Forgives All Sins And Sinners.

This means there are no unpardonable sins or sinners today. There is no sin so evil or sinner so vile that God cannot forgive today.

Acts 13:38-39 says; ***Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man (Christ) 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.***

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.***

(3) The Gospel Of Grace Declares That Salvation Is A Present Possession, Not A Future Attainment.

Sinners are saved the moment they believe the Gospel of Grace.

2 Timothy 1:9 says; ***Who hath saved us and called us with a holy calling.***

Ephesians 2:8 says; ***For by grace are ye saved.***

Titus 3:5 says; ***Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.***

Romans 5:11 says; ***We have now received the atonement.***

Colossians 1:13 says; ***Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son. In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.***

Romans 5:9 says; ***Being now justified by his blood.***

In Paul's epistles salvation is spoken of in the ***past and present tense*** for according to the Gospel of Grace sinners are saved the moment they believe. Salvation is a gift of God we now possess, not a future reward earned by works.

(4) The Gospel Of Grace Declares That Believers Are Set Free From The Law Of Moses Upon Believing.

Romans 7:4, 6 says; ***Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ. But now we are delivered from the law.***

Romans 6:14 says; ***For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.***

We are free from Moses' Law, but not the Law of God. The Law of God is the moral laws of the 10 commandments. (See Romans 13:8-10) The law we are set free from is described by Paul in the book of Hebrews. It is the religious laws, rituals and ordinances God gave to Israel to observe in the

Old Testament. We are also free from the curse of the broken law which is death. See Galatians 3:13

(5) The Gospel Of Grace Declares That All Believers Are Unconditionally And Eternally Secure In Christ.

According the Gospel of Grace;

(a) Those who are saved by grace through faith without works are kept saved by grace through faith without works.

(b) God forgives all sins without exception and distinction; past, present, and future.

(c) We cannot be condemned by the law for we are set free from the Law.

(d) Salvation is a gift received by faith not a reward earned by works.

(e) God does not impute sin to the believers account.

For these reasons and more those who believe the Gospel of Grace are eternally secure in Christ.

Ephesians 1:13 says; ***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.***

Ephesians 4:30 says; ***Ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.***

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.***

Philippians 1:6 says; ***He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.***

(6) According To The Gospel Of Grace There Is No Advantage In Being A Jew Or Disadvantage In Being A Gentile

In time past God gave the Jews the Law of Moses and circumcision. These two things gave them many dispensational and spiritual advantages above the Gentiles. It also separated them from the Gentiles and forbade them from keeping company with them. (See Acts 10:28) The only way a Gentile could be blessed or saved in time past was by becoming a Jewish proselyte and blessing the seed of Abraham, the Jews. (See Genesis

12:1-4) But the Gospel of Grace now declares that the law has been abolished (See Ephesians 2:14-16); circumcision is of no profit (See Galatians.5:6); and that Israel has been cast away (See Romans 11:15) Therefore, there is no longer any advantage in being a Jew or disadvantage in being a Gentile. The Gospel of Grace has put Jews and Gentiles on equal footing. A Gentile does not have to become a Jewish proselyte to be saved and a Jew does not have to keep the law to be saved. God saves them both the same way; by grace through faith without works. (Ephesians 2:8-9) And once they are saved they are placed into the church which is Christ's body and in the church there is total equality between Jews and Gentiles. (See Ephesians chapters 2, 3)

Ephesians 2:14-16 says; ***For he is our peace, who hath made both (Jew and Gentile) one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us. Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace. And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.***

These are the things Paul preached when he preached the Gospel of Grace. He also said that if any man preaches a gospel different from the Gospel of Grace he is accursed of God according to Galatians 1:8-9.

The Identity of the Antichrist (Part 1)

Throughout my life I have heard preachers and “quote” Bible scholars try to convince people to believe the antichrist comes out of the USA. I have heard them say Henry Kissinger was the antichrist and then it was Jimmy Carter and then Ronald Reagan and then it was George Bush and now Barak Hussein Obama.

There were many preachers during WW2 who said the antichrist was a German: Adolf Hitler and others said he was an Italian: Mussolini. Others pointed to Communist Russia and said Joseph Stalin was the antichrist. Today, some say the antichrist will come to power in the European Union

and they say that Prince Charles is the antichrist. Many preachers and book sellers throughout history have taught that the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church is the antichrist. Most of the reformers believed and taught this. Most fundamentalists believe this today.

Let me ask you; do you know the nationality of the antichrist? Do you know what nation he will rise to power in? You should, because the scriptures are amazingly clear as to who this man is and what nation he will come to power in. It is so clear and simple that you have to wonder if the devil has not blinded people's minds to keep them from seeing what nation the antichrist will come from.

Micah 5

Verse 2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting.

This is a prophecy of the birth of Jesus Christ. It shows us where he would be born 100's of years before he was born and the fact that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God for it says he is from old from everlasting. It also shows us that he will one day rule over the house of Israel which is a reference to his second coming. (Both comings in one verse)

4 And he (Christ) shall stand and feed in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God

5 And this *man* (Christ) shall be the peace, when the Assyrian (antichrist) shall come into our land: and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men.

6 And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof: thus shall he deliver *us* from the Assyrian, when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders.

This is a future prophecy of an Assyrian who will attack the land of Israel and tread down their land and palaces, but when he does Jesus Christ will fight against him and deliver them from this Assyrian.

Who is this Assyrian? It's a prophecy of the antichrist that will attack Israel and persecute them as Micah prophesied. But what is important to note is what the antichrist is called in these verses. He is called the Assyrian. What does this tell us? The antichrist will come out of Assyria. What the Bible calls Assyria is what we call modern day Iraq.

Here in Micah 5 is a remarkable prophecy of the two main characters of the last days. Jesus Christ and the antichrist. Jesus Christ is God incarnate and the antichrist is the devil incarnate. What is interesting to note is their birth places are given 100's and 1000's of years before they were born. Jesus came from Bethlehem and the antichrist will come from Assyria. That is why he is called the Assyrian which is modern day Iraq. Therefore, the antichrist will come out of modern day Iraq.

The Identity of the Antichrist Part Two

In the prophet Isaiah the antichrist is identified as an Assyrian in three chapters.

Isaiah 14

Isaiah 14:4 That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!

5 The LORD hath broken the staff of the wicked, *and* the sceptre of the rulers.

6 He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, *and* none hindereth.

This is a prophecy against a King of Babylon. Babylon is located in Assyria which is modern day Iraq. This King of Babylon will smite the people in his wrath and rule over many nations. But we see in these verses that God will smite him and bring an end to his kingdom and his city which is the city of Babylon. Some say this is past history of Nebuchadnezzar who was the King of Babylon, but it's not because if you keep reading you find out that this King of Babylon is the devil incarnate, the future antichrist.

9 Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet *thee* at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, *even* all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.

10 All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us?

11 Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, *and* the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.

12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

The king of Babylon in Isaiah 14:4 is none other than Lucifer according to Isaiah 14:12. Who is Lucifer? The devil according to Ezekiel 28. The king of Babylon who will smite the nations in his wrath is the devil incarnate. In fact he is the antichrist who will be the devil incarnate and the king of Babylon which is located in Assyria modern day Iraq. This is future prophecy of a future king of Babylon and is not the past history of Nebdz.

There is no doubt this is the antichrist.

13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

It says he will exalt his throne above the stars of God.

The antichrist will do just that: Dan. 8:9-10 says: ***And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land. And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them.***

It says he will sit upon the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north.

The temple of God in Jerusalem is located on the sides of the north called Mt. Moriah. And the antichrist will indeed sit in the temple of God in Jerusalem on the sides of the north according to Paul in 2 Thess. 2:4 and Daniel in 11:37. (Nebuchadnezzar never did that.)

14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

Paul refers to this text in In 2 Thessalonians 2:4 where he wrote: ***Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.***

15 Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

In Revelation 19:20 the antichrist will be cast into hell.

24 The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:

25 That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders.

In this verse the antichrist is called an Assyrian, showing us again his nationality. He will come from Assyria which is modern day Iraq. The antichrist will come to power in Iraq as the king of Babylon. But according to these verses the Lord will break him and tread him under his feet at the second coming of Christ.

In Isaiah 14 this King of Babylon is called Lucifer and Lucifer is the devil. This King of Babylon is not Nebuchadnezzar of past history. This is a future king of Babylon who is the devil incarnate in the flesh, the antichrist.

And he will say: *I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.* Also in Daniel 11:15 he is called the king of the north which is Babylon and according to Revelation 18 Babylon will be rebuilt in the future.

Isaiah 10

Isa. 10:12 Wherefore it shall come to pass, *that* when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks.

The Assyrian in this verse is the same one of chapter 14; it's the antichrist and he is called a king here as in chapter 14.

24 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD of hosts, O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian: he shall smite thee with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt.

26 And the LORD of hosts shall stir up a scourge for him according to the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb: and as his rod was upon the sea, so shall he lift it up after the manner of Egypt.

27 And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing.

20 And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.

21 The remnant shall return, *even* the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God.

22 For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, *yet* a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness.

What Isaiah describes in this chapter is the future destruction of the king of Assyria who is the antichrist. The Lord will smite him at the second coming of Christ and when he does it says: *The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God. For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return.*

This return of a remnant of Jews will be permanent; they will never be driven out of the land again. Paul quotes these verses in Romans 9:27-29 and applies them to the remnant of Jews who will be saved from the Assyrian antichrist at the second coming of Christ.

Isaiah 30

30 And the LORD shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall shew the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of *his* anger,

and *with* the flame of a devouring fire, *with* scattering, and tempest, and hailstones.

31 For through the voice of the LORD shall the Assyrian be beaten down, *which* smote with a rod.

33 For Tophet *is* ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made *it* deep *and* large: the pile thereof *is* fire and much wood; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.

This is obviously a reference to the second coming of Christ in wrath, anger, fire, lightening, and hailstones just like John predicted in Revelation 16. In that day he will smite the Assyrian which he says smote them with a rod. The Assyrian is the antichrist of Isaiah 14, Isaiah 10 and Micah 5.

According to these verses there is a special place God has prepared to punish the antichrist with fire called Tophet in verse 33. The word means a place of burning. It's located in the valley of the sons of Hinnom southeast of Jerusalem where Israel offered human sacrifices to Moloch by fire in the Old Testament.

Nahum the Prophet prophesied of the antichrist and identifies him as an Assyrian as Isaiah and Micah

Nahum 3

18 Thy shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria: thy nobles shall dwell *in the dust*: thy people is scattered upon the mountains, and no man gathereth *them*.

19 *There is* no healing of thy bruise; thy wound is grievous: all that hear the bruit of thee shall clap the hands over thee: for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?

This is another among many verses in the prophets that tell us without a doubt that the antichrist will come out of Assyria and will be the future king of Babylon. Babylon is located in modern day Iraq and if you know anything about Bible history Babylon is the origin and source of all cults, false religions, heresies, idol worship, lies and Satanism. It is only fitting for the antichrist to be the king of such a vile wicked city.

This is why it is wrong to say that men like Kissinger, Hitler, Stalin, Obama and the Pope etc is the antichrist. People who say such things are not

serious students of prophecy. They read books about prophecy, but they don't read the prophets. If you read the prophets Micah, Isaiah and Nahum you can easily see the antichrist will come out of Assyria which is modern day Iraq.

The Lord's Supper

Taken from studies in 1 Corinthians 11:17-26

17 Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse.

When the church meets together it should be for the good of the members. Every service should in some way edify, comfort, teach, instruct, encourage and provoke the saints unto love and good works. We should be better off spiritually as a result of meeting together.

But, the church in Corinth met together for the worse instead of the better. They were not edified and encouraged or provoked unto love and good works. It was just the opposite, especially when it came to the Lord's Supper.

18 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.

If you walked into the church at Corinth you would not have seen unity among the members. You would have seen division. There were at least 4 schisms in the church of Corinth. It was a carnal church divided up into 4 groups. See 1 Cor. 1:10-12

They failed to see that the members of the church are not only members of Christ's body, but member's one of another. You would get the idea in Corinth that the church had four heads. Today it is even worse. There are 100's if not 1000's of divisions among the members of the body of Christ today.

19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

There were heresies in the church of Corinth such as denying the resurrection of the dead in chapter 15 and perverting the Lord's Supper in chapter 11 plus the rampant carnality throughout the church. Heresies always cause divisions. One side believes the truth and the other side opposes the truth by adding to it, subtracting from it or changing it. Heresies usually split the church. See Acts 20:29-30

The one good thing that comes out of heresies is that those who are approved of God and are true to the faith are made manifest. Truth wins out over error and those who believe the truth and are approved of God are made manifest to the church and those who oppose truth are also made manifest.

See 1 John 2:18-19

20 When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.

21 For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.

22 What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.

What the Corinthians called the Lord's Supper was not the Lord's Supper and bore no resemblance to it. They perverted it and turned it into a feast of gluttony and drunkenness.

*The Lord's Supper is a common meal where everyone partakes of it at the same time, as Christ and the apostles did in Matthew 26:26-30. But they were divided up into at least four different factions eating and drinking among themselves and excluded those who were not of their faction.

*The Lord's Supper is not a huge banquet or feast of food and drink. The only ingredients were a simple loaf of bread and a cup.

*The Lord's Supper is a solemn assembly where the death and resurrection of Christ are remembered and honored. It was not a party, feast or a banquet or celebration of the flesh.

They had turned the Lord's Supper into a feast of gluttony and drunkenness just like the feasts they had in the idol's temple they came out of. It appears that they incorporated into the Lord's Supper the same heathen practices they practiced in the idol's temple. They turned the Lord's Supper into the same kind of feast of gluttony and drunkenness they held when they worshipped idols. What they did when they worshipped idols they continued to do when they observed the Lord's Supper. That is why Paul said; this is not to eat the Lord's Supper.

(Many times when people get saved they carry over into their Christian life the same habits and practices and beliefs they had when they were lost.)

23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:

24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

Paul's description of the Lord's Supper bore no resemblance to what they called the Lord's Supper. It was the opposite of what they did. And they knew better, because he delivered it to them when he was with them in Acts 18. Therefore, they were without excuse.

*The Lord's Supper is a chance for all the members of the church to affirm their faith in the death and shed blood of Christ together publically. It is a collective testimony of our faith in Christ's death and shed blood to save us and keep us saved. As we confess with our mouth the Lord Jesus, we also confess the Lord Jesus when we partake of the bread and cup of the Lord's Supper.

*The Lord's Supper is a solemn remembrance of the price Christ paid to save us. God's people often forget it, but the Lord's Supper makes us remember it. That is why the word remembrance appears twice in the verses that define the Lord's Supper. It makes our minds focus on his death and shed blood. You cannot partake of the Lord's Supper without remembering and focusing on the awful price Christ paid to save us.

*The purpose of the Lord's Supper is to remind us that the cross of Christ is the power of God unto salvation. No one should ever think the Lord's Supper is necessary for salvation or plays any part in salvation. The purpose of the Lord's Supper is to remind us and the world that the death and shed blood of Christ is the power of God unto salvation. The Lord's Supper should direct our attention to Christ and not the bread and cup that symbolize him. Any so called supper that emphasizes the bread and cup instead of the Savior who is symbolized by the bread and cup, is not of the Lord. It is not the Lord's Supper, but the supper of man or the devil. See 1 Cor. 10:20-21

*The bread and cup of the Lord's Supper are symbols and not the substance of Christ's flesh and blood. This is obvious when you consider the first time the Lord's Supper was observed. It was observed by Christ and his apostles before he died. His body was not dead, but was alive and with them physically. His blood was not shed when they observed the Lord's Supper. The broken bread had to symbolize his broken body for his body was alive and seated next to them. The cup had to symbolize his blood, for it was not even shed. They were symbols and not the substance or actual body and blood of Christ. How could the apostles even think that by eating the bread they were actually eating Christ's body when his body was alive and seated next to them? How could they think they were actually drinking the blood of Christ when his blood was still flowing in his veins in his body seated next to them?

The bread of the Lord's Supper represents his broken body on the cross, but his body was then with them living and had yet to be broken. The cup represents his blood that was shed from his dead body, but his blood was still in his living body and had not been shed. And there is no greater absurdity than to imagine his "living body" there changed at once to a "dead body," and then the bread to be changed into that dead body, and that all the while the "living" body of Jesus was before them as the Catholics believe.

*The Lord's Supper is a perpetual memorial. He said observe it till he comes again, but it does not end at his coming. It will be observed in his coming kingdom. See Matt. 26:29

This refutes the idea of people who say the observance of the Lord's Supper was transitional or limited to the "Acts period" and observed by Jews only and has passed away. Paul did not say it has passed away for he said to observe it till the second coming of Christ and the Lord says he will observe it in his coming kingdom. If a person will not observe the Lord's Supper today what are they going to do in the coming kingdom of God when Jesus observes it? Are they going to ask him to be excused? Are they going to get up and walk out when Jesus observes it in the coming kingdom of God as I have seen them do today?

*The Lord's Supper is a memorial for those who Christ died and shed his blood for. If Christ's body was broken for all men and if his blood was shed for all men, then all men who believe this should observe the Lord's Supper for it is a remembrance of it. It's a supper for all sinners, Jew or gentiles, who have faith in the death and shed blood of Christ to save them. It's not a

“Jewish ordinance” as some say; it’s a sinner’s memorial of Christ’s body that was broken for them and his blood that was shed for them.

*The Lord’s Supper is a sign that a new dispensation has begun and the old dispensation has passed away.

See verse 25

When we partake of the Lord’s Supper we are saying in a figure that our sins have been forgiven by the blood of the New Testament and not the blood of the Old Testament. The New Testament took force when Christ the testator died (Heb. 9:16-17) and it is obvious it is in force today by the fact we are told to observe the supper of the New Testament which is the Lord’s Supper. Both Old and New Covenants have a supper. The Old Covenant supper was the Passover supper. The New Covenant supper is the Lord’s Supper. If God told us to observe the Lord’s Supper then it’s obvious the Old Covenant and its Passover supper have passed away and the New Covenant with its Lord’s Supper has taken its place. If the New Covenant has not taken force, why did God tell us to observe the supper of the New Covenant? If we do not partake of the blessings and promises of the New Covenant, why does God tell us to observe the Lord’s Supper which is the supper that calls to our minds the New Covenant that took force when Christ died? (See Hebrews 10:9-10)

Keep in mind also Paul was a minister of the New Covenant (2 Cor. 3:6) and as a minister he preached the blessings and promises of the New Covenant. We also partake of the blessings and benefits of the New Covenant according to Romans 15:27, Gal. 3:29 and Eph. 2:12-13. The greatest blessing of the New Covenant is the once for all sacrifice of Christ which the Lord’s Supper is a memorial and remembrance of. The New Covenant has many spiritual promises, but the Lord’s Supper draws our attention to just one and it’s the most important; the cross of Christ and the permanent forgiveness of sins by his death and shed blood.

*By partaking of the Lord’s Supper we preach the death, burial, resurrection and coming again of Christ. Paul said: ***ye do shew the Lord's death till he come***. The word shew is translated declare in Acts 17:23. It is also translated preach in Acts 17:3, 1 Cor. 9:14, Philp.1:16 and Col. 1:28.

When we partake of the Lord’s Supper we are shewing, preaching and declaring publically that we believe Christ died for us and the fact we are told to do it till he comes again, also says we believe he is coming again and if he is coming again after he died, that means we believe he was resurrected.

The Mystery Of The Church

In Ephesians 3:1-9 Paul wrote about a mystery pertaining to the church.

***For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,
If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is
given me to you-ward:***

***How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I
wrote afore in few words,***

***Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the
mystery of Christ)***

***Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it
is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;***

***That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and
partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:***

***Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of
God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.***

***Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given,
that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of
Christ;***

***And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which
from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all
things by Jesus Christ:***

Paul uses the word mystery twice in these verses. The church itself is not the mystery. There has always been a church throughout the Bible called the church of God that both Old and New Testament saints are members of. The mystery of the church concerns the gentile members of the church. When writing about the mystery in Ephesians 3 he mentions the word "gentiles" in verses 1, 6, and 8 for the mystery pertains to them.

The gentiles Paul writes about are those saved under his ministry and in chapter 2 he shows us what kind of gentiles they were. There is more than one kind of gentile in the Bible and when you see what kind these gentiles were, it will help you to understand the mystery of the church.

In Ephesians 2:11-12 he wrote:

Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

The mystery of the church pertains to uncircumcised gentiles who were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. Being aliens of Israel they were without Christ, strangers from the covenants of promise, without hope and without God in the world.

The gentiles Paul wrote to in Ephesians were not circumcised Jewish proselytes. This is why they were without hope in time past, for the only gentiles who had hope at that time were gentiles who became circumcised Jewish proselytes to Judaism and kept the law as a Jew.

What is the mystery concerning these uncircumcised gentiles who were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel?

Ephesians 3:6 says: ***That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:***

1. That the gentiles should be fellow heirs

Fellow heirs are fellows who have the same inheritance. My two brothers and I are fellow heirs to the inheritance of our father. We have a equal share to his inheritance. The mystery is that gentiles are now fellow heirs with someone, but who? Paul shows us who they are in Ephesians 2:14-17.

For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

In these verses, God has reconciled two groups of people together to make one body in Christ. In time past, they were divided by a wall, but now that

wall has been abolished and they are now one body in Christ. Who are they? In the context, the two groups are Jews called the circumcision and gentiles called the uncircumcision in verse 11.

Therefore, when Paul says gentiles are fellow heirs, he means we are fellow heirs with the Jews. If fellow heirs are fellows who have the same inheritance then what is the inheritance? The inheritance we now share with the Jews is theirs. God promised the Jews in the commonwealth of Israel an inheritance and now uncircumcised gentiles share in their inheritance. What is it? The only inheritance in the Bible; The Kingdom of God. In the same book where Paul says gentiles share in the Jews inheritance he shows us what the inheritance is in Ephesians 5:5 which says: ***For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.***

2. That the gentiles are members of the same body

The body is the church. The mystery is we are members of the same church with someone, but who? The same people we are fellow heirs with, the Jews. In time past, we were cut off and divided from them by a middle wall of partition. But now, the wall has been abolished and today we are members of the same body or church with them.

3. That the gentiles are partakers of his promise

The mystery is that gentiles are now partakers of someone's promise. What is the promise and who does it belong to? Interpreting the promise from the context, the promise is like the inheritance; it's the promise and promises God originally made to the Jews we are one body with. In time past, according to Ephesians 2:12 we were strangers from the covenants of promise God made with the commonwealth of Israel, but now we partake of their promises and promises. In the book of Ephesians there are three promises gentiles now partake of that were once promised to the commonwealth of Israel only.

In Ephesians 1:13, the Holy Spirit of promise.

In Ephesians 2:12, the covenants of promise and especially the New Covenant of promise.

And Ephesians 5:5, the promise of the kingdom of God.

All of these promises and many more once belonged to Israel only, but now we gentiles are partakers of them. (Romans 15:27)

But, how did uncircumcised gentiles become fellow heirs with the Jews to their inheritance in the kingdom of God? How did uncircumcised gentiles become members of the same body or church with the Jews that we were divided from in time past? How did gentiles who were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel become partakers of their promise and promises? Once you see how, you will see the mystery of the church.

