

IRON SHARPENS IRON

THE GOSPEL (“GOOD NEWS”)

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(Verses NASB 1995 unless otherwise indicated)

Excerpted from *The Gospel of the Grace of God* (with permission).

INTRODUCTION

This book provides a summary of “the gospel of the grace of God” ([Acts 20:24](#)), which is also “the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation” ([Eph. 1:13](#)), “the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” ([2 Tim. 3:15](#)), and “the faith which was once for all [time] handed down to the saints” ([Jude 3](#)) in New Testament (NT) Scripture. This presentation can serve as an introduction for those coming new to the faith or as a review for the professing Christian. We will start “in the beginning” ([Gen. 1:1](#)) and build “line upon line, . . . precept upon precept” ([Isa. 28:10–13](#) ESV) so you understand the relationship between God, Satan, humanity, and sin—and why we need a “Savior” ([Luke 2:10–11](#); [Titus 1:4](#); [3:4](#); [2 Pet. 1:1](#), [11](#); [2:20](#); [Jude 25](#); [Acts 13:23](#); [1 John 4:14](#); [Acts 5:31](#); [2 Tim. 1:10](#); [Jude 24–25](#)).

Before we begin, I would like to offer a few notes to help the reader:

1. You will see verse citation references as you go along. To get the most out of this study guide, you should read and study Scripture as you go along (see the “Reading and Studying the Bible” chapter). You may think I’m citing more verses than are necessary; however, realize that I’m not simply multiplying verses for no reason. To arrive at the (whole) truth of what Scripture teaches (and avoid false teachings), you must consider in aggregate “the sum” ([Psa. 119:160](#)) of what Scripture says while also understanding that Scripture never contradicts itself. Additional verses often expand on a particular topic (e.g., baptism) or view the subject from a different angle – you cannot simply pick some verses and make interpretations and doctrine from those verses in isolation while ignoring others about the same topic. Even the verses I’ve cited are not exhaustive, but they are sufficient to establish correct doctrine. If a verse doesn’t have a citation, it was given earlier in the chapter; citations are repeated across chapters for completeness, so each chapter can stand on its own.
2. Please don’t be in a rush to just “skim over” this material; this is written as more of a study guide to help you really understand the Gospel. While the Gospel message is very simple, we are dealing with a matter of utmost and grave importance here: the eternal destiny of your soul ([Matt. 10:28](#); [16:26](#); [25:31–46](#); [Mark 8:36–37](#); [Luke 12:20](#); [16:19–31](#); cf. [Heb. 9:27](#)). It is worth taking some time to read the matter diligently, including reading and studying the cited Scripture. While I have cited a fair number of Scripture references for completeness (and to assist you with your own Bible study), you generally don’t have to go beyond the first or second reference to establish the subject at hand. If you were to diligently study all cited Scripture, it could easily take several months. I’m doing my best to explain things to you as Phillip did to the Ethiopian ([Acts 8:26–35](#)), but you will also have to put in the necessary time as well by reading and studying Scripture. In effect, what this book is doing is walking you through the verses which explain the Gospel, for it is “the word of God” ([Luke 8:11](#); also “the word of truth” ([2 Cor. 6:7](#)) and “the word of life” ([Php. 2:16](#))) which is “the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” ([Rom. 1:16](#); cf. [John 3:18](#); [6:35](#), [37–40](#); [11:25](#); [Acts 10:43](#); [Rom. 9:33](#)), not anything I may write.
3. The material has some repetition, which I believe is beneficial ([Php. 3:1](#); [Rom 15:15](#); [2 Pet. 1:12–13](#); [3:1–2](#)).

4. Unless otherwise indicated, all Bible verses are New American Standard Bible (NASB) 1995. There is a “Choosing a Bible” page on our [website](#) and a chapter in *The Message of Truth* and *The Gospel of the Grace of God* books that we publish, which explains the various English Bible translations, and why I chose this one as my main bible.
5. While it is my job to present, preach, and teach the Gospel to you accurately and completely, it is your job to “[be diligent](#)” ([2 Tim. 2:15](#); [Heb. 4:11](#); cf. [2 Pet. 1:10](#); [2 Pet. 3:14](#)) about your salvation, to “[work out your salvation with fear and trembling](#)” ([Php. 2:12](#)), and to “[Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!](#)” ([2 Cor. 13:5](#)) to make sure that you are, indeed, in the faith and have not strayed (been deceived) from the truth into false teachings, schemes, snares, and fake gospels of man.
6. The material doesn’t cover all the nuances of Christian faith or Christian life (e.g., prayer, living in the spirit, the wisdom of God, the armor of God, etc.); but it does have enough material to get you started well down the true and correct “[narrow](#)” path to eternal life ([Matt. 7:13–14](#); [Luke 13:24](#))!
7. And lastly, don’t just accept anything I (or anyone else) write as true without checking it against Scripture for yourself ([Acts 17:11](#)). You can be “[deceived](#)” ([2 Cor. 11:3](#)) and “[tricked](#)” (see [Eph. 4:14](#); [2 Tim. 4:3–4](#)) out of our “[crown of life](#)” ([Jas. 1:12](#); [Rev. 2:10](#); cf. [2 Tim. 4:8](#); [1 Pet. 5:4](#); [Rev. 3:11](#)) by false teachings of man, who are teaching contrary to the Word of God and “[the faith which was once for all \[time\] handed down to the saints](#)” ([Jude 3](#)).

So, with that introduction, let us proceed on the path to eternal life, along “[the Highway of Holiness](#)” ([Isa. 35:8](#)).

– R. John Anderson

1 THERE IS A GOD

In days and centuries past, men understood and acknowledged that there was a God, even if they chose not to obey Him. But in today's modern, so-called enlightened society dominated by public opinion and the science of man, we must reassert that foundation before we can even begin with the Gospel message.

Know that there is a God¹ (Gen. 1:1; Psa. 53:1–3; 115:15; Pro. 1:7; 9:10; Jer. 29:13; Luke 12:5; Heb. 11:6; Deut. 4:29; Isa. 55:6; Acts 17:22–29; cf. Pro. 3:5). There are no other gods (little g; Isa. 44:8; 45:5–6, 18, 21–22; 46:9; Deut. 4:35, 39; 32:39; 1 Kgs. 8:60; 1 Chr. 16:26; Joel 2:27; 1 Tim. 1:17; 2:5; Rom. 1:22–23). His name is given as “YHWH” (יהוה) in the original Hebrew² texts of the Old Testament (OT), and also simply as “I AM” (Exo. 3:14). It is also written as “Yahweh,” “JEHOVAH” / “Jehovah,” and “LORD” in various English translations (Gen. 2:4; Exo. 6:2–3). He alone is “holy” (morally pure) (Lev. 19:2; Rev. 4:8; Acts 7:33; Psa. 11:4; 29:2; 103:1), perfect, omnipotent, omnipresent, and eternal (having no beginning or end; Rev. 1:17; 2:8; 22:13; Heb. 13:8; Isa. 43:13; Psa. 90:2), and there is nothing unclean whatsoever in Him (1 John 1:5; 3:5; Jas. 1:17; Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8–10; Psa. 5:4; 145:17; Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 1:19; Num. 23:19; cf. Gal. 5:9). “God is love” (1 John 4:8, 16) and “God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5; cf. Rom. 3:4; 9:14; Matt. 17:2; John 1:5).

“God is Spirit” (John 4:24; cf. 2 Cor. 3:17), “who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see” (1 Tim. 6:16; cf. 1 Tim. 1:17; John 1:18; 5:37; Matt. 17:2). We, therefore, must find God through faith, for as it is written, “without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is [i.e., that He exists] and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him” (Heb. 11:6; cf. Heb. 11:27; John 1:18; 5:36; 10:25, 30, 32, 38; 12:38–40; 14:7–11, 20; Col. 1:15–19; 2:2, 9; Rom. 1:19–20; 2:15; Psa. 19:1–4; Acts 14:16–17). But it is also written that “You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart” (Jer. 29:13; cf. Jer. 24:7; Deut. 4:29; 30:2, 10; Luke 11:9–10; Acts 17:27; Psa. 91:15; 119:2, 10, 145; Isa. 55:6–7; Hos. 5:15; Amo. 5:4; Zep. 2:3; Joel 2:12; Acts 8:37; contrast Matt. 15:8).