It says: **IN CHRIST BY THE GOSPEL**

Those five words reveal the mystery of the church. The mystery is this; Uncircumcised gentiles, who were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, are now fellow heirs with the Jews to their inheritance in the kingdom of God; they are now members of the same body or church with them and they partake of their promises; ***in Christ by the gospel***; that is, by faith alone in the gospel without becoming Jewish proselytes, without circumcision or without keeping the law or works of any kind.

The mystery of the church is how uncircumcised gentiles got in the church and our relationship with the Jews who were in it before us. Beginning with Cornelius in Acts 10 and especially during Paul's first missionary trip in Acts 13-14, God began to save uncircumcised gentiles and made them members of the same body with the Jews and gave them an equal inheritance in the kingdom of God with the Jews and made them partakers of all the spiritual promises he made to the Jews without requiring them to become circumcised Jewish proselytes or keeping the law or works of any kind.

In time past, it was not a mystery that gentiles would share in Israel's inheritance and promises and become members of the same church with them, IF they became circumcised Jewish proselytes and kept the law like a Jew. All of the prophets knew this perfectly; But what the Old Testament

Prophets did not fully see, as is now revealed to the New Testament Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit, is that God would save uncircumcised gentiles by faith alone in the gospel without circumcision or works and give them an equal inheritance in the kingdom of God with the Jews and place them in the same body of Christ with the Jews and make them partakers of all the spiritual promises he originally made with the commonwealth of Israel and declare them equal in every way with the Jews in the church which is his body.

***The Resurrection of the Dead And Translation of Living Saints At Christ's Coming**

***The Resurrection Body**

***The Two Resurrections**

Concerning the resurrection of dead saints and the translation of living saints at the second coming of Christ Paul wrote: 1 Corinthians 15:50-55:

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 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?

In these verses, the Lord gives us a full description of both the dead and living saints at his second coming:

The Time:

He will come at the last trumpet.

The Speed:

He will come in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

The Saints:

When he comes, the dead shall be raised incorruptible and the living saints will be changed and transformed without dying.

The Prophecies:

When this event takes place two prophecies in the Old Testament will come to pass according to verses 54-55. One is Isaiah 25:8-9 which says: ***He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.***

The other prophecy is Hosea 13:14 which says: ***I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.***

These are the two prophecies Paul said will come to pass in verses 54-55 when Jesus comes again. When Paul quotes these two prophets this is how he interpreted them:

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?

Paul combines what Isaiah and Hosea wrote concerning the dead and living saints when Jesus comes again. When they wrote; *O grave where is thy victory?*, they wrote of the dead saints when Jesus comes again. They will be raised from the dead. This agrees with verse 52: ***The dead shall be raised incorruptible.*** It also agrees with 1 Thessalonians 4:16: ***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:***

When they wrote, *O death, where is thy sting?*, they wrote of the living saints at Christ's coming. They will never experience the sting of death. They will be changed without dying. This agrees with verse 51: ***We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.*** It also agrees with 1 Thessalonians 4:17: ***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.

The prophets Isaiah and Hosea prophesied that when Jesus comes again at the last trumpet, dead saints will be raised incorruptible and living saints will be changed without dying; they will never experience the sting of death.

The Word of the Lord

What Hosea and Isaiah wrote explains what Paul meant in 1 Thessalonians 4:15 about *the word of the Lord*. He said: **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.**

What Paul wrote about the dead saints being raised from the dead and the living saints changed without dying, he was referring to what Isaiah and Hosea the prophets wrote according to 1 Corinthians 15:54-55. The word of the Lord in 1 Thessalonians 4:15 are the prophecies of Isaiah and Hosea made in the word of the Lord concerning the resurrection of dead saints and the translation of living saints at Christ's coming. This is why Paul calls this event the Hope of Israel in Acts 28:20. We share in their hope for in time past gentiles like us had no hope according to Ephesians 2:12.

The Mystery

In 1 Corinthians 15:51 he wrote: ***Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.***

This verse says there is something about Christ's coming that was a mystery in time past. In this chapter, he tells us exactly what it is. The mystery is: ***We shall not all sleep.*** The mystery is not Christ's coming. The mystery is not the resurrection of dead saints. The mystery concerns living saints when Christ comes again. They will not sleep or experience the sting of death. They will be changed without dying. When Christ comes again the dead saints will say; O grave, where is thy victory? and the living saints will say, O death where is thy sting?

In the days of Christ's earthly ministry and the days of the apostles, the general belief of most people was that by the time Christ came again all saints would be dead. But, Paul shows us a mystery about the resurrection; we shall not ALL sleep. Some will sleep, but not ALL. Some will be alive when he comes again and they will never die or experience the sting of death. But, even though it was a mystery it was one of those mysteries written down in the prophets. A mystery in the Bible is not a mystery or secret because it was not written down prior to its revelation. Many

doctrines we believe today were written down in the prophets, but were hidden and concealed from the understanding of men until God chose the right time, place and man to reveal it to. And the mystery about living saints was one of them. It is found in Isaiah 25 and Hosea 13, but no one understood it until God revealed it to Paul in its fullness. Most people believed in the resurrection of dead saints, but they did not fully understand the plight of living saints. Most believed all saints would be dead when Christ came and they would be raised, but God revealed to Paul there will be saints alive when Christ comes and they will never die. They will be changed and transformed without experiencing the sting of death. (I hope to be one of them.)

The Dead And Living Saints According To Jesus Christ

In the book of John, he records a conversation between Jesus and Martha and in his conversation he told her what Paul would later write in 1 Corinthians 15 concerning the living and dead saints at his coming. In John 11 is found the death of Lazarus. After he died, Martha his sister came to Christ and it says in verses 21-26:

Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

The Lord told Martha that her brother would rise again. She answered by saying: ***I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.*** This shows us what she knew about resurrection. She knew there would be a resurrection of the dead at the last day which all saints in that day believed. But, then the Lord told her something else about the resurrection in the last day; ***And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?***

This verse has given people a problem for years because we know many saints who have believed in Christ and yet they have died. But the Lord said, *whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.* How do we explain this? The answer to the problem is by interpreting it by the context in which it appears. When the Lord said: *whosoever liveth and believeth in me*, he was speaking of the saints who will believe in him in the last day

when the dead will be resurrected. He said, they shall never die. Martha understood the resurrection of the dead in the last day, but she did not answer his question about the living saints in the last day. Why? Because according to 1 Corinthians 15:51 it was a mystery to her as it was to most saints in that day. It is not until you read 1 Corinthians 15 that this mystery about living saints is fully revealed. But, even though it was mystery, Jesus plainly said that in the last day, not only will dead saints be resurrected, but those who are alive and believe in him will never die. He said this years before God saved Paul, but Isaiah and Hosea the prophets wrote about it years before Christ said it, or before Paul wrote it.

The Resurrection Body

1 Corinthians 15

35 But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?

Someone rejected and others objected to the doctrine of resurrection because they could not understand *how* the dead are to rise and with *what kind of a body* they will have in resurrection. They said: Is it to be the same body? If so, how is this, since the resurrection bodies will not eat or drink, or beget children, as the natural bodies do? Also, these bodies will turn back to dust again. *How* then can they rise again? If it will be a different body, how can the personal identity of the person be preserved?

To the natural mind the resurrection of the dead seems impossible. If you look at it from the natural mind it seems impossible and even absurd. They say: How can dead bodies which have been buried in the earth for so many hundred, even thousands of years be raised? They have all been reduced to dust, and this dust has undergone a thousand forms. What about bodies that have been cremated or the bodies that have been destroyed and eaten and digested by wild animals? What about the bodies cast into the sea and eaten and digested by sharks and other fish. How could they possibly be raised again?

If their dust is scattered; how shall it be re-collected? Or if they were cremated or burned at the stake, how shall the particles which composed their bodies be recollected and re-organized? If they were devoured by wild animals and the birds of the air or the fishes of the sea, and if their flesh became the food of other animals to form their bodies; how can it be re-collected and re-organized? Or if their flesh became the food of plants and trees how can it be remolded into a human body?

And with what body do they come?

This is the second objection to resurrection. They asked: What will be the form, the shape, the size of the new body? Will it be composed of the same matter it is now composed? Will it have the same necessities, the same needs as it now has? Are we to suppose that the aged will be raised as aged, and the young as young, and babies raised as babies and remain as such forever? Are we to suppose that the bodies will need support and nourishment?

All these and other questions have been asked in regard to the bodies at the resurrection. Paul answers these questions by saying that in one sense it will be the same body, but in another sense, a distinct body. It will be a body, but a spiritual body and not a natural body.

36 Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die:

Paul uses an illustration from nature they were familiar with to show how foolish they were to reject the doctrine of resurrection. He reminds them of seed that is planted into the earth. When seed is planted into the earth it becomes corrupt, rots, decays and it dies, but then it is quickened and rises up in stalk, blade and then ear like wheat and corn.

Therefore, just because something dies and rots and becomes dust in the earth, does not mean it cannot be quickened and made alive. It happens all the time. If God is able to quicken a seed or grain that is decayed, rotten and dead and cause it to blossom and bear much fruit, then why should it seem incredible that God could quicken dead bodies? He quickens dead seeds and grains millions of times every day.

37 And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain:

A farmer does not take a full grown stalk of wheat or a full grown stalk of corn and plant it in the earth. What is planted in the ground is the bare naked kernel of corn or wheat. In other words, what goes into the ground is not what comes up out of the ground. If you compare the bare kernel of corn planted in the earth with a full stock of corn it's hard to believe they are the same.

So is the resurrection of the dead. The body buried in the grave is not like the body that will come up out of grave. One is corruptible and other incorruptible.

38 But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.

God does not cause a stalk of wheat to grow from a kernel of corn or vice versa. If a kernel of corn is planted into the earth, it will come up as a stalk of corn, even though it will be more glorious than the bare kernel of grain planted in the earth and it is God who does it and not nature. We see this happening all around us.

So it will be in the resurrection. Everyone will have his own proper body, a body which will belong to him and is suited to him. The lost will not rise with the body of the saved, or with a body adapted to heaven. The saints will not rise with a body like the lost adapted to hell. (See Rev. 20:11-15) There will be fitness in the new body to the character of him who is raised. The saints will have bodies suited to saints and to where they will spend eternity, in the kingdom of God.

39 All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds.

The point Paul makes in this verse is; as there are many kinds of flesh, the flesh of our resurrected body will be a different kind of flesh than the flesh of these mortal bodies. In the resurrection our corruptible bodies of flesh and blood must be changed into incorruptible bodies of flesh so we can inherit the kingdom of God according to verse 50. Christ's resurrection body was a body of flesh, but a different kind of flesh than he had before he died. (Luke 24:39) What is true of him will be true of us in the resurrection. God will give us bodies of flesh and bones, but they will be incorruptible bodies so we can live in and inherit the kingdom of God.

40 There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

There is a great variety of bodies. Look at the heavens, and see the splendor of the sun, the moon and the stars. And then look upon the earth and see the bodies here - the human body and bodies of animals and insects. This is two entire classes of bodies. Heavenly and earthly. We can see how they differ. Why should it sound strange to say there will be a difference between our bodies on earth from what they will be like in heaven? We see a vast difference between earthly and heavenly bodies every day. And why should it seem strange to say that there will be a difference between bodies adapted to live here on earth and bodies adapted to live in heaven?

The glory of the celestial is one

The splendor, beauty, dignity, magnificence of the heavenly bodies differs from those on earth. There is beauty in the terrestrial things of the earth: the human body; the plumage and feathers of birds; beautiful flowers, beautiful minerals and diamonds. But as beautiful as they are, they differ from the heavenly bodies. The heavenly bodies are more glorious and beautiful. If so, why should it seem strange to say that there will be a difference between our body as it is adapted to its residence here on earth from what it will be when it is adapted to its residence in heaven?

41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory.

The sun has one degree of splendor and the moon another and so also the stars. They differ from each other in magnitude, brightness and beauty. See a map of the heavens and note the magnitude numbers of the stars. The idea in this verse differs from that in verse 40. In verse 40 Paul says that there was a difference between the different classes of bodies; between those in heaven and those on earth. But in this verse he says that in the heavenly bodies themselves, there is a difference. They not only differ from those on earth, but they differ from each other. The sun is more splendid than the moon and one star more beautiful than another. The idea here is that the bodies of the saints in heaven will not only differ from those on earth, but that they shall differ among themselves, like the difference of the splendor of the sun, the moon, and the different stars. Even though all saints will be unlike what they were on earth, yet there may be a difference in their splendor and glory as God made a difference between the splendor and glory of the sun, moon and stars.

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:

This verse continues the idea of the previous verse; as there is a difference between the glory of the heavenly bodies, so is the resurrection of the dead. There is strong indication in these verses that there will be differences in the glory of the bodies of the saints in the resurrection, as there is difference in the glory of the sun, moon and stars. Read the following verses and see why: Daniel 12:2-3, Matthew 13:41-43, Romans 8:17-18

44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

These physical bodies are natural bodies being made from the dust of the earth and they are subject to the same necessities and inconveniences as the bodies of animals. These natural bodies are kept alive by breath, food, water and sleep. It is subject to disease, sickness, weakness and death. But the resurrection body will not require the things the natural body requires to sustain itself.

A *spiritual body* is not a spirit which does not have flesh and bones. Christ's resurrection body was a spiritual body, but it had flesh and bones. (Luke 24:39) It's spiritual in that it will not have the same necessities and needs as the natural body. It will be the opposite of the natural body. It will not require food, water and breath to keep it alive as the natural body. It will not be subject to sickness, disease and death as the natural body. It will not have an old nature of sin as the natural body. It will be an eternal body and not a temporal body as the natural body. It will not be created out of dust as the natural body but a special creation of God. (See 2 Corinthians 5:1-2)

45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

Christ is called the second Adam because he stands in contrast from the first Adam. As we receive our temporal life and bodies from the first Adam, we receive our immortal and undying bodies from the second Adam. As we receive our natural body from the first Adam, we receive our spiritual body from the second Adam. As we receive our mortal, corruptible body from the first Adam, we receive our immortal, incorruptible body from the second Adam.

Jesus is called a quickening spirit not because he is a spirit, for he has a flesh and bone body. He is called a quickening spirit because he is the one who quickens us from the dead. He is the one who raises the dead and the one who gives us the resurrection body. The first Adam was a living soul, but not a quickening spirit. The first Adam had no power to quicken anyone from the dead, but the last Adam does. See John 5:21-29

46 Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.

The order is this; The decaying, dying, weak and corruptible body comes first. The imperfect body is succeeded by the perfect; the impure body by the pure; and the vile and degraded body by the glorious.

47 The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.

Adam's origin was from the dust of the earth and to dust he returned and so will we. This body is not capable of living with God in heaven or in the coming kingdom of God. The first man had an earthly origin; he was made out of the earth with a body adapted to live on earth. See Genesis 2:7, 3:19 The second man is from heaven. He has a heavenly origin with a body adapted to live in heaven. The idea is that, for you to live with him in heaven or the kingdom of God you must have a body like his.

48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.

If you want to know what Adam was like or looked like take a look at yourself. We are all his descendants; We all derive our nature from him. We are all frail, corruptible, and mortal and we are subject to corruption and decay like him.

If you want to know what you will be like and look like in the resurrection take a look at Christ for as Christ IS NOW in heaven, such will be all those in Christ when he comes again. He will change our vile bodies to be fashioned like unto his glorious body. See Philippians 3:20-21

49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

The point he is making is this: The connection which is formed between the believer and Christ is as close as that which he had between him and Adam. And as that connection with Adam caused us to be subjected to pain, sin, sickness, and death, so the connection with Christ assures us that we will like him be free from sin, sickness, pain, and death, and like him will have a body that is pure, incorruptible, and immortal. And the next verse tells us why this is important.

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption

Simply put; these flesh and blood bodies cannot inherit the kingdom of God for they are corrupt and corruption shall not inherit incorruption. We must be changed and transformed. We must have a new and glorified body like Christ's to live with him in the kingdom of God. In resurrection we will receive such a body.

The Two Resurrections

In John 5:28-29 Jesus said: ***Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.***

The Lord plainly said there will be two resurrections in the future. Not three or four, just two and he ought to know, for he is the one who will raise the dead. (John 5:21) He said there will be a resurrection of life and a resurrection of damnation. The resurrection of life is the resurrection of all saints from all ages at Christ's coming. The resurrection of damnation is the resurrection of the lost. What John does not mention is that there will be at least 1000 years between these two resurrections. Later in Revelation he reveals this fact to us.

What Jesus said about the two resurrections in the future is what the prophets in the Old Testament and the apostles in the New Testament wrote. Daniel the prophet wrote about the same two resurrections that Christ preached. In Daniel 12:2 he said: ***And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.***

Daniel prophesied of two resurrections in the future. According to him the saints will be raised to everlasting life and the lost to everlasting contempt. These are the same two resurrections found in John 5 and like Christ he also does mention the fact that there are at least 1000 years between these two resurrections.

Concerning the saints who will be raised to everlasting life he said in the next verse: ***And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.*** He does not mention the plight of the lost after they are raised, but Isaiah the prophet does. In Isaiah 66:24 he wrote: ***And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.*** The Hebrew word translated abhorring in this verse is the same word for contempt in Daniel 12:2 and you can see why. It says, *their worm shall not die neither shall their fire be quenched.*

Paul the apostle in the New Testament also preached and wrote about the same two resurrections. In Acts 24:14-15 he said: ***But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.***

The resurrection of the just is the same as the resurrection of life in John 5 and the resurrection into everlasting life in Daniel 12:2.

The resurrection of the unjust is the same as the resurrection of damnation in John 5 and the resurrection of contempt in Daniel 12:2. This shows us the influence that Daniel and Jesus had on Paul when it came to the doctrine of resurrection. He preached the same two resurrections as they did.

The resurrection of the just and of everlasting life is the resurrection of all saints at Christ's coming. The resurrection of the unjust and damnation and contempt, is the resurrection of the lost after the resurrection of life. There are not two resurrections of the lost and there are not two resurrections of the saints. There is one resurrection of the saints and one resurrection of the lost. There is a first resurrection and not a first before the first. Moreover this first resurrection was prophesied by Isaiah and Hosea. See 1 Corinthians 15:54-55.

In Revelation 20 John also wrote of these same two resurrections, as he did in John, but here he gives us additional information about them. He had a vision and he saw the martyrs of Christ in the future and he wrote:

And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

The resurrection of life and the just is called the first resurrection here in Revelation and notice he said FIRST. Not the second or third, but the first and nothing comes before first. If you are first in the dinner line then no one is ahead of you in the dinner line. If your name is called out first then nobody's name is called out before yours. If this is the first resurrection, then there is no resurrection before this one. If there is a resurrection before this resurrection, then this resurrection is not first. This resurrection is called first because no resurrection precedes it.

The first resurrection is the resurrection of life and of the just. It's when all saints from all ages will be raised from the dead. The second resurrection is the resurrection of damnation and the unjust and of contempt. It's the resurrection of the lost from all ages 1000 years after the resurrection of the saints. John describes the second resurrection in verses 11-15 and when you read these verses, you see why it is called the resurrection of damnation and contempt.

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 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.

No matter where the lost dead are now, they will all be resurrected and brought to this judgment. God will judge their works to prove beyond any doubt that they are guilty of every sin his law outlaws and deserve to be punished in the lake of fire forever. This shows us that the lost dead do not cease to exist at death for it says, ***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.***

If you are not saved and have no intention of getting saved and you think you will cease to exist when you die, you better think again and read these verses again.

The prophets in the Old Testament and the apostles in the New Testament and Jesus in the four gospels all said, there are two resurrections. They are future separated by 1000 years. The resurrection of all saints at Christ's coming and the resurrection of the lost 1000 years later.

The Scriptures Versus The Sacraments

Comparing the seven sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church with the scriptures

The following are quotes from Roman Catholic literature and doctrinal statements concerning the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church.

Baptism

"The Church does not know of any other means other than Baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude...

"The faithful are born anew by Baptism..."

Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, and are incorporated into the Church...

Baptism is a Sacrament which cleanses us from original sin, makes us Christians, children of God, and heirs of heaven. Baptism is necessary to salvation, because without it we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. (According to this sacrament water baptism is necessary for salvation)

Penance

Penance is a Sacrament in which the sins committed after Baptism are forgiven. **Penance remits sins and restores the friendship of God to the soul by means of the absolution of the priest.**

"Absolution takes away sin, but it does not remedy all the disorders sin has caused. Raised up from sin, the sinner must still recover his full spiritual health by doing something more to make amends for the sin: he must 'make satisfaction for' or 'expiate' his sins. This satisfaction is also called 'penance.'

"(Penance) can consist of prayer, an offering, works of mercy, service of neighbor, voluntary self-denial, sacrifices, and above all the patient acceptance of the cross we must bear."

"Confession to a priest is an essential part of the sacrament of Penance:"

"It is called the sacrament of confession, since the disclosure or confession of sins to a priest is an essential element of this sacrament. "One who desires to obtain reconciliation with God and with the Church, must confess to a priest all the unconfessed grave sins he remembers after having carefully examined his conscience." (According to this sacrament Penance is necessary for salvation)

Confirmation

"Confirmation perfects Baptismal grace; ***it is the sacrament which gives the Holy Spirit in order to root us more deeply in the divine filiation, incorporate us more firmly into Christ, strengthen our bond with the Church...*** "If a Christian is in danger of death, any priest should give him Confirmation. Indeed, the Church desires that none of her children, even

the youngest, should depart this world without having been perfected by the Holy Spirit with the gift of Christ's fullness." (According to this sacrament confirmation is necessary for salvation)

Anointing of the Sick And Last Rites

"In addition to the Anointing of the Sick, the Church offers those who are about to leave this life the Eucharist as viaticum. Communion in the body and blood of Christ, received at this moment of 'passing over' to the Father, has particular significance and importance. It is the seed of eternal life and the power of resurrection..." (According to this sacrament the anointing of the sick and last rites are necessary for salvation)

Eucharist

The Holy Eucharist is the Sacrament which contains the body and blood, soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ under the appearances of bread and wine.

For this reason the Eucharist cannot unite us to Christ without at the same time cleansing us from past sins and preserving us from future sins:" "By the same charity that it enkindles in us, the Eucharist preserves us from future mortal sins." (According to this sacrament the Eucharist is necessary for salvation)

Matrimony

The Sacrament of Matrimony is the Sacrament which unites a Christian man and woman in lawful marriage. A Christian man and woman cannot be united in lawful marriage in any other way than by the Sacrament of Matrimony, because Christ raised marriage to the dignity of a Sacrament. The bond of Christian marriage cannot be dissolved by any human power. To receive the Sacrament of Matrimony worthily it is necessary to be in the state of grace, and it is necessary also to comply with the laws of the Church. Christians should prepare for a holy and happy marriage by receiving the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist; by begging God to grant them a pure intention and to direct their choice;

Holy Orders

Holy Orders is a Sacrament by which bishops, priests, and other ministers of the Church are ordained and receive the power and grace to perform their sacred duties. To receive Holy Orders worthily it is necessary to be in the state of grace, to have the necessary knowledge and a divine call to this sacred office. Christians should look upon the priests of the Church as the messengers of God and the dispensers of His mysteries. Only bishops can confer the Sacrament of Holy Orders. (According to this sacrament when a priest is ordained with holy orders they receive the power and right to forgive sins and grant absolution)

Summing up the sacraments

*They are not scriptural. They are nothing more than the traditions and ordinances manufactured and made up by the Roman Catholic Church.

*They contradict the writings of the apostles and prophets.

*Their purpose is to put Catholics under bondage and control of the Roman Catholic Church.

*They make salvation available only to those who are members of the Roman Catholic Church.

*They all require works of some type to gain salvation and forgiveness of sins and to keep and maintain salvation.

The sacraments and the cross of Christ

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

The cross and religious works, such as keeping the law and taking the sacraments, cannot be preached for salvation at the same time. Why? Because works, such as the sacraments of baptism, penance, the Eucharist, confession and the mass make the death of Christ vain. If a man could become righteous by keeping the law or by taking the sacraments, then Christ is dead in vain.

If you and I could be saved by works of any kind, such as keeping the law and taking the sacraments, Christ's death on the cross was vain and useless. Why did Christ die to make atonement for our sins if we could gain salvation and eternal life by religious works such as taking sacraments? God would have never subjected his Son to suffer the awful pain and death of the cross if we could be saved by religious works such as keeping the law and the sacraments. His death would be unnecessary if salvation and eternal life could be gained by our works. When works are preached with the cross for salvation, the works makes Christ's death in vain. The truth of the matter is, the cross makes works vain and useless. The death of Christ on the cross takes works out of salvation and makes faith the only requirement to be saved.

The sacraments and the grace of God

Galatians 2:21 not only says that works make the cross of none effect, but they ***frustrate the grace of God***. The word frustrate means to disannul, bring to naught, set aside, neutralize and violate. This is what works such as the works of the law and taking the sacraments does to the grace of God when they are preached for salvation. No one can preach works and grace for salvation at the same time. Works disannuls grace and grace cancels out works.

Romans 11:5-6 says: ***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.***

Works and grace are diametrically opposed to one another. When it comes to salvation you cannot preach both at the same time. If you preach the cross you must preach salvation by grace for if you preach works you not only make Christ's death in vain, but you frustrate and disannul the grace of God.

The sacraments and the gift of God

Salvation is by grace and grace is the unmerited and undeserved grace and favor of God bestowed upon sinners. The main theme of Paul's epistles is the undeniable fact that salvation is the free gift of God freely

given to sinners like us who don't deserve it nor earn it or can earn it. Read the verses for yourself.

Ephesians 2:8-9: ***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.***

Romans 5:14-18

Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.

For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

Romans 4:5: ***But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.***

Titus 3:5: ***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.***

2 Timothy 1:9: ***Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,***

Romans 6:23: ***For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.***

How many times does God have to say salvation is free and a gift for it to be true? Just once, but he said it over and over again so we can't miss it. My wife was a Roman Catholic for nearly 20 years before she was saved and did not know these verses were in the Bible. After she got saved she was amazed and at the same time felt betrayed by the Catholic Church for concealing these verses from her and millions like her today.

The sacraments and the spiritual perfection of the believer

Hebrews 10:14 says: ***For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.***

By his one sacrifice Christ has perfectly forgiven our sins; he has perfectly obtained a full pardon for our sins; he has provided a perfect redemption for us; he has perfectly justified us from all things. What he accomplished at the cross he continues now and forever without works of any kind by us such as keeping the law and taking the seven sacraments.

Dear friend, at the cross God did all the works necessary to save you and keep you saved forever. God imputed our sins to Jesus Christ on the cross and put him on trial for our sins as if he committed them instead of us. In that trial he condemned his Son for all of our sins and his Son died for all our sins. God foreknew every sin you would ever commit from the cradle to the grave and Jesus suffered the wrath of God for all of them.

When God raised him from the dead he declared he was satisfied with the payment his Son made for your sins. The penalty of sin is death and the only payment God will accept as payment for sin is death, not law keeping or religious sacraments. Death is the penalty of sin and the payment must match the penalty. Christ offered his life as the payment for our sins and it matched the penalty perfectly. His death and resurrection provided a perfect atonement for all our sins. His death and resurrection satisfied all of God's just demands against our sins.

Now God holds out a hand of mercy and grace to you and he says, believe on my Son and in what he did for you on the cross and call on me and I will save you. Millions have taken God up on his gracious offer and he saved them and he will save you too.

The sacraments of the Catholic Church or the sacraments of any church will not save you. Salvation is by grace through faith alone in Jesus Christ and in his sacrificial death and resurrection for your sins. The apostles never ever taught or preached the so called seven sacraments. They are a fabrication of men. They are contrary to the scriptures. As a matter of fact, the apostles even went as far as to say that anyone who preaches the law for salvation or says a person must take the sacraments to be saved is cursed of God.

Galatians 1:8-9: ***But though we, (the apostles) or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, (the gospel of grace) let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.***

Believe the gospel the apostles preached that declares that salvation is the free gift of God and not of works and God will save you now. Call on the Lord now and ask him to save you for he promised he would. He said, whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

The Second Birth

In John 3:3 Jesus said: ***Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*** In verses 5-6 he said: ***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.***

There are many religious people who are deceived about the water in John 3:5. They assume it is water baptism and that you must be baptized in water to be born again. Is this true? No. Notice it says; *born of water, born of the flesh* and *born of the Spirit*. It appears as if there are three births in the verses. What's the answer? Two of them are the same. To be born of

the flesh is the same as being born of water, ***for every physical birth is a water birth.*** There are only two births in these verses. Physical and spiritual. And unless you are born the second time by the Spirit you cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Be not deceived, water baptism has nothing to do with the New Birth. To be born of water is to be born the first time physically. To be born of the Spirit is to be born the second time spiritually. If you have been born of water only, you will not enter the kingdom of God. You must be born twice to get into God's kingdom. The New Birth is spiritual birth. It's your spirit spelled with a little "s" being born or begotten of God's Spirit capital "S" according to verse 6. In Titus 3:5 it's called regeneration of the Spirit and in Ephesians 2:1-5 it's called the quickening of the Spirit.

There are those who say that being born again is not a spiritual birth, but the resurrection of the body and they come to this conclusion from reading Acts 13:33 where it says that when God raised Christ from the dead he said: ***Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.*** When Christ was raised from the dead he was begotten from the dead. In Colossians 1:18 he is called the firstborn from the dead. These verses do have a spiritual application to the new birth in John 3. As Christ's body was dead, our spirit was dead; dead in trespasses and sin. As Christ's body was raised from the dead physically by the Spirit of God, our dead spirit was raised from the dead, quickened, regenerated and made alive by the Spirit of God. Even though there is a spiritual application it is not the correct interpretation. The New Birth is not the physical resurrection of our physical body. We know this is true by the simple fact that the apostles wrote their epistles to people who were alive and had never died but they were all born again.

1Peter 1:3: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

1Peter 1:23: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

James 1:18: Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

1 John 5:1: Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

1Corinthians 4:15: For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

Galatians 4:28-29: Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.

The apostles were not writing to dead people. They wrote to saints who were alive at the time of their writing and they were all born again proving beyond a doubt the New Birth is spiritual not physical.

The Necessity of the New Birth

Jesus said; ye MUST be born again. But why?

When you were born the first time you received from your earthly parents three things: Their life which was temporal life; their spirit which was dead and their nature which was corrupt. Why was their spirit dead and their nature corrupt? Because of Adam's sin. Romans 5:12 says: ***Wherefore, as by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.***

When God placed Adam in the garden he gave him a lot of freedom and only one commandment; ***Genesis 2:16-17 says: And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.***

He had the freedom to eat of all the trees in the garden except one; it's called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God warned them that in ***the day*** they ate that tree they would ***surly die***. As soon as God gave Adam this one commandment not to eat of one single tree, along came the

devil to tempt them to do what God said not to do. When the devil showed up in the garden he tempted Adam and Eve to eat of the tree God said not eat of. Eve said to the devil; ***God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.*** The devil said to her: ***Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.***

The devil accused God of lying to them and he said the real reason God does not want you to eat of the tree is because you will gain superior wisdom and knowledge as the gods who were probably angels who occupied the garden with them. They fell for the lie and ate of the tree and they died in that day. They didn't die physically that day for Adam lived over 900 years. They died spiritually. Their spirit died within them and this can be seen in how they hid from God when he came to see them in the garden after they sinned. Prior to the entrance of sin into the world, they had very close fellowship with God, but after sin came they hid from God, they ran when he got near. What happened? Their spirit died and their nature became corrupt and later their body died.

The physical, moral and spiritual condition of Adam and Eve was passed down to all their children including us. When you were born the first time you were born with a dead spirit, a corrupt nature and temporal life. This is why we must be born again for when you are born again you receive from your heavenly Father his life which is eternal, his Spirit which is holy, and his nature which is divine. This makes you fit to live with him forever in the coming kingdom of God.

But be not deceived; being born of water in John 3 is not water baptism; it's the same as being born of the flesh. Being born of water, that is of the flesh, will not get you into the kingdom of God. You must be born the second time and this time by the Spirit of God. How is a person born again? In this same chapter where the Lord says you must be born again, he tells us how in verses 14-16 and especially John 3:16.

Second Coming of Christ In Acts Period??

Throughout my life I have heard many preachers say that if Israel would have repented at the preaching of the 12 Apostles in the so called “Acts period”, that Christ would have come again and set up his kingdom. Recently, I heard Doctor Peter “*cash register*” Ruckman say that the reason why Christ was standing in Acts 7:55 is because he was about to come back, but sat back down when the Jews in Jerusalem stoned Stephen instead of believing him. This from a man who says he has read the Bible through over 300 times and has read a “book a day” all his life.

I heard another preacher say that Christ was about to come back, but his Father had to stop him to tell him about a so called “mystery program” he didn’t know about that was about to begin. Many dispensationalists teach that in early Acts, Jesus could have come again and set up his kingdom, but didn’t because Israel did not repent.

This theory that Christ could have come back during the Acts period if Israel would have repented is totally bogus. Just a casual reading of the Four Gospels and a simple understanding of prophecy proves it is bogus.

The 12 Apostles and the Second Coming

We are told that if Israel would have repented at the preaching of the apostles in the “Acts period” the Lord would have come back and set up his kingdom. But, did the apostles expect Israel to repent at their preaching? And did they expect the Lord to come back and set up his kingdom during their life time? Search and see. In Luke 21:12-17 Jesus told the apostles before hand what to expect when he sent them out to preach in the so called Acts period.

He said: *They shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.*

Does this sound like the apostles expected Israel to repent so the Lord could return and “set up his kingdom” in the so called “Acts period”? No! They expected to be hated, beaten, jailed, persecuted and even killed and it all came to pass. Everyone of them was murdered!

The Destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple and the Second Coming

In Luke 19:43-44 the Lord prophesied the city of Jerusalem and the temple would be destroyed. He said:

For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

This prophecy came to pass in 70 AD when Titus and the Roman army destroyed both the city and the temple. If this is true, was there any chance of Christ returning anytime BEFORE the city and the temple was destroyed? It's obvious that as long as the city and temple were standing there was no chance of Christ returning. Therefore, we see again that the theory that Christ could have come back in the so called Acts period and "set up his kingdom" is bogus. There was no kingdom coming to Jerusalem in the Acts period, only wrath and destruction. (See also Luke 21:20-24, 1 Thess. 2:16)

Peter's Death and the Second Coming of Christ.

In John 21:18-19 Jesus said to Peter:

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God.

The Lord plainly told Peter he would grow old and die. In 2 Peter 1:14 Peter knew he was going to grow old and die for he said: *Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.*

If this is true, do you think Peter believed the Lord was coming back in the so called "Acts period" or any time before his death? No. Whenever and whatever Peter preached in the book of Acts he always knew in the back of his mind that there was no chance the Lord was coming back as long as he was alive.

The Standing of Jesus and the Second Coming

As mentioned at the beginning of this article there are many preachers who call themselves dispensationalists who teach that the reason Jesus was standing in Acts 7 is because he was about to come again. Cornelius Stam even says in his Acts commentary that in Acts 7 Jesus was about to come again and pour out his wrath on the world! When I hear men say these things it makes me wonder if they know anything about the second coming of Christ and especially the events that must precede the second coming of Christ.

Don't they know the antichrist must first appear before Christ's coming? Don't they know the fourth kingdom in Daniel 7 must come to power before Christ's coming?

Don't they know that Babylon must be rebuilt and become the center of world commerce before Christ's second coming?

Don't these scholars and writers know that Moses and Elijah must appear before Christ comes again?

Also, how could the antichrist sit down in the temple of God and say he is God (2 Thess. 2) when Jesus said in Luke 19 and Luke 21 and Matthew 24 that the temple was going to be destroyed?

None of these prophetic events happened before Acts 7 and yet they are all prophesied to take place PRIOR to the second coming of Christ. This is the problem with modern dispensationalism. People get locked into these dispensational theories such as the theory that Jesus could have come again in the Acts period if Israel would have only repented and they end up ignoring the plain facts of the scriptures. I will say again as I have said in the past; It's one thing to be a dispensationalist; it's another to be a Bible believer. This subject is a prime example of this.

In closing consider this fact: There is not a verse in the Bible that says the whole nation of Israel will repent and believe on Christ before he comes again. In Romans 9:26-29 Paul shows us how many will repent and believe before Christ comes again: ***And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God. Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of***

the sea, a remnant shall be saved: For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom, and been made like unto Gomorrha.

These verses are prophecy and it tells us that only a small remnant of Jews will be saved before Christ comes again.

The Thorns of Romans 8

Verses 35-39

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This part of Romans 8 is the hard part. What we read in verses 1-34 is pleasant and appealing. Verses 1-34 are like a soft pillow for the head of weary Christians, especially Romans 8:28. These verses make us feel good and we love to read them and memorize them. But salvation is like a bed of roses and as beautiful as roses are they have thorns. I had a rose bush in my yard that was beautiful to look at, but it had branches full of thorns that would cut your arms and legs if you didn't handle it right. Salvation is as beautiful as a rose, but roses have thorns and in Romans 8:35-39 we see the thorns. These verses describe the pain and suffering of salvation.

Every thorn found in these verses has been experienced by Christians throughout church history. Today we are not exempt from any of the thorns

of Romans 8:35-39 either. Being saved from sin and hell does not save us from pain and sorrow and these verses are proof of that.

In Romans 8 God gives us the total picture of salvation. He shows us the bad along with the good. He shows us both the pleasure and pain of salvation. He does not leave out the bad to make us feel good. Any man God calls to preach must preach both sides of salvation. Not just the pleasures of verses 1-34, but the pain of verses 35-39 also. A pastor has the duty of giving Christians both sides of the story. If he doesn't they will become weary in well doing when trouble and sorrow comes into their lives and sooner or later it will. Many Christians throughout history have become bitter and even mad with God when they suffered tribulation and pain in their lives because some preacher led them to believe that those things would never happen to them. I have even heard some hyper dispensationalists say that such things as tribulation, famine, distress and the sword *belong to Israel and not the church!*

The Thorns of Salvation

Tribulation

In John 16:33 Jesus said: ***These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.***

In this verse are two promises. Peace and tribulation. We like the promise of peace, but what about the promise of tribulation? They are both promised. As a matter of fact, the promise of peace is given to those who suffer tribulation. Those who suffer tribulation are the ones who need peace the most and in this verse the Lord promised us peace in the midst of our tribulation. He never said he would save us from tribulation. What he promised was his presence and his peace in the midst of it. (Hebrews 13:5-6)

In Acts 14:22 it says that Paul: ***Confirmed the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.***

Between now and the coming kingdom of God the forecast is tribulation. The prospect of entering into the kingdom of God is glorious for then we will enjoy a new body and new heavens and a new earth, but we must remember that tribulation precedes it. The road that leads to the kingdom of God is *Tribulation Boulevard*. If you are a true Christian, you cannot escape tribulation. Paul never said we would escape tribulation. Over and over again he told us that tribulation is in our future. Paul said to the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 3:4: ***When we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.***

When people were converted under his ministry he told them up front they would suffer tribulation and so should we. Many preachers today have led members of the church to believe that they will not suffer tribulation. Tribulation is a dirty word in many churches, especially American churches. They don't want to hear it because it makes them uneasy. But if you read the Pauline epistles you will see he warned the church over and over again that we will suffer tribulation.

Distress

In 1 Thessalonians 3:7 Paul wrote: ***Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith.***

The word distress means; affliction, calamity, and misery. Distress affects the mind more than the body and sometimes it can be worse than physical pain. Distress is being perplexed, not knowing what to do or where to turn for help in a time of great need. It's a feeling of helplessness. It is being in such a bind that you do not know what to do or who to turn to. Christians throughout history have suffered distress from their trials and persecutions. Paul said he was plagued by; *fightings without and fears within* in 2 Corinthians 7:5.

Persecution

2 Timothy 3:12 says; ***Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.***

In these days of apostasy most Christians believe that health, wealth and prosperity are signs of godliness. If someone enjoys health, wealth and prosperity people say it's a sign they are godly and God must be blessing

them. But Paul said just the opposite. He said that persecution is a sign of godliness. This is totally foreign to what most Christians are taught today. Persecution is a dirty word in the church today especially in the American church. But persecution is a way of life in most nations like North Korea, China, Viet Nam and the Muslim nations where Christians are routinely persecuted for their faith in Christ. Persecution has been the experience of believers in both testaments.

See Hebrews 11:35-38

Famine, nakedness

In 1 Corinthians 4:11-13 Paul wrote: ***Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day. I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you.***

I have heard people say that God will not allow his people to go hungry, thirsty or without clothes or shelter. But these verses say otherwise. Being saved did not exempt Paul from all these things. Are we better than he? If we claim to follow Paul should we expect better treatment than Paul? Should we expect to be treated better than all the believers throughout history who have suffered these things? There were 10's of 1000's of Christians who starved to death during WW 2 in Russia, Japan, Holland, Poland and Germany. What makes us think we are somehow exempt just because we live in the USA?

Perils

Perils are dangers, risks, hazards, jeopardy, and being exposed to injury, loss or destruction from any cause whatever.

In 2 Corinthians 11:23-28 Paul wrote: ***Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in***

watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

The next time you think you have problems read these verses again. There are people today who boast about following Paul and at the same time think they are exempt from the perils he suffered. They think God will not allow these things to happen to them even though they all happened to the man they claim to follow. People who believe such nonsense are living a dream world.

Sword

In the Bible the sword represents death. Verse 36 defines what Paul meant by the sword. It says: ***As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*** This is a quote from Psa. 44:22. This verse tells us that when we got saved we became like sheep for the slaughter. In other words, we became a target of the enemies of God. It says: *we are killed all the day long* which means our lives are in constant jeopardy. We are marked for death.

This is nothing new for suffering death has been the common lot of the saints of God in all ages. In John 16:15-20 the Lord told us: ***If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.***

One of the ways they persecuted Christ was with the sword. He was killed by the sword of the Roman government. And the Lord said that if they persecute me, they will persecute you. When you become a follower of the Lord you inherit his enemies as well as his friends. His enemies will treat you like they treated him. The servants of Christ cannot expect the enemies of Christ to treat them better than Christ their Master. If they killed our Master with the sword, they can kill us his servants too. And how did they kill him? They crucified him and if crucifixion was the method used to kill him can we expect better treatment? The crucifixion of Christ shows us

what God will allow to happen to the servants of Christ. That's a sobering thought isn't?

Throughout history the followers of Christ have suffered at the hands of ungodly men including the sword of death. Every Christian ought to own a copy of the book Foxes Book of Martyrs and read it from time to time to remind them selves of how God's people have been persecuted and killed throughout church history. Reading that book will make you weep, but it will open your eyes to how God's people have been treated throughout the history of the church. Every Christian ought to sign up to receive the monthly magazine sent out by the Voice of the Martyrs ** and see how Christians are being persecuted throughout the world today. Millions of Christians throughout the world today are familiar with the thorns of Romans 8 for they suffer them every day of their lives.

A blessing in the midst of thorns

In the midst of these thorns there is a blessing promised those who suffer them. Verse 37 says; ***Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*** As bad as these thorns hurt, they do not conquer the Christian. Why?

(1) These thorns do not conquer us because none of these things can separate us from the love of God according to verse 39. When bad things happen to God's people, they should not think they are separated from the love of God. Many times when bad things happen to God's people they have a tendency to doubt the love of God and blame God foolishly. They say; *God if you love me why do you allow me to suffer these bad things? If you loved me you would not allow these things to happen to me.* Sound familiar? But what we must remember is that the Prophets, Apostles and Christians throughout history have suffered these things and that Christ himself suffered them too.

(2) These thorns do not conquer us because death to the believer is the entrance into eternal life in heaven. How can you threaten someone with heaven?

(3) These thorns do not conquer us because God will reward us for suffering for him and the glory of the reward will exceed the suffering according to Romans 8:18. See also 2 Timothy 2:12

(4) These thorns do not conquer us because all things including the thorns in verses 35-39 work together for our good according to Romans 8:28. God can take the lemons in our life and make lemonade out of them. Christ died a horrible death, but we have life, eternal life as a result of it. Many Christians have been encouraged in their trials and tribulations by the testimony of other Christians who have suffered like things in their life. Remember you will never be a comfort to anyone who is suffering unless you suffer yourself. See 2 Corinthians 1:4-7

The Thorn We Will Never Suffer

Even though we are not exempt from any of the thorns found in Romans 8:35-39 there is one thorn we will never suffer as Christians. In Romans 5:8-9 it says: ***But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.***

As Christians we will never suffer the wrath of God. We may suffer the wrath of man and of Satan, but never the wrath of God. Why? Because Christ suffered God's wrath for us on the cross. God's wrath against our sins was poured out on his Son on the cross. We did the crime, but he paid the fine. When God raised him from the dead he declared he was satisfied with the payment Christ made and now he offers sinners salvation from his wrath if they will repent (Acts 17:30, 20:21) believe and call on him to save them. (Rom.10:9-14)

What God Hath Promised

God hath not promised
Skies always blue,
Flower-strewn pathways
All our lives thro';
God hath not promised
Sun without rain,

Joy without sorrow,
Peace without pain.

God hath not promised
We shall not know
Toil and temptation,
Trouble and woe;
He hath not told us
We shall not bear
Many a burden,
Many a care.

But God hath promised
Strength for the day,
Rest for the laborer,
Light for the way,
Grace for the trials,
Help from above,
Unfailing sympathy,
Undying love.

Annie Johnson Flint

The True And False Gospel Part 1

In Galatians 1:6-9 Paul wrote: ***I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.***

Every false teacher and cult in America professes to believe a gospel today, but they are still lost. Why? They believe the wrong one. You can believe in a gospel and still be lost, if the gospel you believe is the wrong one. The devil has a gospel for every taste, appeal, appetite, ego, religion

and pocketbook. If you can't find a gospel you like, he will customize one just for you.