Furthermore, God is not asking you to just “blindly believe” in Him; He has furnished much evidence and proof of His existence and His promises. One comes to faith after a logical, rational, and reasoned evaluation and examination of all the available evidence, including biblical/scriptural, prophetic, historical, literary, scientific, geological, and eyewitness testimony and credibility. Those who deny the existence of God do so against overwhelming scientific, historical, archeological, prophetic, literary, and even geological evidence and eyewitness testimony (Rom. 1:18–20; Acts 14:17; Psa. 19:1–4; cf. Rom. 2:15).

The Bible is God's Holy Word, written to us for our benefit (Rom. 15:4; cf. Pro. 6:23; Psa. 19:8; 119:16, 105), and every word is inspired and inerrant in the original languages (2 Tim. 3:16–17; 2 Pet. 1:19–21; Heb. 4:12). Furthermore, it is written that “God is not a man, that He should lie” (Num. 23:19; cf. Rom. 3:4; Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18); every single word of Scripture will come true (Isa. 40:8; 55:11; Psa. 119:89–91; Matt. 5:18; 24:35; John 10:35; Pro. 30:5; 1 Pet. 1:25; Hab. 2:3; Luke 21:33; Rom. 11:29).

¹ God is a triune God—Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. The concept of a triune God (trinity) is very difficult for our mortal, finite, human minds to comprehend. Discussion of this subject is beyond the scope of this book. See also the following articles: Wayne Jackson, “The Biblical Doctrine of the Godhead,” *Christian Courier*, access date: August 6, 2023, <https://christiancourier.com/articles/the-biblical-doctrine-of-the-godhead>, and Wayne Jackson, “What about the Terms ‘Godhead’ and ‘Trinity?’” *Christian Courier*, access date: August 6, 2023, <https://christiancourier.com/articles/what-about-the-terms-godhead-and-trinity>.

² Hebrew is read right to left.

2 GOD'S CREATION

“God created the heavens and the earth” (i.e., this universe; Gen. 1:1; cf. Gen. 1:1–2:25; Exo. 20:11; 1 Chr. 16:26; Pro. 3:19–20; Psa. 8:3–8; 33:6; 75:3; 102:25; 104:24; 115:15; 121:2; 124:8; 136:5; Isa. 45:12, 18; Jer. 10:12–13; 51:15; Neh. 9:6; John 1:3, 10; Heb. 1:2, 10; 3:4; Job 38:1–39:30; Rev. 4:11). He created everything we see (the sun, moon, stars, the earth, galaxies, and even light itself) by simply speaking them into existence (Gen. 1:3; Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:17; Psa. 33:6). This material universe was made out of spiritual things (spiritual matter, if you will; see Heb. 11:3; cf. Col. 1:16; Rom. 4:17), which we cannot see, and which the science of man cannot measure. It is actually these spiritual things that are eternal (2 Cor. 4:18); it is this material world that will “pass away” (Matt. 5:18; 24:35; cf. 1 John 2:17; Psa. 102:25–27; Isa. 34:4; 51:6; Heb. 1:11–12; 2 Pet. 3:7–12, 13; Rev. 21:1).

God created humans “in the image of God . . . male and female He created them” (Gen. 1:27; cf. Gen. 5:2; Mark 10:6; Psa. 8:4–8) from the “dust from the ground” and “breathed” life into them (Gen. 2:7; cf. Gen. 3:19; 18:27; Psa. 24:1; 89:11; 103:14; 138:14–15; Isa. 29:16; 64:8; Eze. 37:1–10; Job 4:19; 33:6; Ecc. 3:20; Rom. 9:20; 1 Cor. 15:47; 2 Cor. 4:7; 5:1–4). Some place no value on their soul, instead focusing solely on the demands and desires of the flesh (see Esau, Gen. 25:29–34), thinking that they go into nothingness after death (i.e., annihilation)—but you do not go into nothingness (Heb. 9:27; Psa. 86:2; 89:48; 1 Cor. 15:52–54; 2 Cor. 5:1–10; Rom. 14:11; Php. 2:10; Rev. 20:12). Humans were created with an eternal soul/spirit that lives on even after the body dies (returns to dust); the only question is where (Matt. 10:28; 16:26; 25:31–46; Mark 8:36–37; Luke 12:5, 20; 16:19–31; Rev. 20:12; cf. Heb. 9:27). As Luke Trout says,³ “Man’s most valuable possession is his soul; it’s tragic to see so many trade it away for things that are of no value,⁴ things that can be gone tomorrow” (see Matt. 16:26; Mark 8:36; Jas. 1:9–11; 5:1–3; Heb. 11:24–26; Php. 3:7–8; 1 Tim. 6:10; Luke 9:25; 12:16–21; 16:19–23; Rev. 3:17–19; 6:15–17; 18:1–19; cf. Matt. 4:8–10). Further, do not be deceived by the fake science “theory of evolution” (see Gen. 1:1; Num. 23:19; Rom. 3:4; Pro. 14:12; 1 Cor. 1:20); notice that it’s called the “theory” of evolution, not the “facts” of evolution.⁵

God also established laws (scientific, religious, and moral; see 1 Cor. 14:33; Pro. 3:19; 24:3; Exo. 20:3–17; Matt. 22:36–40; John 14:15) that govern this universe and must be obeyed—for He is God, and we are not (Psa. 8:4; 144:3; Isa. 40:17; John 15:4–5; Gal. 6:3; Job 38:1–4)!

Further, realize that we are not alone in the universe. God also created spiritual beings called “angels” (see Gen. 28:12; 32:1; Job 4:18; Psa. 91:11; 103:20; Mat. 4:11; Jude 8; 1 Tim. 3:16; Rev. 12:7; cf. Eph. 6:12). Satan, “the devil” (see Gen. 3:1, 14–15; Matt. 4:1–11; 16:23; 1 Chron. 21:1; Job 1:6–12; Rev. 12:9; 20:2, 7), was the chief angel (Rev. 2:13; 12:7–9; Rom. 16:20; 2 Cor. 11:14; 1 Tim. 5:15), but due to his pride, he rebelled against God, and some of the angels followed him in this rebellion (Matt. 25:41; Jude 6; Rev. 12:7–9). This world is now therefore in the midst of a raging spiritual war (Eph. 6:10–17; 2 Cor. 10:3–5; John 8:44; Dan. 10:13; 12:1; 1 Thess. 2:18; Rev. 12:7–17), for Satan opposes everything good and of God. Since humans were created “in the image of God” (Gen. 1:27), Satan also opposes humanity and wants to destroy as many as possible, including you (Gen. 3:15; Luke 8:12; 1 Pet. 5:8; Jas. 4:7; Eph. 6:11; Rev. 2:10; 12:9; 20:10; cf. Job 1:6–2:10; 1 Thess. 2:18). He is described as a “liar” (John 8:44; cf. Acts 13:10), “deceiver” (see Rev. 12:9; 13:14; 19:20; 20:3, 8, 10), your “adversary” (1 Pet. 5:8), “accuser” (Rev. 12:10; cf. Zech. 3:1; Job 1:6–12; 2:1–6), “tempter” (Matt. 4:1–3; 1 Thess. 3:5), and “the [your] enemy” (Matt. 13:39; Luke 10:19; 1 Tim. 5:14; cf. 1 Pet. 5:8; Eph. 6:11; Jas. 4:7; Rev. 2:10; 13:6–8; 20:7–9; Job 1:13–22; 2:7–10).

³ Sermon, Cottonwood Church of Christ (see also Matt. 16:26; Mark 8:36; Luke 9:25; 12:16–21; 16:14; 1 Tim. 3:3; 6:10; Heb. 13:5).

⁴ Such as silver and gold; that is, money.

⁵ See the chapter “Science versus the Bible.”

3 HUMANITY AND SIN

God placed the first humans (Adam and Eve) in the “garden of Eden” and gave them a few simple rules to obey (Gen. 2:8, 15). All they had to do was believe, trust, and obey God (Gen. 2:16–17). God also gave man free will to “choose” (Josh. 24:15; cf. Rev. 22:11, 17; Pro. 1:29; John 6:67–68) whom to believe and obey (Him, or Satan), for without free will, there can be no love (i.e., a robot preprogrammed to perform a set of commands is not acting in love). God’s initial creation “was very good” (Gen. 1:31)—that is, perfect, without sin, suffering, or death. You mustn’t make the mistake of blaming God for what you see around us; this world and the reality that we now find ourselves in resulted from man’s actions (Rom. 5:12, 19; Gen. 3:6).