There is only **one Gospel** that has the power to save you from sin and hell today and it's the one that Christ and the apostles preached. All other Gospels are false and those who preach them are accursed according to these verses.

The gospel the apostles preached is called the Gospel of Grace and Gospel of Christ. There are four outstanding facts about this gospel.

(A.) *It declares that men are saved by faith alone in the death and shed blood of Christ.*

See Rom. 4:5, Ephesians 2:8-9, Titus 3:5

(B.) *It declares that God forgives all sins and all sinners.*

This means there is no unpardonable sins or sinners today.

See Acts 13:39-39

(C.) *It declares that salvation is a present possession, not a future attainment.*

See 2 Timothy 1:9, Ephesians 2:8, Titus 3:5, Romans 5:11.

(D.) *It declares that all believers are unconditionally and eternally secure in Christ.*

See Ephesians 1:13, 4:40, 1 Corinthians 1:8, 2 Corinthians 5:5, Philippians 1:6

These are four of the most important facts about the Gospel of the Grace of God. If you have believed this gospel you will believe these four facts. And if you do not believe them, you have not believed the true gospel, and you are either lost, or you are deceived like the Galatians.

This means:

*Any man who preaches works are necessary to gain or to keep salvation is a false teacher.

*Any man who preaches that there are unpardonable sins or sinners God cannot save today is a false teacher.

*Any man who preaches that salvation is a future reward and not a present possession is a false teacher.

*Any man, who preaches you can lose your salvation and must do certain works to keep it, is a false teacher.

The true gospel of grace is made up of the sum total of its parts. It declares these four facts and any man or church that preaches a gospel that contradicts them is preaching a false gospel. The man that does not preach the Gospel of Grace is cursed and a church that does not preach it is apostate and God said to stay away from them.

The True and False Gospel Part 2

2 Corinthians 11:4: 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 other gospel Paul warned about is Satan's gospel. It's a perversion of the true one preached by Christ and the apostles. What is the difference between the true and false gospel?

*The true gospel declares that all men are totally corrupt before God and unable to please God in the flesh no matter what they do.

Satan's gospel declares that there is good in every man and all he needs to do is cultivate it until it blossoms.

*The true gospel declares that without the shedding of blood God cannot forgive any sin.

Satan's gospel is a bloodless gospel. It offers forgiveness without a blood sacrifice. It is a self atonement gospel that says you atone for your own sins by the works you do in this life.

*The true gospel declares that because man is totally ruined what he needs is a new birth.

Satan's gospel declares that what man needs is education, cultivation, refinement, reform and more religion.

*The true gospel declares that salvation cannot be earned by works.

Satan's gospel is a gospel of works such as; taking the 7 sacraments, going to Mass, water baptism, tithing, law keeping, doing penance, charitable works, reform and self improvement.

*The true gospel declares that Christ is God and that salvation is only in the death and shed blood of Christ.

Satan's gospel emphasizes Christ's deeds of compassion and works of mercy and the beauty of his character and teaching. Satan's gospel eulogizes his life, but it ignores his death for sin. Christ's atoning work on the cross is never mentioned in Satan's gospel. It is a bloodless gospel and a cross less Christ.

*The true gospel declares that God cannot and will not forgive your sins until someone pays the penalty for them.

Satan's gospel declares that God will forgive your sins no matter if they are paid for or not.

*The true gospel declares that without salvation men will spend eternity suffering in the fires of hell.

Satan's gospel declares that hell is a myth and a superstition and that a loving God would never create such a place, much less cast anyone into it.

*The true gospel declares both the love of God and the wrath of God.

Satan's gospel declares the love of God only. It never mentions the wrath of God for it says it does not exist.

*The true gospel declares that God saves bad people by his grace.

Satan's gospel declares that God saves good people by their works. It says if you become good enough God will save you. You become good enough to be saved by the works you do in this life.

*The true gospel offers men a "know so" salvation.

Satan's gospel offers men a "hope so" salvation. No one knows if they are saved or not when they believe Satan's gospel.

*The true gospel declares that you must have God's righteousness to enter into the kingdom of God for you have none of your own.
Satan's gospel declares men who do good works are righteous and their own righteousness can get them into the kingdom of God.

*The true gospel declares no one has ever or will ever receive eternal life by keeping laws and commandments.
Satan's gospel declares that you can earn eternal life by the laws and commandments he gives you to keep.

*The true gospel declares that saving faith is total faith in Christ alone for salvation.
Satan's gospel declares that saving faith is divided between faith and works.

*The true gospel declares that saving grace is the gift of God and not of works.
Satan's gospel declares that the grace that saves is received by works such as taking the sacraments.

*The true gospel declares that God did all the works necessary to save you and keep you saved.
Satan's gospel declares God did not do all the works necessary to save us and keep us saved. We must participate in our salvation. God did his part and now we must do ours and if we do, we will be finally saved if we continue to do the works we are supposed to do to the end of our life.
God did his part and now we must do ours. It's salvation by the installment plan. Christ made the down payment and we must pay the notes.

*The true gospel says that all sins are forgiven and remitted the moment a person believes.
Satan's gospel says all sins are not forgiven or blotted out and remitted the moment a person believes the gospel. It's the church and its priests and leaders who forgive sins. You must come to them for forgiveness and absolution of your sins.

*The true gospel declares that salvation is the gift of God.
Satan's gospel declares that salvation is not a gift of God, but a reward earned by a life time of works. It is not free, for it is conditional upon the

works the church prescribes for men to do after they believe. According to Satan's gospel, works are as much a part of salvation as faith. Faith is not enough. According to it no one can be saved without works or kept saved without works.

*The true gospel declares that the believer is secured eternally because of the sacrificial death and resurrection of Christ.

Satan's gospel declares that no one is secured eternally because of the sacrificial death and resurrection of Christ. His security is based upon the works he does in his life. As long as he is faithful and does the works the church tells him to do, he is secure. It's a conditional security based upon the works he does in his life, till the end of his life. Hence, no one can know for sure they are saved until they get to the end of their life.

*The true gospel declares that all charges against the believer are cancelled out by the cross

Satan's gospel declares that all charges against the believer are not cancelled out by the cross the moment he believes Satan's gospel. His gospel says a believer can be charged and penalized to hell forever for his sins after he believes. According to Satan's gospel a man who professes to believe in Christ can be cast into hell later if he does not do the works the church gives him to do.

*The true gospel declares that the moment a man believes all of the merits of Christ's sacrificial death on the cross are put to his account.

Satan's gospel says that the moment a person believes all of the merits of Christ's sacrificial death on the cross are not put his account. According to Satan's gospel we must come to the church to receive the merits of Christ's death. The church and its priests and leaders are the ones God entrusted the merits of Christ's death and they and they alone have the power to distribute them to men.

*The true gospel declares that all of the righteousness of God is imputed to the believer when he believes and he now has all the righteousness necessary to save him forever.

Satan's gospel declares that all of God's righteousness is not put to the believers account and if he needs more righteousness to get into heaven he can borrow from the "bank of the martyrs" and the Faithfull's righteousness.

*The true gospel declares that Jesus Christ is the only way to God.
Satan's gospel declares there are many ways to God and one is as good as the other.

Whose gospel have you believed? When it comes to salvation sincerity does not count but accuracy does. There are many people who sincerely believe in a gospel today, but are still lost because they have believed the wrong one. For 20 years my wife sincerely believed the gospel preached to her by the Catholic Church but she was lost because she had believed the wrong gospel. The gospel they taught her is the same one you hear in many so called Protestant churches also. It's the gospel that says that even though Christ died for your sins, his death and shed blood is not sufficient by itself to save you, but that you must do certain works along with believing to be saved. That's a deadly gospel and if you believe it you will end up in hell. It does not matter how sincere a person is or how devoted they are or how many good works they have done, if you believe the wrong gospel you will end up in hell.

You need to exam the gospel you have believed today. Make sure it is the right one. The right one is the one the apostles preached. It says that Christ died for all your sins and by faith and faith alone in his death and shed blood God will save you eternally from sin, hell and the lake of fire.

We do not have to be in dark concerning false teachers and apostate churches. We can separate the tears from wheat, the sheep from the wolves, and the true from the false by the gospel they preach.

The True And False Jesus

In 2 Corinthians 11:2-4 Paul warned us about a false Jesus. He wrote:

Would to God ye could bear with me a little in *my* folly: and indeed bear with me. For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present *you* as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled

Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. 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*.

In verses 13-14 he identifies the men who taught the counterfeit Jesus, gospel and spirit as ministers of Satan. He wrote:

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.

Why would a minister of Satan preach about Jesus? To deceive you into believing they are true ministers of God. They use the name of Jesus to make you think they are credible. They also use his name so that if you expose them they can accuse you of attacking Jesus. But do they preach the true one? Of course not. How could they, for the true Jesus condemns false apostles and teachers like them. The Jesus they preach is a false Jesus who promotes their false doctrines, but the average person sitting in the pew today doesn't know the difference. There are people sitting in the pews that believe in Jesus, but their Jesus is the wrong one. They believe in the Jesus preached by the ministers of Satan. This is the ultimate deception.

The way we expose false teachers and apostate churches is by comparing the true Jesus with the false Jesus they preach. Banks teach their tellers to spot counterfeit money by first teaching them what real money looks and feels like. Once they know what real money looks like and feels like it's easy for them to spot counterfeit money.

If you know who the real Jesus is, it's easy to spot the false Jesus. When you hear a man preaching the false Jesus then you know he is false teacher and a liar.

The ministers of Satan have created a Jesus to fit their false doctrines. Their Jesus promotes the false doctrines and the false gospels they preach. These wicked men are found in many different kinds of churches, but they all have a false Jesus and their Jesus is like them, he is a counterfeit.

The differences between the true and false Jesus.

*The death and shed blood of the real Jesus is all that is necessary to save you and keep you saved forever.

The death and shed blood of the false Jesus they preach is not sufficient, but you must do your part like taking the sacraments, keeping the commandments, living a good life to be saved.

*The real Jesus is God manifest in the flesh.

The false Jesus is a great teacher, prophet, angel, or enlightened one, but not God.

*The real Jesus is eternal, never having a beginning or end.

The false Jesus is a created being. He has a beginning and end.

*The real Jesus is the beginning of the church because he is the head of the church.

The false Jesus is not the beginning or head of their churches. The head of their churches are men like the Pope, Joe Smith, Charles Russell, Helen White or Mary Baker Eddy.

*The real Jesus is the creator of heaven and earth.

The false Jesus did not create heaven and earth, for they are the results of evolution not creation.

*The real Jesus abolished the law and its animal sacrifices forever by his death on the cross.

The death and shed blood of the false Jesus they preach did not abolish the Law, because they say God will re-establish the Law of Moses again in the future including animal sacrifices.

*The real Jesus said he alone has all power in heaven and earth.

The ministers of Satan say they have the same power as their Jesus and even more.

*The real Jesus said he came to die to save sinners from hell and the wrath of God.

Their Jesus died to make them healthy, wealthy, and prosperous and to increase their "self esteem".

*The real Jesus said he will come again in flaming fire to take vengeance against those who do not believe in him.

The false Jesus does not take vengeance on anyone, even those who do not believe on him.

*The real Jesus said he will cast sinners into the lake of fire.

The false Jesus will not cast anyone into such a place for many say that such a place does not exist.

*The real Jesus has a Father in heaven he prayed to.

The false Jesus does not have a Father for many of them say he is the Father, Son and Spirit!

*The real Jesus suffered poverty throughout his life on earth.

Their Jesus wore designer clothes and lived like a king and they say we should also.

*The real Jesus descended into hell to preach judgment to fallen angels and sinners.

Their Jesus went to hell to be tortured by Satan because his crucifixion did not fully atone for sins.

*The real Jesus is so awesome and big that heaven is his throne and earth is his footstool.

Their Jesus is a small cracker that you can eat, chew up, digest in the stomach and flush down the toilet.

*The real Jesus condemned false religion.

Their Jesus does not say anything bad about any one's religion. He "respects them all".

*The real Jesus called false teachers names like; serpents, vipers, hypocrites, whited sepulchers, wolves, and children of the devil.

Their Jesus would never call people by such names. He is very politically correct.

*The real Jesus warned us that he will chastise us for our sins.

The false Jesus does not chastise anyone for sin.

*The real Jesus asked us to remember his death on the cross by observing his supper.

The false Jesus tells them not to observe any supper to commemorate his death.

*The real Jesus says that all believers are members of his body for he dwells in all believers and they in him.

Their Jesus says some believers are not members of his body even though the true Jesus dwells in them and they in him.

*The real Jesus said that he would curse any man and even an angel from heaven who preached a gospel different from Paul's.

Their Jesus sends men to preach a gospel that contradicted Paul's.

*The real Jesus says his blood forgives and removes the sins of all believers forever.

The blood of the false Jesus does not remove or forgive the sins of all believers; it merely covers them up and hides them temporarily.

*The real Jesus secures the salvation of all believers.

Their Jesus does not secure the salvation of all believers.

*The real Jesus frees all men from the law when they believe on him.

Their Jesus does not free all men from the law who believe on him.

*The real Jesus saves sinners by faith alone without works.

Their Jesus saves men by faith and works.

*The real Jesus tells us that when sinners believe on him they will never come into condemnation.

Their Jesus tells believers they can come into condemnation after they believe on him.

*The real Jesus tells us over and over again to follow what he said and did while on earth.

The false Jesus says don't you dare preach what I preached on earth and don't you dare follow what I did on earth. Just ignore it for *"Its not for us today"*.

*The real Jesus said he is our Great High Priest.

Their Jesus says he is not our great high priest.

*The real Jesus says we should repent and believe the gospel and call on me and I will save you.

The false Jesus says you don't have to repent or call on me or confess me to be saved.

*The real Jesus says I have prepared a place for you in the kingdom of God.

The false Jesus says we don't have a place in the kingdom of God.

*The real Jesus says we can expect to suffer tribulation in this world just like he did, until he comes again.

The false Jesus says we will not suffer tribulation, but we are exempt from it even though millions of saints have suffered it throughout history.

*The real Jesus says when he comes again the whole world will know it for he will come with millions of saints and angels, with the blowing of the last trumpet, with a loud shout, with the voice of the archangel, dead people being raised up from their graves and the alive caught up into the clouds.

The false Jesus says no one will know when he comes because it will be "secret and silent".

*The real Jesus said I have placed in the Old Testament many promises and blessings for you to claim and enjoy today, especially the ones concerning me. The false Jesus says there is nothing in the Old Testament for you. That's not written to you, even though Paul quotes it 200 times and based at least 60 major church doctrines on it.

*The real Jesus says I died to institute the New Covenant and in the New Covenant you will find a once for all sacrifice for your sins.

The false Jesus says the New Covenant is not yours to claim, even though Paul was a minister of the New Covenant.

*The real Jesus says you must be born again to get into the kingdom of God.

The false Jesus says you do not have to be born again to get into the kingdom of God.

*The real Jesus says we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present evil world.

The false Jesus says he is not interested in the way we live.

*The real Jesus offers us rewards, crowns and blessings that are based on our service to him in this life.

The false Jesus says everything is free under grace and nothing is based upon your works and service to him in this life.

*The real Jesus promised us a mansion in his Father's house.

The false Jesus says those mansions are not yours to claim.

*The real Jesus told us we should not expect the world to treat us better than him.

The false one says we should expect the world to treat us better than him.

*The real Jesus says the closer you get to God the more the world will hate you. The false Jesus says the closer you get to God the more the world will love you.

When a man, any man, says he preaches Jesus, ask him which one? When someone tells you they believe in Jesus, ask them which one? There is a false Jesus who is the opposite of the true. Christ warned us about the coming of false Christ's and they are here, not only in the flesh, but in the preaching and doctrines of false teachers, apostate churches and deceived believers. They have created a "Jesus" in people's minds today who bears no resemblance to the real Jesus found in the Bible. That is why we must judge men and churches by the Jesus they preach and believe in. The true one is found throughout the New Testament.

(The ultimate deception and horror is when people find themselves in hell after believing in a false Jesus. And the sad fact is many will.)

The True Israel of God

Jeremiah 31:35-37

Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name:

If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.

Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD.

God said, that if the sun stops shining and the moon no longer gives off its light then Israel will cease from being a nation before him. That's never going to happen; therefore there will always be a true Israel of God.

He also said, that if you can measure the heaven above and measure the foundations of the earth beneath then he would cast off Israel from being a nation. That can't be done; therefore he will never cast the whole nation off.

There is a holy nation of Jews today, but it is not the nation or state of Israel located in the Middle East. The true Israel of God are the Jews who believe on Christ throughout the world and not the lost blinded Jews who reject Christ in the nation or state of Israel in the Middle East. They are saved, born again Jews throughout the world. Their numbers are small for they are a remnant, but they are here and gentiles like us are members of the body of Christ with them and also share in the spiritual promises God made to them according to Romans 15:27.

*They are the little flock of Luke 12:32 and the nation bearing fruit of Matt.21:43.

*They are the election of grace of Rom.11:1-7

*They are the branches in the olive tree that were not broken off that we were grafted into and among. Rom.11:16-17

*They are the Jews who first trusted in Christ of Eph.1:12

*They were those who were nigh to God in Eph. 2:17

*They are ½ of the twain or two of Eph. 2:15

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

*We gentiles 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 gentiles 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 of saints that was a mystery from the beginning of the world in Eph.3:9

*They are the chosen generation and holy nation of 1 Peter 2:9

*They are the true Israel of God in Galatians 6:16 which say:

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.

From the call of Abraham till now, there has always been a true Israel of God. The true Israel of God is the Jews throughout Bible history who have believed what God says. They were the Jews in the Old Testament who believed what the Prophets said. They are the Jews in the New Testament who believed what Christ and the Apostles said concerning Jesus Christ; that he was the Son of God and their Messiah and that he died for their sins and raised again from the dead. The Israel of God began with Abraham and continues until this day. There is an unbroken line of Jews in Bible history who has always believed what God said.

Today, gentile believers are members of the same body with them and partake of the spiritual promises God made to them. They were not made rich through us, but rather we were made rich through them. They did not gain anything through us, but we gained everything through them. They were the ones who had all the blessings and promises and not us. God grafted us gentiles into their olive tree so we could partake of their root and their fatness and their riches. We were worthless wild olive branches fit for

nothing but burning. For this reason we should not think we are something special or different from them. It's only by the grace of God we were grafted into the good olive tree and became partakers of Israel's spiritual blessings and promises. If not for their blessings and promises we would have none.

True Genuine Bible Repentance

Every man God called to preach in the Bible preached repentance in both Old and New Testaments.

The Prophets in the Old Testament:

Ezekiel 14:4-6: Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the LORD will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols; That I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.

(These verses show us that repentance is more than just changing your mind, but turning away from something bad, such as idols.)

Jesus Christ in the Four Gospels:

Luke 13:1-5: There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

(Jesus said twice if a person does not repent, he will perish.)

The Apostles in the New Testament:

All of the Apostles in the New Testament preached repentance including Paul. It may surprise some people to know he preached repentance when he preached the Gospel of Grace. In Acts 20, he had a meeting with the elders of the church at Ephesus and he rehearsed what he preached while in Ephesus. He said he testified: ***Both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*** (verse 21) He told them it was his desire to: ***Finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.*** (Verse 24)

This shows us that repentance is a part of the Gospel of Grace. If you preach the Gospel of Grace, you should preach repentance as Paul did.

Paul not only preached repentance, but he commanded those who repented to prove they had repented. In Acts 26:20 it says Paul: ***Shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.***

When a person believed the Gospel of Grace preached by Paul, he did works to prove he had repented. (See Acts 19:17-20) John the Baptist preached the same thing in Matt.3:8.

Repentance is a word and a doctrine misunderstood by most people. The devil has perverted the meaning of the word repentance. He has redefined the word to make repentance a work you must do to be saved. But, what is repentance? First, repentance does not mean you must clean up your life so you become good enough for God to save. That's impossible and if it were true, heaven will be an empty place in eternity. There is none righteous no not one and no amount of "cleaning up your life" can atone for your sins. Lost sinners cannot possibly do anything in the flesh to please God. As far as God is concerned, lost people are dead people and dead people can't do anything.

Repentance is not making a promise to God that you will stop sinning if he will save you. If that were possible, you would not need a Savior. And if God saves those who promise to stop sinning, what happens when they sin

after he saves them? God saves sinners who cannot stop sinning, not because they make a false promise he knows they cannot keep.

The best way to define repentance is to notice what people did when they repented. In the Acts 17, Paul preached repentance. In verses 30-31, Paul said: ***And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.***

It was in this same chapter in Acts, the Thessalonians were saved to whom Paul later wrote the books of 1, 2 Thessalonians. (See Acts 17:1-5) When the Thessalonians heard Paul preach the Gospel of Grace in Acts 17, they believed and repented. But what did they do when they repented? 1 Thessalonians 1:9 says: ***For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.*** They not only believed the Gospel of Grace, but they turned from their idols to the true and living God. This again shows us repentance is more than changing your mind. When people repented in the Bible, they not only changed their minds, but they turned away from something that was bad such as idols.

Paul commanded both Jews and Gentiles to repent when they believed the gospel according to Acts 20:21. But, what did they turn from when they repented?

The Jews

When the Jews who believed Paul's gospel repented, what did they turn from? They turned away from the works of the law and animal sacrifices unto Christ alone to be saved. As long as a Jew believed he could be saved by the works of the law, keeping the commandments and offering animal sacrifices for his sins, God could not and would not save him. He had to repent. He had to turn from works and animal sacrifices to Christ alone before God could save him. It was the works of the law that prevented the Jews from being saved by grace. Therefore, when they

repented they turned from the thing that hindered them from being saved, which was the Law of Moses.

In Hebrews 6, Paul writing to the Hebrew believers said: ***Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God.*** The dead works the Jews repented of or turned from was the works of the law. The works of the law were dead works, for they could not give life. They repented and turned from the dead works of the law to the life in Christ.

The Gentiles

When the gentiles who believed Paul's gospel repented, what did they turn from? Their idols. The majority of the gentiles saved under Paul's ministry were idol worshipers. Being idol worshippers they had faith and trust in their idols to save them, deliver them, protect them, guide them and to keep them. Their idols were their saviors. What God is to a Christian, idols are to idol worshippers. As long as they had faith and trust in their idols, God could not and would not save them. For them to be saved: they had to do what the Thessalonians did; they had to turn from their idols to the living God to be saved. It was their idols that prevented them from being saved. Therefore, when they repented they turned from the thing that hindered them from being saved which were their idols. That's what the gentiles did when they repented.

Another example is my wife. My wife was a Roman Catholic for nearly 20 years before she was saved. She went to Mass 6 days a week. She was taught and believed salvation was in the Mass, the sacraments and keeping the laws of the church. As long as she believed salvation was by works, God could not and would not save her. She had to repent. She had to turn away from the laws and works of the Catholic Church and trust Christ alone to save her. It was her religion that prevented her from being saved by grace. Therefore, when she repented she turned from the religion that hindered her from being saved. She was like the Jews in Paul's day; she had to repent of her religion! But, as long as she continued to go to Mass and do the works Rome told her to do, God would not save her.

The question is; can a person be saved without repenting? The answer is no. Put on your thinking hat for a minute: I ask you; could a Jew in Paul's day be saved as long as he continued to do the works of the law and offer animal sacrifices for his sins? The answer is obvious, no. He had to turn away from his works before God could save him by grace, because men cannot be saved by grace and works at the same time.

Could a gentile be saved as long as he held on to his idols to save and deliver him? The answer is obvious, no. He had to turn from his idols like the Thessalonians did before God could save him by grace, because a man cannot be saved by false gods and the true God at the same time.

Could a Jew be saved by the gospel and offer animal sacrifices for his sins at the same time? Of course not. Could a gentile be saved and worship his idols at the same time? No. The law is what hindered the Jew from being saved and until he renounced it, God would not save him. The same is true of the gentiles when it came to idols.

This is what true repentance is in the Bible. The meaning has been distorted today by Satan the god of this world. He has turned repentance into a work men must do to be saved. But, we have just seen repentance means to turn from works to be saved by grace. Repentance is not a work you do to be saved. It's turning from works, religion and idols that keep you from being saved. This is what the Prophets, Christ and the Apostles preached when they preached repentance. (This article is available in CD audio.)

WAS THE CROSS A PART OF THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM?

For many years I have heard preachers say that the cross was not a part of the gospel of the kingdom and when men preached the gospel of the kingdom they did not preach the cross for salvation. But what saith the scriptures? The scriptures tell us in no uncertain terms that the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross was a part of the gospel of the kingdom and when men preached the cross they preached the kingdom of God. Here

are three examples of men who preached the cross for salvation when they preached gospel of the kingdom.

Jesus Christ

Matthew 4:23 says: ***And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.***

It's obvious Jesus preached the gospel of the kingdom, but what about the cross? Yes, he preached the cross when he preached the gospel of the kingdom. Consider these verses:

In Matthew 20:28 he said: ***Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. At the same time he preached the gospel of the kingdom Jesus declared that he would give his life as a ransom for sinners.***

In John 6:51 he said: ***I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of world.***

In John 10 Jesus said 5 times he would die for sinners and his sheep when he preached the gospel of the kingdom.

11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

17 Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

In Matthew 26:27 when he observed the Lord's Supper with his apostles he said: ***And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.***

Jesus said he would shed his blood on the cross for the remission of our sins at the same time he preached the gospel of the kingdom.

As you can see from these verses the Lord clearly said he would die on the cross as a ransom for sinners, for the remission of sins, for the life of the

world and for the sins of sinners, at the same time he preached the gospel of the kingdom of God.

The 12 Apostles

In Matthew 24:13 Jesus said to the 12 apostles: ***And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.***

In Mark 16 they were told to preach the gospel of the kingdom in all the world. But, when they preached the gospel of the kingdom did they preach the cross for salvation? Yes, they did. Consider these verses written by Peter who was one of the 12 apostles. When he preached the gospel of the kingdom he also preached:

1 Peter 1:18-19: ***Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.***

1 Peter 2:24: ***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 3:18: ***For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:***

The Apostle Paul

Did Paul preach the kingdom of God? Yes, throughout his ministry. Consider these verses in Acts:

Acts 14:22: ***Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.***

Acts 19:8: ***And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.***

Acts 20:25: ***And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.***

Acts 28:23: And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.

Act 28:30-31: And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

At the same time Paul preached the kingdom of God, he like Jesus and the 12 apostles preached the cross for salvation. He wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4: ***For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.***

Notice these two verses in Acts 20:24-25 where Paul preached the kingdom of God at the same time he preached the gospel of grace.

But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

At the same time he preached the gospel of grace he preached the kingdom of God and at the same time he preached the kingdom of God he preached the gospel of grace. The kingdom of God is a part of the gospel of grace, because the kingdom of God is the inheritance given to those who believe the gospel of grace. See Eph. 5:5, 1 Cor. 6:9-11, 1 Thess. 2:12.

Some dispensationalists object and say they are not going to be on the earth in the kingdom of God, because they are seated in heavenly places and will be there forever. The answer is, we are not seated in heavenly places literally, but positionally in Christ, just like we were positionally crucified on the cross with Christ, buried in the tomb with Christ and raised with Christ. And as Christ did not remain on the cross or in the tomb, he will not remain in heaven either. 1 Thessalonians 4:16 says Christ will DESCEND FROM HEAVEN. And when he descends from heaven the Bible tells us exactly where he will then go: Luke 1:32-33 says:

He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Isaiah 9:7 also says: ***Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.***

Jesus Christ will descend from heaven down to the earth and sit on the throne of David and will rule and reign as King in the coming Kingdom of God and according to 1 Thess. 4:17 Paul said; AND SO SHALL WE EVER BE WITH THE LORD.

Where ever the Lord is in eternity is where we will be and we know from Luke and Isaiah and many other verses he will be on the earth ruling as King of Kings and Lord of Lords in the coming literal, physical, visible, earthly kingdom of God. This is what the Lord meant when he said in John 14:3: *I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

Jesus Christ, the 12 apostles and Paul all preached the cross for salvation when they preached the kingdom of God, because the kingdom of God is the future inheritance and destiny of all who believe that Christ died on the cross for their sins and was raised from the dead. And when we preach the cross for salvation today, we should also preach the kingdom of God as these men did throughout their ministry.

What Keeps Christians From Quitting?

Galatians 6:9: **And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.**

The reason Paul wrote these words is because there are many saints who grow weary, faint and quit.

In Christ's day many quit.

John 6:66-67: **From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?**

In the book of Acts many quit.

2 Timothy 4:10: **For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.**

2 Timothy 1:15: **This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me.**

Many are quitting today.

There are about 45,000 churches in America and each year 3700 close. Each month 1700 pastors quit the ministry. Church attendance is at an all time low in America. In 2004, only 17 percent of the population attended a Christian church on any given weekend. Of the 17 percent only 25 percent of them come just 3 Sundays out of 8. This means they missed 5 Sundays out of 8.

*As Christians we are in a race: ***Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.*** But what keeps us in the race? What keeps us from quitting and becoming a spectator in the grand stand?

*We are called to fight; ***Fight the good fight of faith.*** But what keeps us in the fight? What keeps us from throwing in the towel?

*We are called to be soldiers: ***Endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.*** But what keeps us in the war? What keeps us from becoming AWOL?

*We are called to be **planters** and to sow the seed of the word and gospel: But what keeps us sowing the seed and witnessing and preaching?

*We are called to be laborers; ***Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.*** But what keeps us working instead of quitting?

There are 5 things that keeps me and I hope you in the race and in the fight, sowing and planting the seed.

Judgment

2 Corinthians 5:9-11: ***Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.***

Why should we labor and work for the Lord? That we may be accepted of him. Suppose a Christian does not labor and work for the Lord in this life? Suppose he spends his life satisfying the lust of the flesh? Suppose he is entangled with the cares of this life and pursues pleasure and chases after money and brings no fruit to perfection? Will he be accepted? What is the opposite of accepted?

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

We have a date with judgment in the future. What will God judge?

The works we have done in our body

Eccl.. 12:14: **For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be good*, or whether *it be evil*.**

The words of our mouth

Matthew 12:36-37: **But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.**

The secret thoughts of our mind and heart

1 Corinthians 4:5: **Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.**

Romans 2:16: **In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men (the thoughts of your mind and heart) by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.**

Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

Did you ever fear the terror of your parents when you did something wrong? We should also fear the terror of the Lord when it comes to this judgment. In that day all of our works, words and thoughts will be exposed and judged. This is very sobering and it should cause us to fear God.

As a pastor my duty is to persuade saved men to get ready now for this coming judgment and to get busy by laboring now to be accepted by the Lord when they are judged. Knowing about this coming judgment should keep us all in the race and to race even harder.

Love

2 Corinthians 5:14-15: ***For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.***

The terror of the Lord persuades us in verse 11 to labor, but here the love of Christ constrains us. The word constrain means to press on, to urge, to impel, or to excite. The love of Christ is the reason we press on. It urges us to never quit; it excites us to continue. It's the love he had for us when he died for us. His sacrificial love demonstrated for us on the cross is what constrains us.

When you consider who he died for and what he died for, it should constrain us.

Romans 5:5-10: ***And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.***

Notice who Christ died for: Sinners-8. The ungodly-6. His enemies-10. Would you die for such people? Christ did and why? Verse 8 is the answer. LOVE.

Romans 3:19: Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

It says the whole world is guilty before God? Guilty of what? Breaking every commandment of the law of God. We are guilty of every sin the law of God condemns. The law condemned every one of us. This means that when Christ died he died for law breakers. It means he died for people who hated him. He died for idolaters. He died for liars, thieves, murderers, adulterers, fornicators, blasphemers, sodomites, etc

He died for people who deserve to burn in hell forever and ever and he would be justified if he cast us all into hell. But instead of casting us all into hell he took our place on the cross and allowed his father to judge and condemn and execute him in our place so he could save us from the hell we deserve. That's the love of Christ that constrains us.

In verse 11 the terror of the Lord persuades us to labor for the Lord so that our works will be acceptable unto him in the Day of Judgment. But what does the love of Christ constrain us to do?

Verse 9: ***And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.***

Putting it simply: His love in dying for us should constrain and urge us to die. To die to ourselves and then to spend the rest of our lives living for him who died for us.

This is what it means to become a living sacrifice. It means you become dead and at the same time alive. Dead to your own selfish desires and ambitions, but alive to his desires and ambitions.

This is what it means to bear a cross. It means your ambitions and goals and aims in life are crossed out by his.

The problem with many Christians is that they have this turned around. They are dead to Christ and alive to themselves and Christ's will and ambitions are crossed out by theirs. This is why many have dropped out of the race and quit. The love of Christ no longer constrains them and the terror of the Lord does not faze them.

Fear

2 Corinthians 7:1: Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

What is it that we should fear? Of what will happen to us if we fail to cleanse ourselves from the filthiness of the sins of the flesh and spirit. What will happen to us?

1 Corinthians 11:30-32: For this cause many *are* weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

The Corinthians are an example of what happens to Christians who fail to cleanse themselves from the filthiness of the sins and of the flesh and spirit. God chastises them with weakness, sickness and even death. This is why Paul said we should fear God in 2 Corinthians 7:1. Chastisement ought to strike fear in the heart of every believer.

Reward

1 Corinthians 3:11-15: For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. (Christ himself is the foundation upon which we are built) Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; (different types of works Christians do in this life) Every man's work shall be made manifest: (revealed) for the day shall declare it, (judgment day) because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

There is a major reason to finish the race and to keep fighting to the end and to endure hardships as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. It's verse 14.

If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

God will reward the works we do in this life if they are the works he ordered us to do. Your works are never in vain in the Lord.

1 Corinthians 15:58: Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, (Be firm, strong, confident in the faith) unmoveable, (Firm, fixed,

stable, unmoved, unshaken) always abounding in the work of the Lord, (Always actively engaged in doing the will of God; in promoting the glory of God, and advancing the kingdom of God and the word of God and the gospel of God.) forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. Your labor is not vain for 1 Corinthians 3:14 says: If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

Hebrews 6:10: **For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.**

Notice; the work you do that benefits the saints is considered work done for Christ and his name. What you do for them, you do for Christ and God will not forget it.

The work you do in the Lord is noticed by the Lord even though it may be ignored by men.

The work you do for the Lord is not forgotten for it will be rewarded according to 1 Corinthians 3:14.

The rewards God promises those who work for him in this life should motivate us to stay in the race, keep fighting, keep planting,

Ephesians 6:8: **Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.** This verse is based upon the oldest law in the world; the law of sowing and reaping. Whatsoever a man sows thus shall he reap. If you sow good works in the name of Christ you will receive good from the Lord in return. Any price you have to pay in this life to reap rewards at the judgment seat of Christ will be worth it. The rewards will be exceedingly, abundantly above what we could ask of think.

Inspiration

Many people today were inspired by others to become what they are today. Many Nascar drivers were inspired by other drivers before them. The same is true of football players, doctors, nurses etc. There are three people who should inspire us to stay in the race, keep fighting to the end, keep working, keep sowing the seed and never quit and one of them is the greatest inspiration of all.

The prophets

In Hebrews 11:33-38 Paul wrote about the Old Testament prophets and what they suffered to preach the word:

Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. And others had trial of *cruel* mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and *in* mountains, and *in* dens and caves of the earth.

The apostles

Jesus said to the New Testament apostles in Luke 21:12-17: **But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute *you*, delivering *you* up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and *some* of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake.** Those great men carried the gospel to Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria and the utter most parts of the earth. They established churches all over the known world, 1000's of people were saved but they were persecuted, beaten, imprisoned and in the end they were all murdered.

Jesus Christ

Hebrews 12:1-3: **Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.**

Throughout his life Christ preached the gospel to 1000's, healed the sick and raised the dead and trained men to take his place. But he was persecuted throughout his life and in the end he was beaten, whipped and crucified for sinners like us. He is the greatest inspiration of all.

These are the men who should inspire us. These are the men God told us to follow and if we do, we will not become weary and faint and give up and quit. They all stayed in the race under the worst circumstances till the end. God help us to follow their example.

If you know of a brother or sister in Christ who has fallen out of the race encourage them to get back in. ***Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*** Galatians 6:1

If for some reason you have dropped out of the race, I encourage you to get back in and stay in the race till Jesus comes again. There is an old song that says: ***Sometimes the day seems long, Our trials hard to bear. We're tempted to complain, to murmur and despair. But Christ will soon appear to catch his bride away! All tears forever over in God's eternal day! It will be worth it all when we see Jesus! Life's trials will seem so small when we see Christ. One glimpse of his dear face, all sorrow will erase. So, bravely run the race till we see Christ.***

What Makes Christians Different From Everyone Else?

In Acts 11:26 the Bible says that ***the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch.*** They were called Christians because they stood out from ordinary people. Everyone knew who they were because they were different from everyone else. They did not blend in with ordinary people. Their name made them separate and distinct from the world around them. It was a derogatory name, but they wore it as a badge of honor.

In that day Christians were separate and distinct from ordinary people and the world around them knew it. The name Christian had a greater impact in that day than it does today because we live in a day of compromise when Christians have become conformed to the world. They bend over backwards to be just like the world. But in the Bible true Christians were separate and different from most people. They were different because Christians are supposed to be different. When you call yourself a Christian

you are separating yourself from other people who are not. It's a name that separates the true people of God today from those who are not. But what makes Christians different and distinct from everyone else? What separates them from ordinary people and the world around them?

Their Birth

Christians are born not made. Good football players and baseball players are made not born. Winning race car drivers are made not born. But Christians are different because they are born and not made. You become a Christian by birth, but the birth of a Christian is different from everyone else because they have two births. The ordinary person is born once, but Christians are born twice. They have a physical and spiritual birth. They are born of the flesh and the Spirit. True Christians have a rebirth, a second birth or a new birth. In the Bible the rebirth of Christians is also called regeneration (Titus 3:5) and the quickening of the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:1)

Why are Christians born twice? Because they are convicted and convinced by the Lord that their first birth disqualifies them from entering into the kingdom of God. In John 3:3 Jesus said: ***Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*** If we must be born again to enter into the kingdom of God then something must be wrong with our first birth. True Christians seek a second birth because they know something is terribly wrong with their first birth. But what is it? When you were born the first time you received from your parents three things that condemned you and made you unfit to enter into the kingdom of God.

You inherited *their life which was temporal life*. But you cannot live in the kingdom of God with temporal life, because it is an everlasting kingdom. The only people who can possibly live in the kingdom of God are those who have eternal life, not temporal life.

You inherited *their spirit which was dead* in trespasses and sins. You can't live in the kingdom of God with a dead spirit.

You inherited *their nature which is corrupt and fallen*. You cannot live or enter into the kingdom of God with a corrupt fallen nature.

Our first birth condemns us and makes us unfit to enter into the kingdom of God and this is why true Christians are born again or born twice.

The second birth qualifies us to enter into the kingdom of God. The second birth makes it possible for us to enter into the kingdom of God and live forever with God. When a person is born the second time they receive three things from their new Father who is God, that makes them fit to live in his kingdom.

You receive *his life which is eternal*, for you must have eternal life to enter into the kingdom of God.

You inherit *his Spirit which is Holy*, for you must have the Holy Spirit of God living in you to live in the kingdom of God.

You inherit *his nature which is holy and divine*, for you must have a divine nature to enter into his kingdom.

You also receive the blessings and benefits of God's only begotten Son when you are born again. You receive the blessings and benefits of his death and shed blood. Christ's death on the cross is counted as the death of all those who are born again. This means that God counts his Son's death as the full and complete payment for your sins, for no one can enter into the kingdom of God with unforgiven sins. Plus, God counts the righteousness of his Son as yours making you as righteous as he is, for no one can enter into the kingdom of God who is unrighteous.

True Christians are born twice and their second birth makes them different from everyone else. Not just anyone can say they have the *Life, Spirit and Nature of God* living in them, but every true Christian can make that claim for when they are born again they receive all three. Being born twice they have a guaranteed place reserved for them in the everlasting kingdom of God.

Their Faith

The faith of true Christians is totally different from the faith of the world around them. What makes it different? They have no faith or trust in themselves. Paul said true Christians: ***worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.*** (Philippians 3:3)

True Christians have no faith or confidence in themselves. This is why their faith is different, because the world says believe in yourself, trust in yourself, have faith in yourself and be self confident. The faith the world has comes from pride and a false belief about their so called strength, abilities and work. This is why it is hard for a self confident man to be saved and to become a true Christian.

To become a real Christian you must renounce all your faith and confidence in yourself, abilities and works. Instead, you must put all of your faith, trust and confidence in someone else's work, strength and ability; The Lord Jesus Christ.

This is what separates true Christians from the world and false Christians too. A true Christian renounces all of his faith and confidence in himself and in his works and trusts Christ alone to save him and Christ alone to keep him saved. Why? Because true Christians believe their so called righteousness are filthy rags and all of their works are bad and they know there is nothing they can do in the flesh to save themselves and keep themselves saved. That is why their total faith, trust and confidence are in Christ and him alone to save them and keep them saved.

We are saved by faith, but the faith that saves us is not faith and trust in ourselves or our works. Saving faith is total and complete trust in Christ's work on Calvary to save you and keep you saved forever.

This sounds strange to most people because it demeans the flesh. If you do not trust and rely on yourself and your works to save you, this means you have no faith and confidence in yourself. If you have no faith and confidence in yourself then you must believe there is nothing in you that merits salvation. This flies into the face of the world. The world says; if we do our part, God will do his part and both of us working together will save us. They believe God made the down payment on salvation and they pay the notes by good works. True Christians say all my works are an abomination to God. I am spirituality bankrupt and so I am going to trust Christ and his work alone to save me.

Their Life

The life of a Christian is not like any other for a true Christian spends his life serving and pleasing someone other than himself. The world says; live for yourself, don't deprive yourself, pamper yourself, please yourself and love yourself. You only have one chance to live so spend your life, time, and money pleasing and satisfying yourself.

But, the life of a real Christian is not a self centered life. It's a life spent for someone else. In 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 Paul defines the true Christian life. He wrote: ***For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.***

A Christian lives, but he does not live for himself; instead he lives for someone else. Who? The one who died for him and rose again. The Lord Jesus Christ.

We have heard preachers say we ought to live for the Lord, but I don't believe most people really understand what that statement means so let me use an illustration to help us understand it. Let's say that I take a blank piece of paper and sign my name at the bottom and I hand it to God and I say to him whatever you fill in above my name is what I will do. So God takes the blank paper and fills it in and hands it back to us and from that time forward we spend the rest of our life obeying what he wrote above our name.

That illustration is not farfetched because God has written down what he expects of us when we become Christians in Romans 12:1-2 which says: ***I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.***

This is what God expects out of every true Christian. God expects all of us who call ourselves Christians to present our bodies unto God as a living sacrifice and not be conformed unto the world any more. What does that mean? How can something be dead like a sacrifice and living at the same time? It means we die to ourselves and live the rest of our lives totally for the glory and benefit of the Lord. We put our life and plans on the back burner and God's plans and will on the front burner and God's plans and God's will become ours till we die.

Paul is an example of what it means to present your body unto God as a living sacrifice. When God saved Paul the first thing he said was: **Lord what will you have me to do?** That is when Paul handed that blank piece of paper to the Lord with his name signed at the bottom and the Lord filled it in and he spent the rest of his life doing it. When Paul was saved his life was turned completely around. Paul died, that is he no longer lived for Paul. He spent the rest of his life doing what God wrote above his name.

The life of a true Christian is spent doing the will of God. He finds out the will of God and then dedicates his life to doing the will of God. When he gets up in the morning he says: Lord what will you have me to do today? What are your plans today? What can I do today that will bring you the maximum praise and honor? How can I use my body to glorify you today?

The life of a true Christian is not a selfish life. He does not live for himself. He sacrifices his life, time, body, money, his all for the benefit of Christ and Christ alone. This is why true Christians put up with inconveniences and interruptions in their lives for the sake of Christ and his work that others would not. They do it because the love of Christ constrains them. They make sacrifices in their lives that others will not make. They do it to further the work of Christ. They are willing to suffer if necessary to do the will of God. They are willing to pay any price with their lives so that God and Christ receive the maximum glory from their lives.

True Christians are not self centered people. They don't believe the world revolves around them. Their world revolves around God and Christ. God and Christ is the center of their world and their lives.

True Christians do not expect God and Christ to wait on them and to serve them. They spend their lives serving and waiting on God and Christ.

True Christians do not treat God as if he is the great cash register in the sky either; True Christians give up and sacrifice their life, time and bodies for the sake of Christ.

The life of a true Christian is unlike the lives of most people; They sacrifice their life and their body and their time, their money, their comfort, their pleasures, their goals, their ambitions and everything they have for the benefit and blessing of someone else.

I know this description of true Christians sounds strange because for years we have been taught a watered down version of what a true Christian's life is supposed to be. Most people don't have a clue of what a true Christian

is really like and what they are supposed to do with their life once they get saved. I blame that on the preachers. They do not teach people the Bible definition of what a real Christian looks and sound like. God's people are not taught the whole council of God concerning salvation and the meaning of being a Christian. They have a distorted view of what real Christians are and what salvation is all about.

A few words about salvation and the Christian life.

Salvation is not a vacation or exemption from work.

Salvation does not give us the liberty to live our life as we please.

Salvation is not a part time job.

Salvation is not freedom from demands and restraints on our personal lives.

Salvation is not a license to sin.

Salvation is not just a fire escape out of hell.

Salvation is not a one time commitment.

Salvation does not mean that God becomes your errand boy or sugar daddy.

Salvation is not your ticket to health, wealth and prosperity.

Every true Christian should understand that when you get saved and become a Christian you go to work for God and spend the rest of your life working for him. It's not a part time job, its full time. You should understand God now owns you and he has every right to your body, time, money and everything you have and it's his to use as he pleases. You should understand you have one career now and it's called the work of the ministry. This is your one and only occupation if you are a Christian. You should understand your life ended at the cross and from this time forward your life is to be spent bringing as much glory and honor and praise to God and Christ as you possibly can. And you should try your best to get everything out of your life that dishonors God and brings shame to his name.