Satan then tricked (“deceived,” 2 Cor. 11:3; Rev. 18:23; cf. 1 John 2:26; Rev. 12:9; 13:14) Eve into disobeying God in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:1–7). While it was Satan who instigated the deception, it was a willful and deliberate choice by Eve (and then Adam) to disobey God (i.e., sin;⁶ see Gen. 3:6; Rom. 5:12, 19). As a result, we now live in a fallen world (“cursed,” Gen. 3:17–19; cf. Gen. 4:12; 5:29; Rom. 5:12; 8:19–22) where death entered (Gen. 2:17; Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:21; Jas. 1:15)—this includes both physical and spiritual death—and we are in “the domain of darkness” (Col. 1:13; cf. 1 Thess. 5:4–5; 1 Pet. 2:9; Eph. 5:8; 6:12; Rom. 2:19; Acts 26:18; John 1:5; 8:12; Psa. 107:10–11) under “bondage” and held “captive”⁷ (see Acts 8:23; Rom. 7:14; Luke 4:18; Gal. 4:3; Eph. 4:8; 2 Tim. 2:26; cf. Psa. 107:10–11) to sin, Satan, and death. Furthermore, Satan became “the ruler of this world” (John 12:31; 16:11; cf. Eph. 2:2; 6:12), and he now does everything he can to trick and deceive you from inheriting “the free gift of God [which] is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 6:23; cf. 1 Pet. 5:8; Jas. 4:7; 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 John 4:6; Rev. 12:9; 20:3, 7–10).

While we are not born in so-called “original sin” (that is a false teaching of man), we (each of us) pursue “evil [sin] from his [our] youth” (Gen. 8:21; cf. Psa. 51:5; 58:3–4; Isa. 53:6). Understand that we are not being blamed for Adam and Eve’s sin. While we do inherit their sinful (fleshly, selfish, lustful) nature (1 John 2:16; 1 Cor. 15:45–49; cf. Num. 11:4, 34; Matt. 5:28; Rom. 13:14; Gal. 5:17, 24; Eph. 2:3; Titus 3:3; 1 Pet. 1:14; 2:11; 4:2–3; Jude 16–18), we (each of us) choose to commit sin ourselves after we come of age and are able to know better (Num. 14:29; Isa. 7:16; Gal. 6:5; Rom. 1:18–32; Heb. 10:26; Lev. 4:2, 13; Matt. 12:31–32; John 9:41; 1 Tim. 1:13; 2 Pet. 3:3; Jude 16, 18; Rev. 22:11; 9:20–21; 16:9; 16:11)—and it is this sin that separates us from God (Isa. 59:2; Eph. 2:12; 4:18). Scripture, therefore, tells us that “THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE,” “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (i.e., we are all sinners before God; Rom. 3:10, 23).^{8 9 10 11}

⁶ Sin is disobedience of God, that is, breaking or disobeying God’s laws/rules (see 1 John 3:4; 5:17; Rom. 7:7–13).

⁷ Also slaves to sin (Gal. 4:8; John 8:34; Rom. 6:6, 16–20; 16:18).

⁸ This is not saying that we are born in “original sin” (which is a distortion of Psa. 51:5; 58:3–20, which are highly symbolic / figurative passages), nor do we “inherit” sin from our parents (John 9:1–3)—both are false teachings of man. Scripture is clear that we are each responsible for our own actions and sins, which we decide to do after reaching an age of accountability (see Rom. 1:20; Num. 14:26–29; Deut. 1:39; cf. Gen. 8:21; Isa. 7:16; Josh. 24:15; etc.). This age isn’t precisely defined in Scripture, although the age that God used when leading the ancient Hebrews out of Egypt and through the wilderness into the promised land of Canaan was twenty years old (Num. 14:29). Those over the age of twenty were decreed to die in the wilderness for their unbelief (i.e., they were old enough to have known better); those under that age were spared and continued to go into the Promised Land. I’m not dogmatic about this particular age, and from what I can find, read, and study on the matter, no one knows the exact age except God Himself. Suffice it to say, at some point in our life, we all reach an “age of accountability” where we know right from wrong, yes? And after that age, we are each responsible for our own sins. Also, babies and infants who die go directly into the awesome and holy presence of the Lord in heaven, where there is no more sin, suffering, or death—and no more pain, anguish, or tears. In fact, it would not surprise me if on Judgment Day we find out that the number of babies and infants in heaven who have been aborted or sacrificed is actually greater than the number of everyone else saved. Such demonstrates the horrific and barbaric cruelty, hatred, and selfishness of man versus the kindness, love, mercy, and grace of God, and will further glorify God (see Matt. 19:30). Amen.

See also:

- Wayne Jackson, “Does Psalm 58 Teach ‘Original Sin?’” *ChristianCourier.com*. Access date: November 8, 2018.

<https://christiancourier.com/articles/does-psalm-58-teach-original-sin>

- Wayne Jackson, “Are Infants by Nature Children of Wrath?” *ChristianCourier.com*. Access date: September 14, 2020.

<https://christiancourier.com/articles/are-infants-by-nature-children-of-wrath>

⁹ Calvinism also speaks to all humans as being “totally depraved” from birth. This again is a false teaching, akin to the “original sin” false teaching.

¹⁰ Roman Catholicism teaches the “original sin” false doctrine, so they invented yet another false teaching on top of that to counter the effects of their error, the “immaculate conception” false teaching.

¹¹ I hope you are starting to see how you will have to be very careful of the false teachings of man as we go along on the true and correct Gospel (Jude 3; 2 Cor. 11:3–4; Gal. 1:6–9; Eph. 4:14; Matt. 7:15; 15:9; Acts 20:29; etc.). See the chapter “Beware the Wolves.”

God tells us that the penalty of sin is “[death \[eternal, spiritual\]](#)” ([1 Cor. 15:56](#); cf. [Gen. 2:17](#); [Jas. 1:15](#); [Rom. 6:23](#); [8:2](#); [Rev. 2:11](#)), also described as separation from God ([2 Thess. 1:9](#); [Matt. 7:23](#); [25:41](#)). Only in God can “[light](#)” and “[life](#)” be found ([John 1:4](#), [8–9](#); [6:33](#), [51](#); [8:12](#); [9:5](#); [10:10](#); [12:35](#), [46](#); [14:6](#); [1 John 1:5](#); [Rom. 4:17](#); [6:23](#)). Away from Him is only “[darkness](#)” ([Matt. 25:30](#); [Acts 26:18](#); [Col. 1:13](#); [Jude 13](#); [2 Pet. 2:4](#), [17](#)) and “[death](#)” ([Rev. 2:11](#); [20:6](#), [14](#); [21:8](#)).

4 THE DAY OF JUDGMENT (HEAVEN AND HELL)

The Bible tells us that “God is love” (1 John 4:8, 16; cf. John 3:16–18; Lam. 3:22–23) and that He is “holy,” “righteous,” “faithful,” “merciful,” “full of grace,” “compassionate,” “patient,” “true,” and “perfect” (Lev. 19:2; Psa. 119:137; 1 Cor. 1:9; Luke 6:36; John 1:14; Exo. 34:6; 2 Pet. 3:9; 1 John 5:20; Matt. 5:48; cf. 2 Sam. 7:28; Psa. 23:5–6; 57:3; 86:15; 2 John 3; Titus 1:2; Rom. 3:4; Lam. 3:22–23; Jer. 29:11). But we also read that He is a God of “justice” (Isa. 30:18; Matt. 12:18; Luke 7:29; 18:7), “wisdom” (Pro. 2:6; 3:19–20; 24:3; Jer. 10:12; Luke 7:35; Col. 3:16; 2 Tim. 3:15; Jas. 1:5; 3:13–17; Rev. 7:12; cf. Psa. 136:5; Pro. 8:22–29), “law” (Psa. 19:7; Luke 2:23–24, 39; Rom. 7:25; cf. Heb. 8:10; 10:16), and “order” (Isa. 28:10–13; 1 Cor. 15:23; Titus 1:5; cf. 1 Cor. 14:33, 40; Acts 11:4; 21:24; Jdg. 6:26).

God will only allow Satan’s and humanity’s rebellion (sin) to continue for a while, for “He has fixed a day” (Acts 17:31) still yet to come, called “the day of judgment” (2 Pet. 3:7; Matt. 10:15; 11:22, 24; 12:36; 2 Pet. 2:9; 1 John 4:17; cf. Matt. 25:31–46; 2 Thess. 1:6–10; 2 Pet. 3:1–13; Rom. 2:5–10; 14:10–12; Rev. 20:11–15; 22:12; Col. 3:25; Gal. 6:7–8; 1 Cor. 4:5; 2 Cor. 5:10), “the day of the Lord” (1 Thess. 5:2; 1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Pet. 3:10), “the day of Christ Jesus” (Php. 1:6), “the day of redemption” (Eph. 4:30), “the day of eternity” (2 Pet. 3:18), “THE DAY OF SALVATION” (2 Cor. 6:2), and “the day of wrath” (Rom. 2:5), “in which He will judge the world in righteousness” (Acts 17:31; cf. Gen. 18:25; Psa. 7:11; 96:13; Acts 10:42; Rom. 2:5, 16; 2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Pet. 2:23).