Their Death

The death of Christians makes them different from everyone else. They die, but their death is not the same as others. There are two major differences between the death of a Christian and a non Christian. Christians die once not twice. And their death is not a curse, but a blessing.

Revelation 14:13 says: ***Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.***

Instead of death being a curse, it's a blessing to true Christians. How can something as bad as death be a blessing? It's not a blessing to everyone for it says blessed are the dead which die IN THE LORD. The only people whose death is a blessing are those who die in the Lord. Why?

*Because when they die they are absent from the body and present with the Lord. They leave this world and enter into the eternal world. What is so bad about that?

*Because when they die they put off this corrupt, weak body of sin, sickness and disease and put on a new body in heaven. What's so bad about that?

*Because when they die their battle with the world, flesh and the devil are over. What is so bad about living in a place where there is no sin, no devil and no world to tempt you and make you fall?

*Because when they die they will see the one they have heard about, sung about, thought about, read about, studied about, but have never seen; Jesus Christ. What is so bad about being in the presence of Jesus Christ and all the holy angels?

*Because when they die they will be united with their loved ones who died in the Lord. What is so bad about that?

This is why it says blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. The death of a Christian is unlike the death of most people. Death to most people will be tragic and horrible for the moment they die their soul and spirit will enter into hell and begin an eternity of suffering and pain with no hope of getting out. And then they will suffer a second death in the lake of fire. Revelation 20:14-15 says: ***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.***

Are you a true Christian? Have you truly been born again for it's by the second birth from God that a person becomes a true Christian. Sad to say many people today are Christian in name only for they have never had a second new birth. They are still dead in trespasses and sins and they cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

If you profess to be a real Christian who is your faith and confidence in? Do you have faith and confidence in yourself or is all of your faith and confidence in Christ alone to save you and keep you saved? If you have faith in anything other than Christ to save you then you are not a true Christian. You can talk, act, dress, and say you are a Christian but if you have the slightest faith in works to save you and keep you saved you are as lost as an atheist who has no faith at all. It's not Christ and your works that save. It's Christ minus your works that save. Christ did not die to help you get saved, he died to save you and keep you saved because you were beyond help and without hope.

If you are a Christian have you obeyed Romans 12:1-2? Can you honestly say that for you to live is Christ? How much glory and honor does God get out of your body, time, money, home, and your personal life? Have you signed your name at the bottom of the page and agreed with God to do what he writes above it? What are you doing now in the way of good works that men can see that causes them to glorify your father in heaven? (Matt.5:16)

If you are a Christian what are you doing now in view of your coming death? When you die what kind of testimony will you leave behind? What kind of works will you take to judgment? When you get to the end of your life and death is at the door will you be pleased when you look back over your life? Is everything in your life right with God now, or will you be ashamed when you face God in judgment after you die. It says: ***It is appointed unto men once to die but after this the judgment. (Hebrews 9:27)***

Only one life will soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last. This life is the only chance you have to serve and work for God. This is the only chance you have to reap rewards and crowns and blessings for eternity. Don't waste your life and time on things that will not matter at the judgment. Redeem your time and life and use it wisely so you will have no regrets when you die or when the Lord comes again.

What Right Division Does And Does Not Mean

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2 Timothy 2:15

One of the best ways to define what words mean is to eliminate what they do not mean. By seeing what words do not mean helps us to narrow their definition down so that they are easier to define. It's called the process of elimination. By a process of eliminating what words cannot possibly mean makes it easier for us to see what they truly mean.

The question of this article is: **What does rightly dividing the word of truth really mean?** We hear these words 100's of times in sermons and in books, but what do they mean? If you ask 10 people what these words mean you will probably get 10 different answers. With so many different definitions how can we get to the real meaning of these words? The best way to define right division is by eliminating what it cannot possibly mean. By doing so we can narrow it down and get its correct interpretation. But how can we do this? By the man who wrote these words. Paul wrote 2 Timothy 2:15 and by studying the **things he said and did** when he wrote these words, we can see what right division does and does not mean. Read that last sentence again.

It is obvious Paul would not do or say anything that contradicted what he wrote in 2 Timothy 2:15. When he said to rightly divide the word of truth he did not say or do anything that wrongly divided the word of truth. No one can accuse him of wrongly dividing the word of truth for what he said and did never contradicted 2 Timothy 2:15.

The following is a list of some of the things Paul said and did through out his ministry. **As you read them, keep in mind they were said and done by the man who said to rightly divide the word of truth.** If Paul did these things and said these things then we know they do not violate 2 Timothy 2:15. If these things are contrary to right division then Paul was a hypocrite because he said and did all these things at the same time he said to rightly divide the word of truth.

Paul the apostle who said to rightly divide the word of truth:

Worked signs and wonders not only among the Jews, but even among the gentiles to get them to believe the gospel.

See Romans 15:18-21

Persuaded his converts to be baptized in water.

See Acts 16:14-15, Acts 16:30-34, Acts 18:7-8, Acts 19:1-5

Was persecuted for preaching the resurrection hope of Israel.

See Acts 26:6-8, Acts 28:20

Preached and claimed the spiritual promises God made to Israel in the Old Testament.

Romans 15:27

Based church doctrine on the Old Testament scriptures.

He quotes the Old Testament 150-200 times in his epistles. He uses the expression as it is written referring to the Old Testament 33 times in his epistles. He based at least 60 major church doctrines on the Old Testament. He said all scripture including the Old Testament is profitable for church doctrine in 2 Timothy 3:15-16.

Preached what he calls “his gospel” from the Old Testament.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4, Romans 1:1-4, Acts 26:22-23

Always went to the Jew first because the promises were made to them.

Romans 1:16, 9:4-5

Taught gentiles that they are grafted into the good olive tree along with the Jews whom he calls the election of grace.

Romans 11:5-6, 17-18

Taught gentile believers they are now the seed of Abraham and heirs to the promises of Abraham.

Galatians 3:29, Romans 4:11

Preached the second coming of Christ and the resurrection of the saints foretold by the Prophets in the Old Testament.

Compare 1 Corinthians 15:54-55 with Isaiah 25:8-9, Hosea 13:14

Preached the blessings and promises of the New Covenant being a minister of the New Covenant.

2 Corinthians 3:5-6

Based the doctrine of justification by faith without works on Genesis 15:1-6, and Habakkuk 2:4.

Romans 4:1-5, Romans 1:16-17

Based the doctrine of imputed righteousness by faith only on what David said in the Old Testament.

Romans 4:6-8

Kept the law of God and told the church to keep it.

Romans 7:22, 25, Romans 13:8-10 (The moral commandments)

Preached the kingdom of God that was originally promised to Israel as the inheritance of the church.

Acts 26:18, 1 Thessalonians 2:12, 2 Thessalonians 1:4-5, Ephesians 5:5, Acts 14:22, 19:8, 20:25, 28:23, 28:31.

Observed the Lord's Supper which is a memorial of the New Testament and told the church to observe it till Jesus comes again.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Wrote epistles to the same church of God he persecuted before he was saved.

Compare Galatians 1:13 with 1 Corinthians 1:1-2, 2 Corinthians 1:1, Acts 20:28.

Commanded lost people to repent when they believed the gospel and to do works meet for repentance after they believed the gospel.

Acts 17:30-31, Acts 20:21, Acts 26:19-20

Instructed sinners to believe and call on the Lord and to confess with their mouth the Lord Jesus to be saved.

Romans 10:9-14

Warned Christians that God would chastise them for their sins if they did not judge and confess them.

1 Corinthians 11:30-32, Hebrews 12:5-8

Commanded the church to keep the ordinances he delivered to the church.

1 Corinthians 11:1-2

Declared that gentiles are no longer aliens from the commonwealth of Israel but are now one body with them.

Ephesians 2:11-16

Preached the heavenly city New Jerusalem as the mother and home of the church.

Galatians 4:26, Hebrews 12:22-24

Instructed Christians that Christ's coming to gather the church is not at hand but is preceded by a number of prophetic events.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-10

Wrote there is one coming of Christ in the future not two or three.

Ephesians 4:4, Hebrews 9:28, 1 Corinthians 15:22-25.

Pronounced a curse on any man including the other apostles or angels from heaven who preached a gospel different from his.

Galatians 1:5-9

Declared that both he and Peter and the other apostles were justified by faith alone without the works of the law and rebuked Peter for not living up to it.

Galatians 2:14-16

Wrote that the church began when God made Christ the head of the body when he raised him from the dead and set him at his right in heavenly places in Acts 1, not 2, 9, 13, 18, or 28.

Ephesians 1:20-23, Colossians 1:18 Mark 16:19.

Taught that all believers are appointed to suffer tribulation and that tribulation will increase before the second coming of Christ.

1 Thessalonians 3:3-4, Acts 14:22, 2 Timothy 2:12, Philippians 1:29

Wrote an epistle to the same Hebrews as Peter.

2 Peter 3:15 with 1 Peter 2:9.

Wrote epistles to the same church at Ephesus and Laodicea as John.

Revelation 2:1 with Ephesians 1:1. Revelation 3:14 with Colossians 4:16

Followed Christ's example and the doctrines he preached and practiced in the Four Gospels throughout his ministry.

1 Corinthians 11:1

Taught believers that certain rewards, crowns and blessings were conditional on good works and could be lost because of bad works.

2 Corinthians 5:10-11, 1 Corinthians 3:12-15, Colossians 3:24-25

Said the church is built upon the foundation of the New Testament Apostles and the Old Testament Prophets.

Ephesians 2:20

Declared that the mystery of Ephesians 3:6 is not the church, but that the gentiles are now fellowheirs with the Jews to their inheritance in the kingdom of God, members of the same body with them and partake of their promise and promises in Christ by faith alone in the gospel without works or circumcision.

Ephesians 3:6

Said the justification of heathen gentiles by faith alone was promised to Abraham.

Galatians 3:8 with Genesis 22:18

Said his ministry to bring light and salvation to the gentiles was prophesied by the prophets.

See Isaiah 49:6 with Acts 13:47

Proclaimed that he was not sent to start the church but to open the door of salvation to gentiles into the church.

Acts 13:1-4 with Acts 14:25-28

Preached Christ as the Great High Priest of the church.

Hebrews 3:1

Preached a present and future tense salvation.

2 Timothy 1:9 with Romans 13:11

Taught us that mystery does not exclude prophecy for many mysteries were concealed in the prophets and many prophecies were mysteries.

For example compare Romans 16:25 with 1 Corinthians 15:3-4. Compare 1 Corinthians 15:53-54 with Isaiah 25:8-9, Hosea 13:14.

Did not hack the Bible up and separate the books into pigeon holes and put up no trespassing signs on the books he did not write. He said all scripture is profitable for doctrine, all scripture is profitable

for reproof, all scripture is profitable for correction and all scripture is profitable for instruction in righteousness.

2 Timothy 3:16

Said that Christ preached to the gentiles in person and then by proxy through him. Paul carried out the gentile ministry of Christ.

1 Timothy 3:16, Romans 15:8-16, Galatians 1:15-16, Acts 13:47 with Isaiah 49:6.

I have purposely picked these examples because many people today will accuse you of *wrongly dividing the word of truth* if you preach and practice these things. If that were true, Paul would be guilty of wrongly dividing the word of truth for he practiced and preached all these things and more. Therefore, those who practice or preach these things today do not wrongly divide the word of truth. The question is; what does it mean to rightly divide the word of truth?

CONTEXT - CONTEXT - CONTEXT

The first law of Bible study is: Interpret every text from the context in which it is found. What does this mean? Pay attention to what is written BEFORE it and AFTER it. And when you interpret 2 Timothy 2:15 from the context in which it appears you will see it has nothing to do with the issues you have just read.

2 Timothy 2:14-18

Verse 14 Of these things put *them* in remembrance, charging *them* before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, *but* to the subverting of the hearers.

Verse 15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Verse 16 But shun profane *and* vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

Verse 17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus;

Verse 18 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

Notice that the command to rightly divide the word of truth in verse 15 is surrounded by a number of warnings about words.

The warning in verse 14 is a warning about striving about words of no profit and words that subvert the hearers. It's a warning about useless profitless and subversive words.

Notice the warning in verse 16 is about profane and vain babblings that are ungodly. It's a warning about profane, vain and ungodly words.

Notice the warning in verse 17 is about words that eat like a canker or a sore. It's a warning about cankerous words.

Notice the warning in verse 18 is about erring from the truth and teaching false doctrines about resurrection. It's a warning about errors and false doctrines that overthrow people's faith.

Right in the middle of all these warnings about subversive words, unprofitable words, profane words, vain words, babblings, ungodly words, cankerous words, lies and false doctrine is found the command to rightly divide the word of truth.

When something is divided it is separated from something else. In the context in which it appears we are to rightly divide and separate the word of truth from what?

Words of no profit that subvert people.

Profane and vain words and babblings that are ungodly.

Cankeraus words that eat the souls and spirits of men.

Lies, errors and false doctrines that over throw the faith of people.

In other words, it's a command to divide and separate the word of truth from lies and false doctrine. Why?

Because every lie the devil ever told has an element of truth in it.

For example read this statement carefully: ***Jesus Christ is the virgin born Son of God, who lived a sinless life and died on the cross for our sins and we can be saved by grace through faith and the grace by which we are saved is acquired by taking the 7 sacraments.***

What part of this statement is true and what part is false? The majority of this statement is the absolute truth. Jesus Christ was born of a virgin. He did live a sinless life. He died for our sins. We can be saved by grace through faith. The part that is untrue and the most damning is the statement; *The grace by which we are saved is acquired by taking the 7 sacraments.* Those few words frustrate the grace of God and make the cross of Christ vain because it adds works to salvation. When we hear and read statements like this 2 Timothy 2:15 commands us to divide and separate the truth from lies and false doctrine. Lost people cannot divide and separate truth from lies and sad to say many Christians cannot either. It's up to us who know the truth to rightly divide the word of truth from the lies and false doctrines the devil mixes with the truth.

The devil always mixes his lies with truth to get people to swallow it. False doctrine is not always totally false. There is truth in many false doctrines and the truth is what hooks people into believing it. False doctrine is like rat poison. Rat poison is 99% good grain and only 1% poison. But the rat would not eat it without the good grain. So it is with the lies and false doctrines of the devil. There is always an element of truth in false doctrine and it's up to us who know the truth to separate the truth from the lies.

That's the definition of 2 Timothy 2:15 from the context in which it appears.

It is wrong to take a verse out of its context and make it say something different from its context. By interpreting 2 Timothy 2:15 in its context we can see that it has nothing to do with the issues I have listed in this article. It has nothing to do with many of the definitions that men have given it

through the years. God alone knows how many doctrines and systems of theology have been built upon 2 Timothy 2:15 that are totally foreign to its context!

What Salvation Is And Why We Need It

In 1 Timothy 2:4 Paul wrote: Who (God) will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

In John 3:16-17 he wrote: 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.

In 1 Timothy 1:15 he wrote: This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

After reading these verses it is very obvious that God will have all men to be saved. God is not willing that any should perish. God does not delight in the suffering of the lost in hell. God does not want you or anyone to go to hell. God wants to save you and make you one of his own. God wants you to live with him forever in the coming glorious kingdom of God.

If God will have all men and women to be saved, we must ask the question; what do we need to be saved from and how can we be saved? Those are the two most important questions you could possibly ask in this life, for the answers will determine where you will be a million years from now. This is not an exaggeration. It is the truth and I will attempt to answer these two questions in these articles and books.

What We Need To Be Saved From

What do we need to be saved from? I asked a lady if she was saved once and she said yes; I save green stamps. So we must define what we mean when we use the word saved. Many people today are not saved simply because they do not know of anything they need to be saved from. They do not feel they are in any kind of danger. So when I tell someone they need to be saved, I must tell them what they need to be saved from otherwise they will be confused. I am convinced that when people really see what they

need to be saved from, more than likely they will get saved. Once a person sees the danger they are in, then they will be more than willing to be saved.

The word salvation means: deliverance, rescue, escape, to liberate or to set free. When you look at its definition it implies there must be some kind of danger, hazard, risk, jeopardy or peril we need to be saved from. If a doctor prescribes a medicine for you that implies you must be sick or have some type of physical problem. If God will have all men to be saved that implies we must be in some type of danger, peril and jeopardy.

But, what is the danger and peril we need to be saved from? The answer is: **Sin and the penalty of sin**. We use the word sin all the time, but what is sin and what is the penalty of sin? If you ask 10 people what is sin, you may get 10 different answers. If you ask people what is the penalty of sin, most people do not know there is a penalty for committing sin. Today, people laugh about sin and make jokes about it and so it is not taken seriously. The fact there is a penalty attached to sin seems ridiculous to many people. With God, sin is very serious and I am convinced that once you see what sin is and how serious it is, then you will understand the penalty. And once you see the penalty of sin, then you will see what we need to be saved from.

The Definition of Sin

What is sin? In 1 John 3:4 he defines what sin is: He wrote: ***Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.***

John says when we sin, we transgress the law. He says sin is the transgression of the law. In other words, when we break the law, we commit sin. But whose law is he writing about? The Law of God. God has a Law and most of us are familiar with it; it's called the 10 commandments; not the 10 suggestions, but 10 commandments. When we break those commandments, we sin against God. Take a look at the 10 commandments.

(1) Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

(2) Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them.

(3) Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

(4) Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

(5) Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

(6) Thou shalt not kill.

(7) Thou shalt not commit adultery.

(8) Thou shalt not steal.

(9) Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

(10) Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

*The 9th commandment says: *thou shalt not lie*. Let me ask you this question and be truthful: Have you always told the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth? If not, what does that make you? doesn't that make you a liar?

*The 10th commandment says: *Thou shalt not covet*. Have you ever coveted or lusted after something that belonged to someone else? If so what does that make you? An idolater for covetousness is idolatry. (Colossians 3:5)

*The 8th commandment says: *Thou shalt not steal*. Be truthful, have you ever taken something that did not belong to you regardless of its value? If so, what does that make you? A thief.

*The 3rd commandment says: *Thou shalt not take God's name in vain*. Have you ever used God's name in a way that does not honor him? If so, what does that make you? A blasphemer.

*Have you ever looked upon someone with lust? Jesus said that if you do that makes you an adulterer. (Matthew 5:28)

If you said yes to these questions then you have just admitted that you are a liar, thief, idolater, blasphemer and an adulterer.

If this isn't bad enough, God says that if you break just one of his commandments, you are guilty of breaking all 10 of them. James 2:10 says: **For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.** Breaking one law makes us guilty of breaking all of God's Laws. This means we are guilty of the sins of: Hatred, Idolatry,

Blasphemy, Disobedience, Rebellion, Murder, Adultery, Lying, Stealing, and Covetousness. These are the sins we are guilty of. These are the charges God brings against us. This is why the Bible says all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. God said this in Romans 3:23 because we have broken all of his laws and commandments.

The Penalty of Sin

We all know when we break the laws of men we pay a penalty. When I was young I can't tell you how many tickets I got for speeding. I had a heavy foot and loved to drive fast. Today, speed scares me, but when I was young the faster, the better. I paid many fines for speeding and the fines I paid was the penalty for breaking the laws against speeding.

God has a law and it's the 10 commandments and when we break his laws, we pay a penalty. The penalty for breaking the Laws of God is very severe; It is death! The Law of God is a very strict law and it punishes everyone who breaks its commandments and the punishment is death. Not just physical death, but what the Bible calls the second death. What is the second death? In Revelation 20 John describes the second death. He describes it like this:

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.
(Revelation 20:13-15)

These are some very sobering verses and they show us what God thinks about sin. Sin is so horrible to God, so repulsive and so evil that the only fitting punishment for sin, is to cast sinners into the lake of fire. Hell and the lake of fire is the penalty of sin. This puts sin in a different light doesn't it? Sin is not something to laugh about, ignore, or make jokes about. God takes sin seriously, because it violates his Law, sin dares his wrath, sin rebels against his authority and sin mocks his justice. God hates sin so much that he created hell and the lake of fire to punish those who break his Laws.

This creates a huge problem for all of us; we have broken all of God's laws. God said if you break one of my laws, you are guilty of breaking all of them. This means we are guilty of every sin the Law of God condemns and we

have just seen that hell and the lake of fire were created for all law breakers. This means we are all doomed to hell and the lake of fire. This is terrible news. but it's the truth.

God's Plan Of Salvation

The question everyone should ask is: how can we escape hell and the lake of fire if we are sinners? There is a way we can escape hell and the lake of fire and it's God's way and his way alone. God has devised a plan of salvation for us sinners and it's the only plan that works. We cannot devise our own plan of salvation. We can't create a way to be saved and expect God to put his stamp of approval on it, just because we are sincere. God has a plan and a way of saving us and unless we follow his plan we cannot be saved. We can't pick and choose the way we want to be saved. There is only one way to get saved and it's God's way and unless we get saved God's way, we will never be saved.

God's plan of salvation works because it solves all the problems we have with sin. Sin and the penalty of sin is the reason we need to be saved. We are sinners by nature and choice and being sinners we have the sentence of eternal death and condemnation hanging over our heads. But, the salvation God offers us takes care of the sin problem and his plan frees us from future condemnation. His plan is the only plan that can effectively deal with sin and damnation. So, we had better find out what he says about being saved and then believe it. We do not want to place our souls in the hands of men or a church and let them determine a way for us to be saved, because they are sinners like us. We must turn to God and place the salvation of our souls in his hands and then do what he tells us to do to be saved. This way we will be safe and saved.

If you are concerned about where you will spend eternity, you had better be right about what you believe, for what you believe will determine where you go when you die.

You don't wait until you have a wreck to put on your safety belt do you? It will be too late then. You are not going to wait until you die to find out if your life insurance policy is good or bad are you? When you die it will be too late.

Are you going to wait until you die to find out if what you believed about salvation was right or wrong? After you die it will be too late. You need to know **now**, before you die, to make sure you are right.

Don't think that what you believe does not matter with God. What you believe matters greatly with God, for it will determine where you go when you die. Don't ever take faith and belief lightly. **Be sure of your faith now before you die because one second after you die you will not be able to correct it if it is wrong.** When it comes to salvation accuracy is what counts not sincerity. Many people are sincere but they are sincerely wrong about salvation, especially salvation by grace.

What The Law Could Not And Cannot Do

Romans 8:3-4: **For what the law could not do**, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

These verses say, ***what the law could not do***. The Jews and especially the Pharisees in Paul's day assumed the law could do many things that it could not do and was never intended to do. There are many people today who assume the law did things that it could not do. They actually agree with the Pharisees. But there were many things that the law could not do in the past and cannot do today. And these are not minor issues. They pertain to salvation and eternal life.

The Law Could Not And Cannot Justify Sinners

Romans 3:19-20: ***Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.***

Galatians 2:16: **Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.**

Keeping the law and its ordinances could not in the past and cannot justify a sinner today in the sight of God. Justification is a judicial act by which the guilty person is cleared from the guilt of his crimes or sins. In the Bible, it means being cleared from the guilt of sins and crimes by the death of another. No one can be justified or cleared from the guilt of their crimes and sins unless someone pays for their crimes and sins. And the only payment God will accept for sin is death. And the death of the animal sacrifices under the Law could not justify sinners. If they did, then the death of Christ would have been unnecessary. Galatians 2:21: ***I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.*** If the animal sacrifices of the Law could justify sinners, then Christ's death was unnecessary and in vain.

The Law Could Not And Cannot Give Men Eternal Life

Galatians 3:21: ***Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.***

What Paul is saying is that as good as the Law was it could not give anyone eternal life. No one gained eternal life in the past by keeping the law and no one today can gain eternal life by keeping the law. If they could, then righteousness and justification should have been by the law. The fact that no one could or can be justified or made righteous by the law, then no one could or can receive eternal life by keeping the law. If it could not justify a sinner, then surely it cannot give eternal life to him.

The Law Could Not And Cannot Take Away Sins Forever

Hebrews 10:3-4: ***But in those sacrifices (animal) there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.***

Hebrews 10:11: ***And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:***

The animal sacrifices offered under the law could not take away sin forever. It was not possible. This is why no one could or can be justified and cleared from the guilt of all sin forever by the law. This is why the law could not give eternal life. The sacrifices of the law were not adequate to justify sinners or give eternal life.

Hebrews 8:7-8 says: ***For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.***

The Law had a number of faults and that is why God made a second covenant to take the place of the first. The main fault of the law was in the animal sacrifices offered for sin.

1 They were not the same nature of those who sinned.

2 They were not sufficient enough or valuable enough or powerful enough to make atonement for the sins and crimes committed against a holy God.

3 The animals offered under the law did not consent or willingly offer themselves in the place of the sinner. The atoning sacrifice had to be capable of consenting and willingly substituting itself in the place of the sinner.

If the law could not take away sin or justify sinners or give eternal life, then how were men saved under the law? The answer is by the same way Abraham was **before the law.**

Romans 4:1-4; ***What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.***

Abraham was justified by faith alone in the promise God made to him 430 years before the law was given to Moses and so were all those who followed in the steps of Abraham. (See vs. 9-12)

The Law Did Not Change The Promise

Galatians 3:13-18:

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: That the blessing of Abraham (Gal, 3:7) might come on the

Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

Concerning these verses Albert Barnes says:

God cannot have two ways of justifying and saving people; and if he revealed a mode to Abraham, and that mode was by faith, then it could not be by the observance of the Law which was given so long after. The main design of the argument and the illustration here is to show that the promise made to Abraham was by no means made void by the giving of the Law. The Law had another design, which did not interfere with the promise made to Abraham. That stood on its own merits, irrespective of the demands and the design of the Law. The way Paul wrote these words in Galatians 3 about Abraham and the law indicates someone was objecting to what Paul said. The objection may have been that there were important acts of legislation which succeeded the promise made to Abraham, and that the promise must have been superseded by the giving of the Law. To this he replies that the Mosaic Law given at a late period could not take away or nullify a solemn promise made to Abraham, but that it was intended for a different purpose. The law that came after the promise did not disannul or replace the promise God made to Abraham. The promise remained in effect under the law and is still in effect today.

The Purpose Of The Law

If the law did not disannul the promise made to Abraham, what was the purpose of the law? Paul answers that question in Galatians 3:19-26;

Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

The law was added or given because of transgressions; That is, the law was given to show the true nature of sin and transgressions or to show what sin was. It was not given to reveal another way of justification, because there was already a way of justification given to Abraham 430 years before the law. It was given to reveal sin and to deter people from sin and to declare its penalty and to convince people of it and to prepare them for the coming of Christ who would die for sin and forgive it once for all. And once the seed who is Christ showed up he put an end to the law.

Romans 10:4 say: ***For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.***

The law was **added** and it was **ended**. It had a beginning and an end. It began with Moses and it ended with Christ. It served its purpose and it still does as far as being a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ and to define what sin is.

Galatians 3:24-26: ***Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.***

The law was not given to justify sinners or give men eternal life. It was added to bring men to Christ to be justified by his death and shed blood and for them to receive eternal life from him. If the law could justify sinners and give them eternal life then Christ died in vain.

There was a way for men to be justified before the law and to receive eternal life and it's the way Abraham was justified in Genesis 15:8 according to Paul in Romans 4:1-4. It's the same way we are today; by faith alone without works. Abraham was justified by faith before the law and we are justified by faith after the law was abolished.

What The Law Could Do

If the law could not justify sinners or give them eternal life then what advantage was there in keeping it? It gave men a long life in this world and many physical blessings in this life. Read Deuteronomy 28:1-14. All the blessings of the law were physical in nature and were conditional upon obedience to its commandments.

Christ Did What The Law Could Not Do

What the law could not do for sinners, Christ's once for all sacrifice for sin and sinners does. His death and resurrection for sin forgives all sins and takes them away forever. His death and shed blood justifies and clears

sinner from the guilt of all sins. And by his death and resurrection we are given eternal never ending life. The animal sacrifices of the law could not do any of these things, but the sacrifice of Christ does for it was a perfect sacrifice for the following reasons.

1 The animal sacrifices of the law were not the same nature of those who sinned. But Jesus Christ took on him the nature of the ones he died for. He became flesh and blood like us to die for us and like us. **Hebrews 2:14-18: Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him 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.**

2 The animal sacrifices of the law were not sufficient or valuable or powerful enough to make atonement for the sins and crimes we committed against a holy God. But the sacrifice of Christ is sufficient enough and valuable enough and powerful enough to make atonement for all the sins and crimes we have committed against God.

Acts 13:38-39: **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.**

3 The atoning sacrifice had to be capable of consenting and willingly substituting itself in the place of the sinner. The animals offered under the law did not consent or willingly offer themselves in the place of the sinner. But Jesus Christ was a willing sacrifice. He was not forced to die against his will. He consented unto the Father's will.

Hebrews 10:5-9: **Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest**

not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

What The Law Cannot Do, No Religion Can Do

The Law of Moses was the greatest religious system in the world in time past. It was created by God himself, but it's laws and sacraments and ordinances could not take away sin or justify sinners or give men eternal life. If the religious system of the Law could not take away sin or justify sinners or give men eternal life, then no religious system in the world today can either, such as; the Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim religions and all the rest.

Paul plainly says that if a man could be justified and made righteous by observing the commandments and sacraments of the Law religion, then Christ died in vain in Galatians 2:21. The same is true of any religion today. Salvation is the free gift of God, but even though it is free, it is not cheap. It cost Jesus Christ his life to give it to you. And beware of any religion that puts a price tag on the gift of God which is eternal life.

Why It Pays To Live Godly And Costs Not To

We all know the advantages in being saved but what about the advantages of living godly in Christ Jesus after we are saved? This is something every Christian should know for there are many.

Ephesians 1:4-5: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

The choosing or electing in vs. 4 was not for salvation but for the ones he adopted in vs. 5 to be holy and without blame before him in love. God chose his adopted children to be holy and without blame. He chose them to be that way and live this way before the foundation of the world. The personal conduct of God's people today was determined before Genesis 1:1.

Ephesians 5:25-27: Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and

cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Christ wants his church to be clean and holy and without blemish. His will is for them to be free from moral and spiritual spots and wrinkles and blemishes. One reason he gave us his word was to wash us and cleanse us and make us holy and without blemish. If you read the word and obey it often it will give you a spiritual and moral bath.

Titus 2:11-12: For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.

The grace of God that saves us in verse 11 also teaches us how to live after we are saved by grace. Sinners saved by grace should and can deny ungodliness, worldly lusts and live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.

It's obvious from these verses in Ephesians and Titus that it's God's will for his people to live holy, godly and righteous lives. In this booklet I will list the advantages and blessings of living holy and godly lives and the disadvantages and costs for not living godly and holy. The fact that God told us to live this way shows us we can for he never told us to do something we can't do. To help and aid and assist us to live this way he put his Spirit in us to show us how. He gave us a new nature to strengthen us and his word to cleanse us when we get defiled. Every Christian in the world can live according to Titus 2:12 and what I want to show you is that it pays to live godly and holy and costs not to.

It Keeps Us In Fellowship With God

1 John 1:4-7: And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

According to these verses fellowship with God is conditional upon our walk or personal conduct in this world. If we walk in the light, that is if we live godly and holy lives we have fellowship with God but if we don't we lose

that fellowship. Fellowship implies harmony, communion, friendship, and oneness with someone. When you are in fellowship with God you are in harmony with him, communion with him, friendship with him and oneness with him.

Relationship with God as sons is one thing, but fellowship with him is another matter. In Ephesians 5 the church is the wife of Christ because we are married to Christ according to Romans 7. But you can be married to someone and not have fellowship with them. I have known people who were married but there was little fellowship and harmony between them. They fought like cats and dogs.

All saints are married to Christ but not all saints have fellowship with him. Fellowship is broken when one party offends the other. Our sins offend God and they grieve and quench his Spirit and as long as they go un-confessed, fellowship and harmony between you and God is broken and will stay that way until you confess and forsake the sin that offends him. And the worst place for a Christian to be in this life is out of fellowship with the God who saved them. As long as you remain out of fellowship you are robbed of the joy of your salvation like David. (Psa. 51:12)

John wrote these words about fellowship with God he said: ***that your joy may be full.*** The greatest joy a Christian can have in this life is the joy of being in fellowship and harmony with God and the most miserable time you will spend in this life is the time you spend out of fellowship with him.

It Makes Us Meet For The Master's Use

The aim of every Christian should be for God to use them. Here is what it takes.

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

20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. (People and works)

21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

The word “meet” in verse 21 means suitable, proper, becoming and qualified. But how do we become meet, suitable, proper, becoming and qualified for the masters use?

By departing from iniquity in vs. 19

Purging ourselves from dishonorable works and men vs.21

Following after righteousness, faith charity and peace vs. 22

This is what it takes to be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meet for the master’s use. People say I want God to use me. Here is what it takes to qualify and to be meet and suitable. God uses clean vessels.

Living Godly Now Will Be Rewarding Later At The Judgment Seat Of Christ

2 Corinthians 5:9-11: Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

This is God’s summons for us to appear in his courtroom. We all have an appointment with judgment. There is a court date in our future. God will judge both the good and bad works we have done in these bodies since we were saved. If this is so, wouldn’t it be wise to live as godly and holy as you can in this life? Wouldn’t it be wise to live as if we were going to stand before the Judgment Seat Of Christ today?

1 Corinthians 3:11-15: For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

The works we do in this life will be under review at the Judgment Seat Of Christ. God will reward the good and penalize the bad. If this is true, then wouldn’t it be wise to live as godly and holy in this life so that when we are

judged we will be rewarded and not penalized? God will reward the spiritual in that day who live godly and holy in this life, but he will penalize the carnal who walk after the flesh in this life.

Your works matter to God for our outcome at the Judgment Seat Of Christ is determined by our conduct and works and faith right now. If that is true will you be rewarded or penalized in that day?

Living Godly Will Save You Now From Chastisement

1 Corinthians 11:29-32: For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

These verses tell us:

That God does not overlook our sins as some think.

That God chastises saints who are forgiven. Forgiveness does not exempt us from chastisement.

The chastisement can come in many forms.

But chastisement can be avoided by two ways: Live a godly and holy life and you will not be chastised. Judge and confess your sins to escape chastisement or further chastisement. The easiest way to be free from chastisement in this life is not to commit the sins that bring chastisement in your life. This is a very good reason to live a godly and holy life.

Living Godly Is A Sign Of True Faith And Salvation

James 2:17-19: Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

What James is saying is faith demonstrates it is real and genuine by works, such as living godly in Christ Jesus. Works are not infallible for a person could have works but no faith such as the Pharisees. But just because there are people like the Pharisees today who have good works but no faith does not negate the principal that true faith is seen in our works. It only

stands to reason that if a person has been saved by the grace and power of God it will be demonstrated in their lives by their works.

For example:

The Thessalonian Saints

1Thessaloinains 1:9: For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;

Paul knew they had turned to the Lord. How did he know this? Because they turned from idols to serve the living and true God. Their works vindicated their faith.

The Ephesian Saints

Act 19:18-19: And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all *men*: and they counted the price of them, and found *it* fifty thousand *pieces* of silver.

The faith of the Ephesians was clearly seen by their works when they destroyed their idols and burned their satanic books after they were saved. Faith is invisible and the only way it can be seen is by works. You can say you have faith but if you have no works to back it up, it makes the rest of us wonder if it's true or not.

It Causes Men To Glorify God

Matthew 5:16: Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Good works such as godly living causes men to glorify God. Paul is an example of this. He wrote in Galatians 1:21-24: **Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ: But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. And they glorified God in me.** They knew Paul before and after he was saved. When they saw the tremendous change in his life they glorified God. One of the best testimonies of salvation by grace is a life changed by grace. They knew how wicked and vile Paul was before he was saved and when they saw the change in him after he was saved they were amazed and gave God the glory.

It Enhances The Possibility Of Our Prayers Being Answered

Psalms 66:18-19: If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me: *But* verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.

What does iniquity in our heart do? It keeps God from hearing the voice of our prayers.

1 John 3:22: And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

Notice that God answers our prayers if we keep his moral commandments (Rom. 13:8-10) and do the things pleasing in his sight.

A man had two sons, one was obedient the other rebellious. They both ask him to give them something. Which one has the advantage over the other? Which one is more likely to get what he asks for? It's obvious, the one who obeys him and does the things that are pleasing in his sight.

Conclusion

Psalms 139:23-24: Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if *there be any* wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Most business hire outside auditors to come in and search their books to see if they can find any mistakes or errors. David asked God to take an audit of his heart and thoughts to see if there some wicked way in him so he could get it right. He did not want it in his life. He asked God to show it to him so he could confess and forsake it.

We need to do the same. Pray this Psalm as a prayer and if God reveals to you some wicked thing and sin in you, then confess it and forsake it. It pays to do it and will cost you if you don't.

Why The Blessed Hope Is Blessed

In Titus 2:13 Paul wrote: ***Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.***

As Christians we do not look for and long for the same things as lost people. Lost people look for the world to get better, but we don't. Lost people look for mankind to get better, but we don't. Lost people look for society to get better, but we don't. Lost people look to politics and politicians to make their lives better, but we don't. Why? Because the Bible tells us the world and men and society and politics will only get worse. Our hope is in none of these things. Our hope is totally different than the hope

that men have. Our hope is the blessed hope which is the literal, physical, visible second coming of Christ. We really believe he is coming again just like he promised when he left. When Jesus went back to heaven in Acts 1 the angels said to the apostles who saw him go up: ***This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.***

What the angels said to the apostles is our hope. It is the return of Jesus Christ to this earth. We live with this promise in our hearts. We live with the prospect of Jesus Christ coming again in our life time. We desire his return, we love his return and we are eager for him to return. To us, nothing is more important than the second coming of Christ.

This is what Paul meant in Colossians 3:1-4: ***If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.***

Notice carefully that when Paul said seek those things which are above and set your affections on things above, he then mentions the appearing of Christ from above in verse 4. When we seek those things which above and set our affections on things above, it means to seek after and set our affection on the second coming of Christ.

Paul practiced what he preached for in 2 Timothy 4:8 wrote this about Christ's coming: ***Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.***

In Titus 2:12 we look for his appearing, in Colossians 3:1-4 we seek after and set our affection on his appearing and in 2 Timothy 4:8 we love his appearing. And we should, because his appearing is a blessed hope. And when you see the reasons you will look for it, love it, seek after it and set your affection on it too.

(1) The Blessed Hope Is Blessed Because We Will Be Re-united With Our Loved Ones Who Have Died In Christ

1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 says: ***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.***

As you can see, many Thessalonians were troubled about their loved ones who had died in the Lord. They did not understand where they were or if they would ever see them again. Paul wrote these verses to assure them and us that they would not only see their loved ones again, but they would be united with them forever when Christ comes again. He said that when Christ comes again he will bring the dead in Christ with him. If he brings them with him they must be with him now in heaven. The dead in Christ are now with Christ in heaven and when he comes again he will bring them with him. The dead in Christ are the saints who will return with Christ when he comes. In 1 Thessalonians 3:13 Paul wrote: ***To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.***

When Christ comes again he will come with his saints according to 1 Thess. 3:13 and for his saints according to 1 Thessalonians 4:17 which says: ***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.***

He will come with the saints who are now with him in heaven and he will come for the saints who are still alive on earth. Those alive when Christ comes again will be caught up into the air to be reunited with the dead in Christ and we will never be separated from them again.

This is one of many reasons why the blessed hope is so blessed. It is blessed because we will be united with our loved ones who have died in the Lord. We have not seen them for years and oh how we miss them, but the day is coming when we will not only see them, but we will be with them and the Lord forever never to be separated again by death.

Death is so cruel. It takes people away from us that we dearly love and need. Death leaves empty places in our hearts that no one else can fill. Death steals our joy. It robs our happiness. It makes us miserable. It makes us cry and weep. It makes us lonely. It often ruins the world for us. It leaves empty chairs at the table. Many people are never the same after they lose a loved one to death.

This is why the blessed hope is blessed, for then in a moment in the twinkling of an eye all this will be changed. We will be united with our loved ones in the air and be with them forever never to lose them again.

(2) The Blessed Hope Is Blessed Because It Is the Appearing Of Our Great God And Saviour Jesus Christ

Titus 2:13 says: ***Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.***

1 Thessalonians 4:16 says: ***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.***

It says, **the Lord HIMSELF** shall descend from heaven. The Lord is not going to send someone else to pick us up. He is coming himself to catch us up. Our great God and Savior is coming again in person just as he promised in John 14:13:

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.

When he comes again we will see the one we have believed on, studied, talked about, preached about, sang about, thought about and looked for nearly 2000 years. This is why the blessed hope is so blessed. It is blessed because it will be the appearing, coming, manifestation and revelation of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. Our great God and Savior thinks so much about his church that he will personally come to gather us unto himself.

(3) The Blessed Hope Is Blessed Because Our Fight Against the World, Flesh And the Devil Will Be Over

In writing about the coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead and the translation of the living saints Paul said;

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? The sting of death

is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

(1 Corinthians 15:54-57)

The victory in verse 57 is against death and the grave, but it also includes victory over all our enemies that war against our flesh. When Christ comes again he will change these corruptible bodies and when these bodies are changed we will then have total victory over all the enemies that war against us such as, the world, flesh and the devil. They attack us 24 hours a day. It's a never ending battle.

This is especially true of the old nature of sin that dwells in us. We have an old nature of sin that dwells in these bodies that is evil and wicked and capable of any sin you can imagine. Paul said this about the sin nature in his flesh: Romans 7:18-20:

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 (the sin nature) that dwelleth in me.

The old nature of sin troubles us day and night. We struggle with him constantly. Paul also wrote about this struggle in Galatians 5:17: ***For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.***

Every saved person understands this verse. We all know the fight that goes on inside of us every day. On one side is the new nature who pulls us toward God, Christ, the Bible and godliness but on the other side is the old nature pulling us away from God, Christ, the Bible and godliness. It's a never ending battle.

This is what makes the blessed hope so blessed for when Christ comes again this war will be over. He will change these vile bodies and give us a new body minus the old nature of sin and then and only then will we gain the absolute victory over sin, death, the flesh, the world, and the devil.

(4) The Blessed Hope Is Blessed Because Our Bodies Will Be Changed And Made New

Philippians 3:20-21 says: ***For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.***

1 John 3:2 says: ***Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.***

When a person is born again their spirit is quickened and made alive by God's Spirit according to John 3:6. But, the new birth does not change our bodies. And until our bodies are changed our salvation will not be complete according to Romans 13:11. But, when Jesus Christ comes again our salvation will be finalized, for then our bodies will be redeemed and transformed and made like Christ's glorified body according to Philippians 3:21 and 1 John 3:2. Then and only then will we be totally conformed and transformed into the image of God's Son.

1 Corinthians 15:49 says: ***And as we have borne the image of the earthy, (Adam) we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. (Christ)***

The blessed hope is blessed because it is our guarantee of a new body that will not be subject to sickness, disease, pain and weakness. These calamities take a physical toll on us today. We lose physical strength, mental abilities, wellness and health every time we get sick. We are never the same. We get progressively weak over time until these bodies give up and die.

I have had dear friends that I have known for years, but due to sickness, they do not recognize me today. Sickness has taken a toll on them both physically and mentally and it's sad. I have another dear friend of mine that I have known since junior high school days who has been sick for 6 months and can't seem to get better. She has one set back after the other. I know many of you have many stories like this too.

This is why we should look for, love and long for the second coming of Christ. The blessed hope is our guarantee that our bodies will never again have to contend with sickness, disease, weakness, pain or death. They will never again have to visit a doctor, put in the hospital, be operated on, take medicine and grow weak and tired. Our body will be like Christ's body in every way and no longer subject to the pain and the calamities of this life. (Until then pray for the sick, visit the sick and stay as healthy as you can)

(5) The Blessed Hope Is Blessed Because We Will Be Rewarded For the Works We Did For Christ In This Life

Hebrews 6:10 says: **For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.**

The Lord does not forget our work and labor for him in this life. Men may forget and ignore your work and labor, but not the Lord, because he keeps records. (Malachi 3:16) And the proof he does not forget our work and labor of love for him is that when he comes again he will judge our works and reward our works if they are good. 1Corinthians 3:13-14 says: **Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.**

The blessed hope is blessed because when Christ comes again he will reward our good works and we will see in that day that the works we did for him in this life were not in vain and worth it all. There is an old song that says: *It will be worth it all when we see Jesus, Life's trials will seem so small when we see Christ. One glimpse in his dear face all sorrows will erase. So bravely run the race till we see Christ.*

This is why Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:58: **Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.**

Our work and labor is not in vain for he will reward our works when he comes again. The two greatest works you can do for the Lord in this life is the work of evangelism and edification because according to 1 Timothy 2:4, **God will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.**

Lost men are saved by hearing and believing the gospel when we preach it to them. This is the work of evangelism. Saved men come into the knowledge of the truth when we teach it to them in the local church. Most evangelism is done in the world and most edification is done in the local

church. (Ephesians 4:11-12) Our only regret when Jesus comes again will be that we did not do more while we had the time to do it.

(6) The Blessed Hope Is Blessed Because It Will Usher In The Glorious Kingdom Of God

One of the main reasons the blessed hope of Christ coming is so blessed, is because when he comes again he will usher in the glorious kingdom of God. 2 Timothy 4:1 says: ***I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom.***

In Matthew 16:28 Jesus said: Verily I say unto you, ***There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.***

Paul said to the Saints in Thessalonians: ***That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.*** (1 Thess. 2:12)

The Kingdom of God is a literal, physical, visible earthly kingdom. The Kingdom of God is one of the greatest promises in the Bible for it meets every need of man. The Kingdom of God will solve every problem men have politically, environmentally, spiritually, religiously, physically, morally, and economically. You name the problem, the Kingdom of God will solve it. Read the following promises of the coming Kingdom of God

*In the Kingdom of God the bodies of the saints will be changed and made like unto Christ's glorified body. Isa. 25:8, Isa. 26:19, Hosea 13:14, 1 Cor.15:49-56.

*In the Kingdom of God, God's throne will be on the earth. Ps:132:11, Jer.23:5, Isa.42:4, Rev.21:3.