Judgment day will be the very same day that “the last trumpet” of God sounds (1 Cor. 15:52; cf. 1 Thess. 4:16) and Jesus returns (Acts 1:11; 22:6, 11; 26:13; Matt. 16:27; 25:31–46; 1 Thess. 3:13; 4:16–17; 2 Thess. 1:7–10; 2:1, 8; Jude 14–15, 24–25; John 14:3, 23; Heb. 9:28; 1 John 3:2; 1 Tim. 6:16; Titus 2:13; Rev. 1:7; 8:1; 15:8; 22:12, 20). It will be the climax of human history, the “last day” (John 6:39–40, 44, 54; 11:24; 12:48; cf. Matt. 16:27; 24:36–51; 25:31–46; 1 Cor. 1:7–8; 15:22–25; 50–55; Php. 1:10; 1 Thess. 3:13; 4:15; 5:2, 23; 2 Thess. 1:6–10; 2:1; 2 Pet. 3:7–13; Jude 14; Dan. 7:9–11; Rev. 1:7; 21:5; 22:20) and the very end of time itself, which ushers in eternity. God has promised to “[make] all things new” (Rev. 21:5), eradicate all sin and sinful things (Psa. 50:3; 97:3; Heb. 10:26–31; 12:29; cf. 1 John 2:17; Exo. 24:17; Mal. 3:2), and restore His creation and all those who chose to obey Him¹² to “glory”¹³ (2 Tim. 2:10; Php. 3:20–21). There will be no more corruption, sin, suffering, or death (1 Cor. 15:26, 35–57; Php. 3:20–21; 2 Pet. 1:4; Heb. 2:14–15; 1 John 2:25; 3:2; Col. 3:4; Jude 21; Rev. 7:16–17; 20:14; 21:1–22:21; John 17:24; cf. Rom. 8:18, 29; 2 Cor. 4:17; 5:1–8; Isa. 25:8).

On that Day, everyone who has ever lived will be resurrected in immortal (but not all glorified) bodies (Acts 24:15; John 5:25; 1 Thess. 4:16; 1 Cor. 15:51–54), and God will separate everyone into two groups—the “saved” and the “lost” (explained shortly; see Matt. 25:31–33). “We [everyone who has ever lived, all humanity] will all stand before the judgment seat of God” (Rom. 14:10; cf. Matt. 25:31–32; 2 Cor. 5:10; Jude 14–15) in the general assembly of humanity, in the Supreme Court of God (Rev. 20:11–15; Matt. 25:34–46; Dan. 7:9–10), and “AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD” (Rom. 14:11; cf. Psa. 72:11; Rev. 5:14), also written thus: “At the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Php. 2:10–11). Jesus is the Lord God Himself (also explained shortly). Even those who did not believe in God or obey the Gospel and His Christ will bow down and declare Jesus is Lord.

Then judgment will happen. “Books [will be] opened” (Rev. 20:12; cf. Dan. 7:9–10; Php. 4:3; Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:15; 21:27), in which every thought, word, action, and deed you have ever said or done in your life is recorded, and “each one of us will give an account of himself to God” (Rom. 14:12; cf. Matt. 12:36–37; Gal. 6:5; 1 Pet. 4:5) and “be recompensed for his deeds in the body [flesh]” (2 Cor. 5:10; cf. Gal. 6:7–8; Col. 3:24–25; John 5:29; Rev. 2:23; 20:12–13; 22:12). At that time, “there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. Accordingly, whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the inner rooms will be proclaimed upon the housetops” (Luke 12:2–3; cf. Luke 8:17; Mark 4:22; Matt. 12:36–37; Eph. 5:12). “Nothing is hidden” from God (see Matt. 10:26–27; Mark 4:22; Luke 8:17; 12:2–3; 16:15; Acts 15:8; 1 John 3:20; 1 Cor. 4:5; Rom. 2:16; Heb. 4:12–13; Rom. 2:16; cf. Job 34:21–23; Isa. 29:15; Jer. 23:24; Eccl. 12:14; Rev.

¹² Those who “call on His name” as instructed in Scripture (Isa. 12:4; cf. Rom. 10:13; 1 Cor. 1:2).

¹³ A state of perfection and holiness, as was originally intended in Genesis 1; also “Paradise” (Luke 23:43).

6:15–16), not even the deep, dark, secret things of the human heart (Rom. 2:16; 8:27; Luke 8:17; 16:15; Mark 4:22; 1 Cor. 4:5; 1 Chr. 28:9; Acts 1:24; 15:8; Jer. 17:10; Psa. 44:21; 139:1–4; Pro. 24:12; Rev. 2:23). He even knows the thoughts and motives behind our actions (1 Cor. 4:5; Pro. 16:2; 21:2; Heb. 4:12–13; cf. Job 31:4; 34:21–22; Jer. 23:24; Ecc. 12:14; Psa. 139:1–4)!

The “saved” (John 3:16–17; 5:34; 10:9; Acts 2:21, 47; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30–31; Eph. 2:8–9; 1 Tim. 2:4; Titus 3:5; Rom. 5:9–10; 8:24; 9:27; 10:9, 13; 1 Cor. 1:18; Luke 7:50; 13:23; 23:35; 1 Pet. 4:18; Titus 3:5; Matt. 10:22; 19:25; 1 Pet. 4:18; cf. “sheep,” Matt. 25:33–34; John 10:27; 21:16–17) will be those who can stand before God on that great Day “righteous” (Matt. 13:43, 49; 25:37, 46; Luke 1:6; Rom. 5:19; cf. Rom. 5:17; 8:10; 1 Cor. 1:30; Php. 3:9), “justified” (Rom. 3:24; 5:1, 9; Titus 3:7), and “holy and blameless” (Eph. 1:4; 5:27; Col. 1:22; cf. 2 Pet. 3:14)—i.e., “without sin” (Heb. 4:15), declared “NOT GUILTY” of sin (see Heb. 9:28; Jude 24; Rom. 6:10; 8:3). The saved will be “raised up” to eternal life with God in heaven for eternity (see John 6:39–40, 44, 54; cf. John 3:15–16; Matt. 25:21, 23, 34, 46; 1 Pet. 5:6; 1 John 3:2; 1 Cor. 15:49–57; Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 3:18; 4:17; 5:6–8; Php. 3:21; Col. 3:4; Heb. 9:28; Rev. 21:3–4).

The “lost” (Matt. 10:6; 18:11; Luke 15:6; 19:10; cf. “wicked,” Matt. 13:49; Acts 24:15; 1 Cor. 5:13; “ungodly,” Rom. 4:5; 5:6; 1 Tim. 1:9; 2 Pet. 2:5–6; 3:7; Jude 4, 18; “immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars,” Rev. 21:8; etc.) will be those who *chose* to remain in their sins (i.e., declared “GUILTY” of sin, see Rev. 22:11; 9:20–21; 16:9; 16:11) by refusing to obey God, who refused “the free gift of God [which] is eternal life in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 6:23), and who refused “the forgiveness of sins” (Col. 1:13–14) that God offered (through Jesus Christ). The lost will be banished to hell for eternity (“eternal death,” see Matt. 25:31–46; Mark 9:44–49; Luke 16:26; 2 Thess. 1:9; Rev. 14:10–11; 20:15; 21:8) along with “the devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:41; cf. Rev. 20:10) who sinned. The lost do not go into annihilation or nothingness after death (that is another false teaching of man; see Luke 16:19–31; Acts 24:15; Heb. 9:27; Matt. 10:28; 16:26; 25:46; Mark 8:36–37; Luke 12:20).

Make no mistake; hell is a real, literal place of eternal torment (Matt. 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 13; Rev. 14:11; 19:20; 20:10–15). Furthermore, hell is not a place you want to go to for even an hour, let alone for all eternity! Hell is described as a “place of torment” (Luke 16:28; cf. Rev. 14:11), “eternal punishment” (Matt. 25:46), “the lake of fire which burns with brimstone” (Rev. 19:20), “the eternal fire” (Matt. 18:8; 25:41), “the unquenchable fire” (Mark 9:43; cf. Matt. 3:12), “the furnace of fire” (Matt. 13:50), “where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED” (Mark 9:44, 46, 48), “the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30), “the black darkness” (2 Pet. 2:17; Jude 13), “the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (Rev. 21:8), and where “the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night” (Rev. 14:11). Hell wasn’t created for humans; it was “prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:41) who rebelled against (disobeyed) God (Rev. 12:7–8; Jude 6; Eph. 6:12).