*The government of His Kingdom will be a theocracy. God himself will reign in the person of Christ. Isa.9:6-7

*In the Kingdom of God his government will be pure and free from corruption. Isa.11:4, 61:11, Jer.23:5

*In the Kingdom of God, war and crime will cease. Isa.2:4, Isa.9:6-7, Micah 4:3

*In God's Kingdom the Devil will be vanquished from heaven and earth. Rev.20:1-5, Rev.20:10

*In the Kingdom of God the creation and environment will be regenerated. Isa.35:1-7, 51:3, Matt.19:28

*In the Kingdom of God the earth will become like the Garden of Eden. Isa:51:3:

*In the Kingdom of God all physical infirmities and sickness will be healed. Isa.35:3-6, Psa.103:3, Jer.30:17, Rev.22:1-2

*In the Kingdom of God the animal creation will be tamed. Isa.11:6-9

*In the Kingdom of God prayer will be answered without delay. Isa.65:24, John 16:23

*In the Kingdom of God great rapidity of growth will be seen in nature. Amos 9:13, Lev.26:4-5

*In the Kingdom of God hunger and starvation will disappear. Amos 9:13, Isa.49:10

*In the Kingdom of God the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord. Isa.11:9

*In the Kingdom of God the Law of God and the Word of God will go forth from Jerusalem into all the world. Isa.2:1-7

*In the Kingdom of God he will destroy all his enemies. Psa.2:8-9, 1 Cor.15:24-27

*In the Kingdom of God the heavenly city New Jerusalem will be established upon the earth. Revelation chapters 20 – 21.

*In the Kingdom of God all idols, false teachers, false religion, cults will be purged. Rev.22:15

*In the Kingdom of God sin, sorrow, suffering, sickness and death will be finally abolished. Rev.21:4

The coming of Christ is truly a blessed hope for when he comes again his kingdom will come. This is why men like Paul preached the good news of the coming kingdom of God throughout his ministry. (See Acts 14:22, Acts 19:8, Acts 20:25, Acts 28:23, Acts 28:31.) He also wrote about it throughout his epistles.

He preached the Kingdom of God when he preached the gospel of grace because the Kingdom of God is the inheritance believers are given when they believe the gospel of grace. He said in Acts 20:24-25: ***But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.***

You have just read some of the many reasons why the blessed hope of Christ's second coming is so blessed. But, even though it is a blessing to Christians it will not be a blessing to the lost and here is why:

In 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 Paul gives us another view of the second coming of Christ that is not so blessed if you are not saved. He wrote: ***And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.***

Notice that in the same day Jesus comes with his angels the saints will be glorified in verse 10 and rest in verse 7, but the lost will be punished with everlasting destruction and fire in verses 8-9. Jesus said his coming will be like the days of Lot in Luke 17:28-30. He will come with his angels and deliver the saints out of this world as his angels delivered Lot out of Sodom. And in the same day the lost left behind will suffer the fire and vengeance of God's wrath as the sodomites in Lots day. This is the picture Paul paints

of the second coming in these verses. The saints will be delivered from the coming eternal wrath, because in verse 10 they believe the gospel and the lost will suffer the wrath because they believed not the gospel in verse 8. Have you believed the gospel, for it will mean the difference between salvation and destruction when the Lord comes again? To believe the gospel means you place all of your faith, trust and confidence in Christ alone to save you now and in that day. He died and paid for your sins in full and God raised him from the dead and he offers you salvation from wrath now and in the future as a gift. But, to receive the gift you must first own up to being the sinner God says you are. Once a person takes the first step of owning up to being the sinner that God says they are the rest is easy. A drowning man does not have to be convinced to call out for someone to save him and a man who sees what a sinner he is in the eyes of God will have no problem calling out to God to save him from his sins either. Don't let pride keep you from being saved.

Sound Doctrines versus Strange Doctrines

Hebrews 13:9 says: **Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.**

This is a warning about *strange doctrines*. Strange doctrines are doctrines that don't sound right when you hear them. Strange doctrines throw up a red flag in your mind when you hear them. Strange doctrines make you feel spiritually uneasy when you hear them. Strange doctrines don't make scriptural sense when you hear them.

Strange doctrines are false doctrines dressed up to sound like sound doctrine. Many people saved and lost are tossed to and fro by strange doctrines, because they don't know what sound doctrine looks and sounds like. If they did they would not fall for these strange doctrines that creep in the church door.

You learn to spot strange doctrines by being rooted and grounded in sound doctrine. Bank tellers are not trained to spot counterfeit money by studying counterfeit money. They are trained to spot counterfeit money by becoming educated in the look and feel of real money. Once you know

what real money looks and feels like, you can easily spot counterfeit money. Once you know what sound doctrine looks like and sounds like, you can spot strange doctrines when you hear and read them.

Sound Doctrine versus Strange Doctrine

There are certain features about sound doctrine that set it apart from false and strange doctrine. There are many outstanding facts and features about sound doctrine that every Christian should know and if they did they could easily spot false and strange doctrines when they hear them.

Sound Doctrine Is Based Upon The Right Gospel

In Galatians 1:6-9 Paul wrote this about the gospel he preached:

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any **man** preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

According to these verses we should test and try the doctrines a man teaches by the gospel he preaches. God blesses the man who preaches the same gospel that Paul preached and curses the man who doesn't. Therefore, gospel that Paul preached is the standard to judge doctrine and other gospels by. If a man preaches the gospel that Paul preached there is a good chance that his doctrine will be sound, because sound doctrine is based upon the right gospel and the right gospel is the one Paul preached. The foundation upon which all true doctrines are built upon today is the gospel Paul preached. So, if a man preaches that gospel he is building upon the right foundation. But if a man preaches another gospel than the one Paul preached, beware of his doctrine. Beware of any doctrine taught by any man who does not preach the gospel of grace preached by Paul. He is building on a false foundation and if the foundation is false so is the doctrine built upon it.

What is the message of Paul's gospel? When Paul preached the gospel he preached:

Salvation by the cross: See 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

Salvation by grace: See Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 4:5, Titus 3:5.

Salvation as a present possession and not a future reward: See 2 Timothy 1:9, Ephesians 1:7, and Romans 5:11.

Salvation that's secure: He preached the eternal security of the believer; that those who are saved by grace through faith without works are KEPT saved the same way.

If a man preaches these truths more than likely his doctrine will be sound. But, if a man does not preach all of these things; if he adds to them or subtracts from them, his doctrine will not be sound; it will be false and strange.

The gospel a man preaches is the barometer by which to measure his ministry, message, motive and doctrine by. Not his looks, personality, charm, following, talents, eloquence, likability or results. The gospel he preaches is the barometer to judge him by. 99% of the time those who preach strange doctrines do not preach the right gospel. If the gospel is wrong there is no way the doctrine can be right.

Sound Doctrine Promotes Godly Behavior

1 Timothy 6:3-4 says: ***If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing.***

Sound doctrine is godly doctrine. It's all about godliness. Godliness is godly living. The purpose in teaching sound doctrine is not only to keep you from error, but to promote godliness in your personal life. Sound doctrine should change your conduct as well as your faith. Your personal life, habits, conversation, conduct, should be radically changed for the better by the doctrine you believe. If it's sound it will change it for the better.

Titus 2:11-12 says: ***For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;***

The grace of God is a doctrine that not only brings salvation according to verse 11, but it teaches us how to live after we are saved in verse 12. It teaches us to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. The doctrines of grace teach us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. The doctrines of grace promote godly behavior. They teach us to renounce every sin in our life. They teach us to live spiritual and godly lives free from reproach. They teach us not to say or do anything that would cause someone to stumble or fall. They do not excuse sin, but condemn every form of sin.

Another way to determine if a doctrine is sound or strange is by the life style it promotes. Doctrines that excuse sin, justify sin, give license to sin is not sound or true; they are those strange doctrines God warned us about. There was a preacher here in the south who taught many strange doctrines that excused sin in the name of grace. He taught people for years that God is not interested in the way you behave, just in what you believe. Many gullible Christians were deceived by this lie and some of them fell into sin, even deep sin. Some of his followers have a flippant attitude about sin as if it is no big deal. Jude warned us about men who use the grace of God to excuse sin. In Jude 1:4 said: ***For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.***

Just because a man preaches about grace does not mean he is doctrinally right; for there are men who have turned the grace of God into lasciviousness. They preach a perverted grace. They use the grace of God as a license to sin. Some of them will even tell you that because we live under grace God will not chastise you for sin and it's even a waste of time to confess your sins to God. But what did Paul the true grace preacher say about this? He wrote; Romans 6:14-15:

For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

And just in case someone would say that the more we sin the more grace will abound he also said in Romans 6:1-2:

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

Under grace God has not only delivered us from the penalty of sin which is hell, but he delivered us from the power of sin in our lives. And in view of this Paul said in Romans 6:6: ***Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.***

In Romans 6:12 he said: ***Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.***

In view of these verses, when I hear people and preachers in the church say their life is no different today than what it was before they were saved, I have to question their salvation. The sound doctrines of grace changes people's lives for the better, but strange doctrine do not.

Sound Doctrine Produces Good Works

The same Paul who said we are not saved by works but by grace also wrote:

Titus 2:7: ***In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,***

Titus 2:14: ***Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.***

Titus 3:8: ***This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.***

Titus 3:14: ***And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.***

According to these verses sound doctrine teaches us that we are not saved by works, but we are saved to work. Sound doctrine teaches us that good works are the fruit of salvation. Sound doctrine expects and demands the believer to go to work after he is saved. Sound doctrine puts Christians to work. It gives us a job to do. Sound doctrine is not just for learning, it's for working. God has a job and a ministry for every Christian to do and sound doctrine will show you what it is, how to do it and why you ought to do it. One of the outstanding traits of sound doctrine is that it will keep you busy serving the Lord. And the way we serve the Lord is by evangelizing the lost and edifying the saints according to 1 Timothy 2:4.

Strange doctrines appeal to the flesh today because they give the believer nothing to do after they are saved. They teach that faith in Christ is all that God requires of us. They teach that everything under grace is free and nothing is earned by works. They teach that God is not interested in what you do, just in what you believe.

But God requires more than faith out of us, he requires works. When you got saved you not only inherited a mansion in the sweet by and by, but God gave you a job to do in the nasty now and now. Ephesians 2:8-10 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. For we are***

his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

According to verse 9, we are not saved by works, but according to verse 10 we are saved to work. There are works God ordained for us to do before the foundation of the world and the main two are evangelizing the lost which is done in the world and edifying the saints which is done through the local church. (See Ephesians 4:11-13, 1 Timothy 2:4)

Keep this in mind also: Many blessings and promises under grace are earned by works. And at the judgment seat of Christ God is going to judge our works. (See 1 Corinthians 3:11-15, 2 Corinthians 5:9-10, 2 Timothy 4:1) Beware of any doctrine that gives the believer nothing to do under grace. Beware of any doctrine that preaches grace to the total exclusion of works. This "no work" doctrine will quench your zeal and make you a do nothing dead head and God knows we don't need any more of them in the church.

Sound Doctrine Glorifies Christ

In John 16:13-14 Jesus said this about the ministry of the Spirit of God:

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, (he came in Acts 2) he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

One way to tell if a doctrine is true or not, is by whether or not it glorifies Christ. Every doctrine glorifies someone and if it is sound doctrine it will glorify Christ. Sound doctrine is inspired by the Spirit of God and the main ministry of the Spirit of God is to glorify Christ. Therefore, any doctrine inspired by the Spirit of God will exalt and glorify the Son Of God. It says: He (The Spirit) shall glorify me.

The main purpose in teaching sound doctrine is to glorify Christ. Every doctrine that is true, will in some way glorify Christ. For example the doctrine of:

Spirit Baptism glorifies the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

Justification glorifies the Cross of Christ.

Reconciliation glorifies the Blood of Christ.

The Church glorifies the headship of Christ.

The New Covenant glorifies the sacrifice and priesthood of Christ.

Grace glorifies the love of Christ.

If doctrine is true and sound, it should honor, glorify, praise and exalt Jesus Christ. It will cause you to focus your attention on Christ. It will motivate

you to love him and want to please him. If it doesn't, it is not sound doctrine.

Beware of any doctrine that leaves out Christ. Beware of any doctrine that Christ is not the main focus. Beware of any doctrine where the messenger is glorified more than the message. Beware of any doctrine where the name a sinful man is used more than Christ's name. Beware of any doctrine where the one who teaches it, gets more attention than Christ.

One way you can separate sound doctrine from strange doctrine is by noting the one who gets the glory. Any doctrine that shifts your praise from Christ to a man or to a church is a strange and false doctrine.

Sound Doctrine Does Not Alter The Word Of God To Prove Itself

Proverbs 30:5-6 says: ***Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.***

Deuteronomy 4:2 says: ***Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.***

These verses warn us about adding to and subtracting from the word of God. A red flag should go up immediately in your mind when you hear a man change words in the Bible to prove his doctrine. If a doctrine is true, it will stand on it's on without adding to or subtracting from the word of God. If you have to change words in the Bible to prove your doctrine, then you better change your doctrine because it's false. Any man who adds or subtracts words from the Bible to prove his doctrine is preaching a lie.

Strange doctrines are false and because they are false, men are forced to add and subtract from the word of God to prove them. Any time you hear a man changing the word of God to prove his doctrine you will be wise to reject it for it is one of those strange doctrines God warned us about.

The Blessed Gifts Of The Blessed God

Ephesians 1:3: ***Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.***

Notice that the word blessed appears twice in this verse.

(1) "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"

The word for blessed here is EULOGETOS which is an adjective. An adjective is a word used with a noun to express or describe a quality or attribute of a person or a thing. We say, *Solomon was a wise ruler*. The word wise is the adjective that expresses or describes this particular quality or attribute of Solomon. When Paul says, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, he is describing one of the qualities and attributes of God the Father. He is eulogizing him. God the Father is blessed, just like he is holy, eternal, righteous, long-suffering, and just.

(2) "Who hath blessed us"

The word for blessed here is EULOGEO which is a verb. A verb expresses action, motion, or a request or command to do something or to forbear doing something. If a man inherits a million dollars we say that man is blessed. It's not that we are praising or glorifying the man, for he could be a reprobate. We are describing the action or event that took place in his life.

We are not blessed as God the Father for we are sinners and Paul would never eulogize sinners. We are blessed by God the Father, that is, he has bestowed upon us all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. The first *blessed* in the verse is an adjective and the second is a verb and there is a marked difference between the two.

The verb blessed has many meanings and applications in the scriptures and they are all true of us.

Most Christians have no idea of what it means to be blessed by God and most are not aware of how much they are blessed by God.

One of the definitions of the verb blessed is: ***To pronounce a wish of happiness to someone, to express a wish or desire of happiness.***

For example see Genesis 28:1-4 which says: ***And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padanaram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother. And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham.***

As Isaac blessed Jacob, God the Father has blessed us. As Isaac's desire was for Jacob to receive the best God had to offer him, it's God's desire that we receive the best he has to offer us. Isaac didn't want Jacob to miss anything God had to offer him. God does not want you to miss out on anything he has to offer you.

God has blessed you, it is his will and desire for you to be happy and blessed in all that he has to offer you. If you sought after and received everything God had to offer you, it would make you happy. I didn't say you would be rich. I didn't say you would drive a new car or own a new house and make a lot of money. I said you would be happy. You would be happy no matter what house you lived in or the car you drove. True lasting happiness and joy is in the things God has to offer you as a Christian. It's God's will for you to find your happiness in those things.

The blessings he had blessed us with should make us happy because they are all spiritual. Spiritual blessings are better than physical because they are eternal, secure, and priceless.

Spiritual blessings are of God and not of men.

Spiritual blessings are perfect.

Spiritual blessings come from God.

Spiritual blessings are gifts of God.

They are from heaven, they are heavenly and glorious.

Ephesians 1:3 bears out the fact that these blessings are spiritual because God the Father is the source of them. God the Son is the channel through which we receive them, and they are heavenly in sphere. And many of them are found in Ephesians. Once you see and comprehend these blessings you will also be convinced that:

*That God loves his children very much.

*He supplies their each and every need.

*In him we find our true happiness.

*That he works all things together for our good.

*That he is concerned about every facet of our lives.

If we would spend time studying and comprehending the following blessings they will change our minds, hearts, feelings, emotions, and life for the better.

Do you feel cursed?

You shouldn't because you are:

Blessed: 1:3

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

You were once cursed, but not anymore. Compare Galatians 3:10 with verse 13.

Gal 3:10: Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

Gal 3:13: 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:

The law of God is the standard by which God judges all men and the law of God curses all those who break its commandments. We broke them all; therefore we are all cursed by the law. But on the cross Christ allowed the law to curse him for the laws we broke. He allowed the law to curse him so he could bless you.

Do you feel unwanted?

You shouldn't because you are:

Chosen - 1:4

According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

If God chose you that makes you one of the elect. How do you elect someone? By voting for them. When God elected you he voted for you. He wrote your name down in the book of life. So don't feel unwanted. God must have wanted you if he elected you.

Are you full of worry and fear about the future and the present?

You shouldn't because you are:

Predestinated - 1:5

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

Pre= Before Destinated= To fix your destiny.

God fixed your destiny before the foundation of the world. He not only fixed your eternal destiny, but your present destiny also. If you are saved God has taken charge of your present life as well as your future life. Predestination involves more than just the future; it applies to the present also. God has a hand in the personal affairs of his people. He puts them in certain places, he puts them in contact with certain people, he gives them certain jobs and work to do, he moves them from one place to another, he stops them, he opens doors for them and he closes doors also. He causes

miracles to happen in their life. He influences other people to bless them. He makes all things work together for their good.

If God has predestined you, it means he is in charge of your life. Therefore, you have no reason to worry or fear. Yield to the will of God whatever it is in your life. If you are in the will of God you are where you are because God put you there.

Do you feel like a homeless orphan?

You shouldn't because you are:

Adopted - 1:5

Predestinated us unto the adoption of children

God has only one begotten Son, all the rest are adopted. God thought enough about you to adopt you into his family. God has a large family. Some are in heaven and some on the earth. And he is not ashamed to call them his children or ashamed to be called their father.

Do you feel rejected?

You shouldn't because you are:

Accepted - 1:6

To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

If he has accepted you in the beloved, this means God the creator of heaven and earth has put his stamp of approval on you and is well pleased with you. To hear some Christians talk you wouldn't know this is true because many of them think it's up to them to make themselves acceptable unto God. But if you are saved he has already accepted you by placing you in Christ his beloved Son. It's in Christ we are acceptable unto God and meet with God's approval. God is as well pleased with you, as he is with his own Son. Your standing with God is now the same as his Son. So don't feel dejected and rejected any more. You have a first class standing with God. However his Son stands is the way we stand.

Do you feel guilty and condemned?

You shouldn't because you are:

Redeemed and forgiven - 1:7

In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

When God forgave your sins he forgave all of them and does not charge them against you again. Romans 4:7-8 says: ***Blessed are they whose***

iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

Hebrews 8:12 says: ***For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.***

When God forgave your sins he wiped the slate clean. So don't walk around with a burden of guilt on your shoulders. You are forgiven and free from eternal condemnation of sin.

Do you feel insecure?

You shouldn't because you are:

Sealed and secured - 1:13

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.

Ephesians 4:30: And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

God gave you his Holy Spirit as a guarantee that he will personally keep and preserve you unto the day of redemption which is the second coming of Christ. He not only put the guarantee in writing, but he put the Holy Spirit in you as a reminder of the guarantee. The Holy Spirit is a constant reminder and guarantee of God's keeping and preserving power. So don't walk around feeling insecure, you are in good hands and God will get keep you unto the end.

Do you feel dead and lifeless?

You shouldn't because you are:

Quickened - 2:1

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

Being quickened is the same as being born again. Your dead spirit was quickened by God's Spirit. God wanted you to enjoy the blessings of his kingdom so he quickened you so you could get into it, for unless a man is born again or quickened he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. So act like you are alive because you are.

Do you feel hated and despised?

You shouldn't because you are:

Loved - 2:4

But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us. Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

If God loved you when you were dead in sins, do you think he loves you less now that you are quickened? Isn't it strange that we believe God loved us in the past, but we doubt his love in the present? God has not changed his mind about you or fallen out of love with you. He loves you as much today as he did when Christ died for your sins. The love he had on the cross for you, he still has today.

The book of Ephesians is God's love letter to his wife the church.

In 1:4 His love for us is eternal

In 2:4 His love is uninfluenced

In 3:19 His love is incomprehensible

In 4:32 His love is tender

In 5:25 His love is sacrificial

Do you feel tired and run down?

You shouldn't because you are:

Seated - 2:6

And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

God thought enough about you to give you a seat to rest at his own right hand in heaven. When it comes to salvation you can rest. We don't have to spend our lives standing and working and fretting to keep and maintain our salvation. When it comes to salvation we can sit and rest at the right hand of God. At God's right hand is the man who did all the work necessary to save us and keep us saved. Because of his work we can sit and rest in him.

Do you feel like you have no gifts?

You shouldn't because God gave you the greatest gift you can possibly have in this world.

The gift of salvation – 2:8-9

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.

Is there any gift greater than eternal life and salvation? Don't say you are not gifted, for you have the very best gift anyone can have.

Do you feel worthless, can't do anything?

You shouldn't because you are his:

Workmanship - 2:10

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

God thought enough about you to give you a job working for him. If you are saved you are never unemployed. God gave you a job working for him and only hires qualified personal. Therefore, there is something you have the ability to do. You may not be aware of it, but you have it. And the job he gave you is in the local church for that is the place of employment for the saints of God according to Ephesians 4:11-12.

Do you feel alienated, ostracized?

You shouldn't because you are:

Reconciled - 2:16

And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

God is not your enemy any more. He is not mad with you and he does not hold anything against you. God is your friend and he your best friend and he has your best interests at heart. You are on good terms with God. So don't feel alienated.

Do you feel like a stranger and foreigner?

You shouldn't because you are a:

Fellowcitizen - 2:19

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God:

God made you a first class citizen with all his saints in his house. God has a big house and it extends to heaven and earth according to 3:15.

It includes the saints and apostles in the New Testament and the saints and prophets in the Old Testament. There are no barriers or walls between the saints of God. Men may erect barriers, but God does not. God has made us fellow citizens with all his saints in the household of God.

Do you feel alone?

You shouldn't because you are:

Habitation of God -2:21-22

In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

A Christian should never feel alone for God lives in you. When God saved you he quickened you and he took up residence in you. He moved in to dwell in your body forever. He made you his temple. We are the temple of God today. You are never alone.

Do you think you are poor?

You shouldn't because you are:

Rich – 3:8

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ:

When you got saved you became rich. You now own and possess the unsearchable riches of Christ. You are richer than any billionaire alive today. Bill Gates riches are chicken feed compared to the riches you own. They are so many they are unsearchable. (See 3:6)

Do you feel weak and helpless?

You shouldn't because you have:

Power - 3:20

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.

God has put his power in you and through that power God can do in and through you above all that you can ask or think.

After reading what God has done for you, are you convinced that God loves his children very much? That he supplies their each and every need? That he works all things together for their good? That he is concerned about every facet of their life?