Mankind was never supposed to end up there! If you end up in hell, it will be by your own choice (Josh. 24:15; cf. Rev. 22:11, 17; Pro. 1:29; John 6:67–68). God forces no one to come to Him, but He has “made known” (John 15:15; Rom. 16:26; Eph. 1:9; 3:5) in advance (Acts 17:30–31; 13:38; Luke 24:47; Rom. 9:17; Col. 1:23; 1 Tim. 3:16; cf. Rom. 5:6; Heb. 9:26; 1 Pet. 1:20; Gal. 4:4) what will happen to those who chose to remain in sin, disobey God, or liked the things “of this world” (Eph. 2:2; 1 Cor. 3:19; 5:10; 7:31; 2 Cor. 4:4; John 8:23; 13:1; 16:11; cf. Matt. 6:19–21, 24; 13:22; 16:24–26; 19:16–24; Mark 4:18–19; 8:34; Luke 8:4–8; 9:23; 14:26–27; John 12:25, 31; 15:19; 17:14–16; 18:36; Rom. 12:2; 1 John 2:15–16; Col. 3:1–2; Php. 3:20; 1 Tim. 6:9–10; 2 Tim. 4:10; Gen. 19:26), which are “passing away” (1 Cor. 7:31; 2:6; 1 John 2:8, 17; cf. Matt. 5:18; 24:35; Mark 13:3–13; Luke 16:17; 21:33; 2 Pet. 3:5–10; Rev. 21:1–6) more than Him. Please understand: God sends no one to hell—you send yourself there by refusing “the free gift of God” (Rom. 6:23; cf. Eph. 2:8; Rom. 5:15–17; John 4:10; Acts 8:20; Rom. 3:24), which is “redemption” (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14), “salvation” (Acts 4:12; 13:26, 47; 16:17; 28:28; Mark 16:20; Luke 1:77; 19:9; Rom. 1:16; 10:10), and “eternal life” (John 3:16–17; 17:3; 1 John 2:25; Rom. 5:21; 6:23; 1 Tim. 1:16; Jude 21; cf. Rev. 22:17) through Christ (explained below). Your spiritual state is fixed for eternity when you die (Luke 16:26)—you either die righteous and “holy and blameless,” or you die in sin. There is no further remedy (i.e., “second chances”) after death (Heb. 9:27; Luke 16:19–31). There will be no discussing, arguing, pleading, or negotiating with God on Judgment Day about whether you deserve to be in heaven or hell; only those covered by “the blood of Christ” (Eph. 2:13; Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:19; 1 Cor. 10:16) will be allowed in (explained shortly). Nothing and no one sinful

or unclean will be allowed to enter heaven (1 Cor. 6:9–10; Gal. 5:19–21; Eph. 5:3–5; John 8:21; Matt. 13:41; cf. Heb. 12:29; Rev. 9:20–21; 20:12–15; 21:1–8, 23–27; 22:15; Luke 12:5). In fact, the entire purpose and point of the Gospel is to explain how you can stand before God on Judgment Day and be cleansed from your sin(s) and granted entrance into heaven.

5 THE WORLD IN AWFUL SLEEP

I do not want you to be uninformed, lest you be deceived by the many (many) false prophecies about end-times matters (eschatology), as false teachings on the matter of Christ's return and Judgment Day are absolutely rampant today.^{14,15} All Bible prophecy has already been fulfilled except that concerning Jesus' return¹⁶ (Acts 1:11; Matt. 16:27; 25:31–32; 1 Thess. 3:13; 4:16–17; 2 Thess. 1:7, 10; 2:1; Jude 14; John 14:3, 23; Heb. 9:28; 1 John 3:2; Rev. 1:7; 22:12, 22), which is also “the day of judgment” and the “last day” of human history (as explained previously). Jesus' return can now happen at any instant; all preconditions and Bible prophecies that were to precede His return have already been met (e.g., the apostasy has occurred, and the “man of lawlessness [sin]” has been revealed; see 2 Thess. 2:1–12).

We are told to “be on the alert” (Matt. 24:42–43; 25:13; Mark 13:35–37; Acts 20:31; 1 Cor. 16:13; Eph. 6:18), for Jesus' return and Judgment Day will arrive “quickly” (i.e., suddenly, rapidly; Rev. 22:7, 12, 20), “like a thief in the night” (1 Thess. 5:2; cf. 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 3:3; 16:15), when it is unexpected by most (Matt. 24:37–42; Luke 17:26–27; cf. Heb. 11:7), and without any further warning whatsoever besides the warning you are getting right now by reading this Gospel presentation (Matt. 3:7; 24:36–44; 25:10; Mark 13:32; Luke 12:40; 17:28–30; 2 Pet. 3:10; 1 Thess. 5:2; Rev. 3:3; 16:15; 22:12, 20; 2 Cor. 5:20; Col. 1:28; cf. Heb. 11:7; 1 Pet. 3:19–20; 1 Cor. 9:16; Exo. 19:21; Isa. 21:6–12; 62:6; Jer. 6:17; Eze. 3:17–21). The only reason Judgment Day hasn't come yet and you are still able to read this is that “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9; cf. 2 Pet. 3:4; 1 Pet. 3:20; Lam. 3:22–23; Jer. 29:11), giving time for more people to turn to Him (Rom. 5:6, 8; 1 Pet. 1:20; Acts 26:18; John 3:16–17; 1 Thess. 1:9; 5:9; Titus 3:4; Lam. 3:22–23; Jer. 29:11)!

Also know that there are dozens upon dozens of false teachings and false prophecies regarding end-times matters (eschatology).¹⁷ The list of these seems to be almost endless and way too long to list here, but it includes the following:

- Dispensational premillennialism (and its many permutations),
- The “secret rapture of the Church,”
- The “AD 70 Theory,” the doctrine of preterism,
- Waiting for “the Antichrist” as a nationalistic/political figure to appear,
- Waiting for more signs and wonders in the skies (e.g., “blood moons,” etc.),
- Waiting for a “Third Temple” to be built in Jerusalem,
- Believing that Jesus' next return will start some new “thousand-year earthly millennial reign in Jerusalem” prior to a seven-year great tribulation and the battle of Armageddon,
- and many more.

All those false teachings of man and institutions come from “the spirit of error” (1 John 4:6) and have one purpose: they are designed to cause you to procrastinate and delay in taking all of this “God and Jesus stuff” seriously and repenting and turning to the Lord *today* with a humble and contrite heart.

To avoid any doubt whatsoever, the very next prophetic biblical event to occur will be when you hear “the last trumpet” and “the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God” (1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thess. 4:16), and Jesus appears above in skies of fire with power and glory with all His holy angels and saints (Matt. 16:27; 24:36–42; 25:31; Acts 1:11; 1 Thess. 3:13; 2 Thess. 1:7–8; 2 Pet. 3:10; Jude 14–15; Rev. 1:7; cf. Heb. 12:29; 1 Tim. 6:16; Rev. 22:12, 20; 4:8). That will also be the “last day” of human history, as “the day of judgment” will have arrived—your fate will then be sealed.

¹⁴ Do not be deceived by the false prophecies of so-called “dispensational premillennialism,” and its many variations and permutations, which are being loudly shilled today from almost every pulpit, book, and movie/publication (even secular ones!). When Jesus returns, it will not be for some “secret rapture” of the Church or to start a new “thousand-year millennial earthly reign of Christ in Jerusalem.” When Jesus returns, Judgment Day will have arrived!

¹⁵ Also, do not be deceived by the many false end-times prophecies about the Book of Revelation; the Book of Revelation is highly symbolic, and many errors and false prophecies result when symbolic/figurative language is interpreted literally.

¹⁶ And the events which follow His return.

¹⁷ See the chapter “Beware the Wolves.”

The events of that day will then unfold quickly (rapidly), and there will be no further chance to “prepare to meet your maker” or “get right with God” or change your eternal destiny (either heaven or hell). And that day can now happen at any instant! As it is written: “[Be on the alert!](#)” ([Mark 13:35–37](#); cf. [Matt. 24:42](#); [25:13](#); [1 Cor. 16:13](#); [Eph. 6:18](#)).

6 OUR HOPE (JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD, OUR SAVIOR)

So far, we have been in bondage under sin, Satan, and death and headed for judgment, but we now come to the “good news” (Luke 1:19; 2:10; Acts 8:12; 13:32; Rom. 10:15; Heb. 4:2, 6; Isa. 41:27; 52:7; 61:1) of the Gospel. We read in Scripture that God “desires all men [people] to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4). God, out of His “love” (see John 3:16–18; 1 John 4:8, 16; Eph. 3:17–19; 5:2; Rom. 5:8; 8:35, 39; 2 Cor. 13:14; Gal. 5:6; 2 John 3; Jude 21; cf. Lam. 3:22–23), “grace” (John 1:14; Eph. 2:5, 8; Rom. 1:7; 3:24; 5:2, 15; Luke 2:40; Acts 11:23; 13:43; 20:24; 1 Cor. 1:3–4; cf. Ps. 86:15), “peace” (Eph. 6:15; Matt. 5:9; Luke 1:79; 19:38; 24:36; John 14:27; 16:33; Rom. 16:20; Php. 4:7, 9; Col. 3:15; 1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Thess. 3:16; Isa. 9:6), “patience” (see 2 Pet. 3:9; Rom. 2:4; 9:22; 1 Tim. 1:16; 1 Pet. 3:20; 2 Pet. 3:15; cf. Ps. 86:15), “kindness” (Rom. 2:4; Rom. 11:22; Eph. 2:7; Titus 3:4; 1 Pet. 2:3; cf. Lam. 3:22–23; Ps. 86:15), “compassion” (Matt. 9:13, 36; Rom. 9:15; Jas. 5:11; Exo. 34:6; Lam. 3:22–23; Ps. 103:8), and “mercy” (see Matt. 5:7; Mark 5:19; Luke 1:50, 54; Rom. 9:15; 1 Pet. 1:3; 2:10; Jas. 5:11; Jude 21; Ps. 86:15), has provided a way for us to “stand before the judgment seat of God” (Rom. 14:10) on the Day of Judgment with our sins forgiven (Matt. 26:28; Luke 1:77; Acts 2:38; 10:43; 13:38; Col. 1:14; 1 John 2:12; Rom. 4:7).

He sent us a “Savior” (Luke 2:10–14; Titus 1:4; 3:4; 2 Pet. 1:1, 11; 2:20; Jude 25; Acts 13:23; 1 John 4:14; Acts 5:31; 1 Tim. 2:3–4; 2 Tim. 1:10; Jude 24–25). He sent “Jesus Christ” (Matt. 1:18; Mark 1:1; John 1:17; 17:3; Acts 8:12; 9:34; 10:36, 48; 20:21; Rom. 1:4, 5–8; 3:22; etc.), “Jesus of Nazareth” (Matt. 26:71; Mark 1:24; Luke 4:34; 18:37; John 1:45–46; Acts 10:34–43; cf. Acts 4:8–12; 22:6–8; 24:5; Matt. 2:23; 21:11; 26:71; Mark 1:9; 10:47; 16:6), “His only begotten Son” (see John 3:14–17; cf. Isa. 9:6), the “Messiah” (Matt. 1:1, 16–17; 2:4; John 1:41; 4:25; cf. Dan. 9:25–26), “the Word” (John 1:1, 14; cf. 1 John 1:1; Rev. 19:13), “the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt. 16:13–16; cf. Luke 9:20; 23:35; John 7:42; 11:27; 20:31; Acts 3:20; 9:22; 17:3; 18:5), “the Prince of life” (Acts 3:15), to be “a lamb unblemished and spotless” (1 Pet. 1:19; cf. John 1:29, 36; 1 Pet. 2:22–24; 3:18; Acts 8:32; Heb. 9:14; Rev. 5:6, 8, 12, 13; 22:1, 3) sacrificed for you and for everyone who believes in Him (John 3:16, 18, 36; 6:35, 37–40; 12:46; Matt. 11:28–30; 20:28; Acts 2:21; 10:43; Rom. 9:33; Rev. 22:17) to take away our sins.

“Jesus of Nazareth,” “the Christ of God,” is a man who lived approximately two thousand years ago. His life was documented and confirmed by many eyewitnesses (the twelve disciples and many others) who testified and wrote as to what they saw, heard, and experienced. Many of them lived with Him during His three-year ministry on earth. Even skeptics and atheists concede that there is overwhelming historical evidence that the man “Jesus of Nazareth” did indeed live exactly as told in Scripture.

Christ is not Jesus’ last name; it is a title that means “the Messiah” or the “anointed” one of God (also “the Christ of God, His Chosen One”; see John 1:41; 4:25; Luke 4:18; 9:20; 23:35; Acts 10:38; Heb. 1:9; and “the Christ, the Son of the living God,” Matt. 16:13–16). *Christ* and *anointed* are the same word in Greek and the same as *messiach* or *Messiah* in Hebrew.¹⁸ Jesus was born in Bethlehem and raised in Nazareth; His genealogy is given in the books of Matthew and Luke. Luke traces His legal genealogy (Luke 3:23–38) back to Adam on His father’s side (Joseph), while Matthew traces His biological genealogy (Matt. 1:1–16) back to Abraham on His mother’s side (Mary).

Jesus was supernaturally born of a virgin (Mary; see Matt. 1:18–25; Luke 1:26–34) by the power of God via “the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 1:18–20; Luke 1:34–35). Jesus was born under the OT Mosaic Law, and He completely fulfilled that Law for us (Matt. 5:17–20; cf. Rom. 8:3; 10:4; Matt. 3:15–17; Luke 2:22–24, 27, 39; John 15:10; Gal. 3:17–24). While He was “tempted in all things as we are,” He remained “without sin” (Heb. 4:15; cf. 1 Pet. 1:18–19; 2:22–24; 3:18; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 9:14; 1 John 3:5; Rom. 8:3; Eph. 5:2; Isa. 53:9). He is the only person ever to do so; everyone else who has ever lived has sinned, as it is written: “THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE,” “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (i.e., we are all sinners before God; Rom. 3:10, 23).

Jesus was God manifest in the flesh (John 1:14; Gal. 4:4–5; Php. 2:6–8; cf. Heb. 2:7–9, 14–17; Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:16, 20–23)—fully God and also fully man (John 1:1–2; 3:34; 8:58; 10:30; 14:9; 16:15; Col. 1:15, 19; 2:9; cf. 1 Tim. 3:16), God incarnate, “the Son of God” (Matt. 4:3, 6; 26:63; 27:43, 54; Mark 1:1; 3:11; 15:39; Luke 1:35; 4:3, 9, 41; 22:70; John 1:34, 49; 5:25; 10:36; 11:4, 27; 1 John 5:20; Rom. 1:3–4; cf. Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22; 3:38; Acts 13:33; Heb. 1:5; 5:5;

¹⁸ Jesus (Ἰησοῦς, *Iésous*) is the transliteration of the Greek name *Joshua* (Jehoshua, Yeshua) in English.

Gal. 4:4), “the Son of Man” (Matt. 8:20; 9:6; 10:23; 13:37; Acts 7:56, etc.), “the image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15), “the radiance of His [God’s] glory and the exact representation of His nature” (Heb. 1:3; cf. John 1:14), “the true God and eternal life” (1 John 5:20), and “IMMANUEL, which translated means, ‘GOD WITH US’” (Matt. 1:23).

Next, even though Jesus was spotless and blameless (without sin), He was obedient to the will of God the Father (Matt. 26:42; Mark 14:36; John 4:34; 5:19–26, 36; 6:38; 8:28; 10:32; 14:31; 15:10; 17:4; 19:30; cf. Matt. 16:23; Mark 8:33), even “obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Php. 2:8; cf. Heb. 12:2; John 10:15–17; Matt. 16:21; 20:18–19; John 12:27–28; Eph. 2:16; 5:2). He was crucified (hung on a cross; see Matt. 27:31–50; Acts 2:23; 5:30; 10:39) at Calvary for our sins (yours and mine; see Matt. 20:28; 26:28; Acts 5:31; 10:43; 13:38; 26:18; Gal. 3:13; Rom. 5:6–8; 8:3; Gal. 1:4; Col. 1:13–14; 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18; Titus 2:14; Heb. 9:26–28), being put to death as a sinner even though He was “without sin” Himself. For this reason, He was given “the name which is above every name” (Php. 2:9; cf. Heb. 1:4, 2:9; Eph. 1:21; Php. 2:9–11).

Further, Jesus was “raised from the dead” (Acts 4:10; 3:15; John 2:22; 21:14; Rom. 6:4–5, 9–11; 7:4; 1 Cor. 15:20; 1 Thess. 1:10; cf. Rom. 1:4; Col. 2:12; Acts 2:22–24) after “three days” (see Matt. 12:40; 26:61; 27:63; Mark 8:31; 10:34; cf. Acts 10:40; 1 Cor. 15:3–8), and He “ascended into heaven” (John 3:13; Acts 2:34; cf. Acts 1:9–11; John 20:17; Eph. 4:8, 10), where He is now “seated at the right hand of God [the Father]” in heaven (Col. 3:1; cf. Matt. 22:44; Mark 12:36; 16:19; Luke 20:42; 22:69; Rom. 8:34; Heb. 1:3, 13; 8:1; 12:2; 1 Pet. 3:22; Eph. 1:20–21; 4:10; Acts 2:34; 7:55–56), ruling and reigning in His kingdom (Matt. 22:44; 26:64; Mark 14:62; 16:19; Luke 22:69; Eph. 1:20–22; Acts 1:9; 7:55; Rom. 8:34; Col. 3:1; 1 Pet. 3:21–22; Heb. 1:13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; Rev. 1:5; 3:21; 19:15; Psa. 110:1; cf. Matt. 28:18; Col. 1:15–16; 2:10, 15; Php. 2:9–10; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 7:25), “far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come” (Eph. 1:21), and where He has gone to “prepare a place for you” (in heaven; John 14:1–3; cf. John 6:39–40, 44, 54; 14:18–23; 14:28; Rom. 8:17; Php. 1:23; 3:20; 1 Thess. 4:13–18; 2 Thess. 2:1; Heb. 9:28; 1 John 3:2–3; 1 Cor. 15:50–57; 2 Cor. 5:6–8; Rev. 3:21; 21:22–23; 22:3–5). He was seen (and touched) by hundreds of eyewitnesses after His resurrection (Acts 1:3; 2:32; 3:15; 5:30–32; Matt. 28:9–17; Mark 16:1–14; Luke 24:36–43; John 20:19–20, 24–29; 21:14; 1 Cor. 15:3–8)—Christianity is the only religion with a “living God” (see Matt. 16:16; Acts 14:15; Rom. 9:26; 2 Cor. 3:3; 1 Tim. 3:15; 4:10; Heb. 3:12; Heb. 9:14; 10:31; 12:22; cf. 1 Thess. 1:9; Matt. 22:32; 1 Cor. 15:12–22). This is “our hope” in Christ (see 1 Cor. 15:19–20; 2 Cor. 1:9–10; 1 Tim. 1:1; 4:10; Heb. 10:23; 1 Pet. 1:13)! Amen.

Jesus is coming again to earth one final time, physically and bodily (Acts 1:11; 1 Thess. 4:16; 2 Thess. 1:7), to get all those who have believed in Him and obeyed His Gospel so that “where I [Jesus] am, there you may be also” (i.e., heaven; John 14:1–3; cf. John 6:39–40, 44, 54; 14:18–23; 14:28; Rom. 8:17; Php. 1:23; 3:20; 1 Thess. 4:13–18; 2 Thess. 2:1; Heb. 9:28; 1 John 3:2–3; 1 Cor. 15:50–57; 2 Cor. 5:6–8; Rev. 3:21; 21:22–23; 22:3–5). The next time Jesus returns, it will be in power and glory, “when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire” (2 Thess. 1:7; cf. Acts 1:11; 22:6, 11; 26:13; Matt. 16:27; 25:31–46; 1 Thess. 3:13; 4:16–17; 2 Thess. 1:7–10; 2:1, 8; Jude 14–15, 24–25; John 14:3, 23; Heb. 9:28; 1 John 3:2; 1 Tim. 6:16; Titus 2:13; Rev. 1:7; 8:1; 15:8; 22:12, 20). As explained prior, this is also “the day of judgment” and the Last Day of human history—and Jesus will be your Judge (Matt. 16:27; 25:31–46; 28:18; John 5:22, 27; 3:35; 17:2; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Rom. 2:16; 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Thess. 1:6–10; 2 Tim. 4:1; 1 Pet. 4:5; cf. Psa. 9:7–8; 50:3–6; 96:13; 98:9; Heb. 10:30; 4:14–16; Rev. 20:11–12).

7 WAS (AND IS) JESUS REALLY GOD?

While many skeptics, agnostics, and atheists continue to deny that Jesus (the man) ever existed (despite overwhelming evidence that He did), others realize that they cannot escape the force of that evidence, and so in a continued effort to discredit the Gospel message, they resort to mockingly conceding: “Well, He never claimed to be God; He was just a good moral teacher.”¹⁹ But let us look at the truth of what Scripture tells us.

Jesus did, in fact, claim to be God many times (Mark 14:61–64; John 8:58–59; 5:18; 10:30; 14:7–9; 17:21; Rev. 1:17–18; cf. Matt. 17:1–8; John 5:17, 23; 16:15; 17:10; Col. 1:15–16). It’s worth noting that from some of the verses above, you can see that the Jews of Jesus’ day had no misunderstanding on this, as each time Jesus claimed to be God, they tried to stone Him to death (John 5:18; 8:59; 10:30–33).

God the Father declared Jesus to be God (Matt. 3:16–17; 17:5; Mark 9:7; 2 Pet. 1:17; Heb. 1:8; 5:5–6), and Scripture declares that Jesus is God (Col. 1:15–16; 2:9; John 1:1–3; Heb. 1:1–8; 1 John 5:20; Psa. 110).

Several attributes are ascribed to Jesus that can only belong to deity: eternal being (having no beginning and no ending), holiness, and receiving of worship. Scripture assigns all of these attributes to Jesus. Speaking of His eternal nature, Scripture is clear that Jesus has no beginning and no end—He is eternal. The Bible tells us that “He [Jesus] was foreknown before the foundation of the world” (1 Pet. 1:20), that “He [Jesus] was in the beginning with God” (John 1:2), that He (Jesus) “was with God” (John 1:1), and that He (Jesus) “was God” (John 1:1). Scripture states that “all things came into being through Him [Jesus]” (John 1:3). He has co-existed eternally with God the Father from eternity past, and He will continue to exist for eternity future (e.g., the “first and the last,” the “Alpha and Omega,” the great “I am”; see Rev. 1:17–18; 1:8; 21:6; 22:13; John 8:58; cf. Exo. 3:14; Heb. 13:8; Rev. 2:8; Col 1:15). Jesus is not “a created being,” “a fallen angel,” or “the brother of Satan,” as some falsely teach.²⁰ Only God can forgive sins, and Scripture tells us that “all authority” was given Him by God the Father to forgive sins (see Matt. 28:18; Acts 4:12; John 5:22; 14:6; 1 Tim. 2:5–7). It is therefore only through Jesus that forgiveness of sins must be obtained and how all men are saved. Additionally, recall from the previous chapter that Jesus will be your judge on the great Day of Judgment, for “He [God] has given all judgment to the Son” (John 5:22).

Further, the miracles He performed were witnessed by hundreds and thousands of people (Matt. 8:5–13, 28–34; 9:1–8; 18–26; 27–31, 32–33; 12:10–13, 22; 15:22–28; 17:14–18; 20:30–34; Mark 1:23–28, 30–31, 40–45; 7:31–37; 8:22–26; Luke 7:11–17; 8:43–48; 13:10–17; 17:11–19; 22:50–51; 24:5–6; John 4:46–53; 5:1–9; 9:1–38; 11:1–46; 21:25; etc.), His command over nature (Matt. 8:23–27; 14:15–33; 15:32–38; 21:18–19; Mark 4:36–41; 11:20–21; Luke 5:1–8; 8:22–25; John 2:1–11; 21:1–14), and the many prophecies He fulfilled²¹ that were written many years before He was even born (Isa. 7:14; 9:6–7; 50:6; 53:1–12; 61:1–3; Dan. 7:13–14; Jer. 23:3–6; Zech. 9:9; Psa. 22:14–18; 34:20; 118:22–29; Mal. 4:5) demonstrate that He was, in fact, God in the flesh (cf. John 5:39).

Even more astonishing, the demons knew exactly who Jesus was and proclaimed so. They clearly identified Him as “Jesus, Son of the Most High God” (Mark 5:7; cf. Jas. 2:19; Mark 3:11) without ambiguity or doubt. They even understood they were under His authority, command, and judgments (Luke 8:26–33; 10:17; Matt. 8:28–34; Mark 5:7; cf. Matt. 25:41; Jude 6; Rev. 20:10).

Lastly, His resurrection from the dead proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that He is God (Rom. 1:4; Acts 17:30–31; cf. Eph. 1:19–21; 1 Pet. 1:3–5, 20–21; 1 Cor. 15:3–8, 12–19; Rom. 6:4; Acts 2:22–24). Note that Jesus predicted His own death and resurrection (Matt. 12:40; 16:21; 27:63; Mark 8:31; 9:31; 14:58; Luke 9:22; John 2:19; 10:17).

It is worth noting that the name Jesus most often used when referring to Himself was “the Son of Man” (Matt. 8:20; 9:6; 10:23; 13:37; Acts 7:56, etc.), reinforcing His love, affection, and bond with humanity and the value He places on His own humanity (despite also being God). Jesus will be identified with His (and our) humanity for all eternity.

¹⁹ Further compounding the matter, some so-called (fake) “Christian” churches today make other false claims: “Jesus was simply an angel, a created being,” or even that “He is the brother of Satan.” This is all blasphemy.

²⁰ Wayne Jackson, “Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Doctrine of the Deity of Jesus Christ,” *Christian Courier*. Access date: July 28, 2019. <https://christiancourier.com/articles/jehovahs-witnesses-and-the-doctrine-of-the-deity-of-jesus-christ>. See also the chapter “Beware the Wolves.”

²¹ See the chapter “Bible Prophecy Foretold Jesus.”

In the next chapter, we discuss a matter of monumental and eternal importance: Was Jesus really raised from the dead? For without His resurrection, we have no “good news” (Luke 1:19; 2:10; Acts 8:12; 13:32; Rom. 10:15; Heb. 4:2, 6; Isa. 41:27; 52:7; 61:1), and no hope.

8 THE GOOD NEWS OF THE GOSPEL

Jesus “did not come [the first time] to judge the world, but to save the world” (John 12:47) and to be “the Light of the world” (John 8:12; cf. John 3:16–17). God has told us that He will accept His Son’s death on the cross as full payment (“atonement,” “atoning sacrifice,” “propitiation”) for your (and my) sins (Heb. 9:26–28; 10:17; 1 John 1:7; 2:2; 4:10; Rom. 3:25–26; 5:8, 21; Matt. 26:28; 1 Cor. 15:3; Col. 1:13–14, 20–22; Eph. 1:7; Heb. 2:17; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18; Rev. 1:5)—if you believe in Him (John 1:12; 3:14–18, 36; 2:11, 23; 5:24; 6:29, 47; 8:30; 9:35; 12:44; 14:1; 17:20; 20:29; 1 Tim. 1:16; Mark 1:15; 16:16; Acts 2:44; 4:4; 4:32; 8:37; 9:42; 10:43; 13:48, 19:4; Rom. 4:5; 9:33; 10:11; 1 Pet. 2:6, etc.) as your Lord and Savior and are obedient to the Gospel (John 3:14–17; 11:25–26; Rom. 5:8–10; this is explained further in “The New Testament Plan of Salvation” chapter).

His shed blood paid the penalty (Heb. 9:22; 1 Pet. 1:18–19; Rev. 1:5; 1 Cor. 6:11; 15:3; Heb. 9:14; 1 John 1:7) for our sins (Heb. 9:22; 1 Pet. 1:18–19; Rev. 1:5; 1 Cor. 6:11; Heb. 9:14; 1 John 1:7), and it is only by and through His shed blood that we receive “forgiveness of sins” (Matt. 26:28; Luke 1:77; Acts 2:38; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38; 26:18; Col. 1:14). God then allows us to be covered by Jesus’ perfect “righteousness” (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:24; 1 Cor. 1:30; Php. 3:9; cf. Rom. 3:21–26; 4:13; 5:19, 21; 10:3–4, 10; Gal. 3:11) so we can stand before Him on Judgment Day with our sins forgiven (Heb. 2:17; 9:26–28; 10:17; 1 John 1:7; 2:2; 3:36; 4:10; Rom. 3:25; 5:21; Matt. 26:28; Col. 1:13–14, 20–22; Eph. 1:7; Rev. 1:5). In effect, we “put on” (Gal. 3:27 ESV; Rom. 13:14; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10) Jesus’ righteousness like “white garments” so we will be clothed in it (see Gal. 3:27; Rev. 3:4–5, 18; 4:4; 7:13–14; cf. 2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 6:11; 7:9, 13; 19:14; 16:15). Christ’s righteousness is counted as our own (Rom. 5:17; 8:10; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21; Php. 1:11; 3:9). Jesus took our sins on Himself: “He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him [God] holy and blameless and beyond reproach” (Col. 1:22; cf. 2 Cor. 5:21; Eph. 1:4; 5:27; 2 Pet. 3:14; Psa. 22:6). The white clothes signify that you have been cleansed from all sin (Psa. 103:12; Isa. 1:18; 43:25; Jer. 31:34; Rev. 7:14; 14:4).

Being covered by Jesus’ righteousness and “brought near [to God] by the blood of Christ” (Eph. 2:13), “reconciled to God” (Rom. 5:10–11; 2 Cor. 5:18–20; cf. Eph. 2:16; Col. 1:20–22) and no longer being “an enemy of God” (Jas. 4:4; cf. Acts 13:10; Col. 1:21; Rom. 5:1, 10–11; 8:7; John 15:23; Gen. 3:15; Jas. 4:4) are the only things that will matter on Judgment Day²²: not whether you think you are a good person (Pro. 14:12; 16:25; 12:15; Pro. 30:12; 26:12; Gal. 6:3; cf. Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:10, 23; 12:3, 16; Luke 18:11; 1 Cor. 3:18; 1 John 1:8; Matt. 9:13; Mark 2:17), attend church regularly (Matt. 15:8; Mark 7:6; 12:33; Pro. 15:8; 21:3; Isa. 1:11–17; Hos. 6:6) or tried to do good works of merit or under the Mosaic Law (Eph. 2:8–9; Rom. 3:27; 4:2–5; Gal. 2:16) to try to gain favor with God. Unlike in human courts of law, God can’t be negotiated or argued with, swayed by clever arguments of counsel, or bribed (Gal. 6:7; cf. 1 Cor. 1:20; 3:19; Gal. 6:3; Job 38:1–3; Deut. 10:17; Acts 8:20; 2 Chr. 19:7; Pro. 11:1). Furthermore, race, creed, color, money, wealth, fame, power, political affiliations, birth heritage, prestige, advanced degrees, titles, and fancy initials placed before or after your name have no standing whatsoever before the Lord, who judges all equally, righteously (correctly), and impartially (Gen. 18:25; 1 Pet. 1:17; Rom. 2:11; 11:32; Col. 3:25; Job 34:19; Pro. 22:2; Eph. 6:9; Acts 10:34–35; 15:9; Rom. 10:12; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 19:11; Deut. 10:17). You cannot buy, earn, or purchase forgiveness of sins—it is a gift of God by the grace of God (Eph. 2:5, 8–9; Rom. 3:24) through His Son, Jesus Christ.

²² This is not meant to diminish in any way the acts of kindness, service, charity, etc., that one may do here in this world; I’m referring specifically to one’s status and salvation before the Lord on the Day of Judgment—which is also the Last Day, the very end of time itself, and the culmination of human history.

9 WHY DID JESUS HAVE TO DIE?

Humanity cannot save itself, for we cannot pay the penalty for our sins ourselves, as we are all sinners (Rom. 3:10–11, 12, 23; cf. Gen. 8:21). We needed a “Savior” (Luke 2:10–11; Titus 1:4, 3:4; 2 Pet. 1:1, 11; 2:20; Jude 25; Acts 13:23; 1 John 4:14; Acts 5:31; 2 Tim. 1:10; Jude 24–25) to save us from our sins, as only a perfect, spotless blood sacrifice could save us by taking away our sins and offering us “the hope of eternal life” (Titus 1:2, 3:7; cf. John 1:29; 3:16–17; 1 John 1:7; Eph. 2:13; Heb. 7:27; 12:13; 1 Pet. 2:24; Rev. 1:5) as God had originally intended for us.

God literally had to “purchase” us (Acts 20:28; Rev. 5:9; 14:3–4; also pay “ransom,” Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45; 1 Tim. 2:6) by the shed blood of His Son on the cross to “rescue” (Col. 1:13; Gal. 1:4; cf. 1 Thess. 1:10; 2 Tim. 3:11; 4:18; 2 Pet. 2:9) and “redeem” us (Titus 2:14; cf. Gal. 3:13; 4:5; 1 Pet. 1:18; Job 19:25; Psa. 19:14; 78:35; Pro. 23:11; Isa. 41:14; 43:14; 44:24; 63:16; Jer. 50:34) from “the domain of darkness” (Col. 1:13; cf. 1 Thess. 5:4–5; 1 Pet. 2:9; Eph. 5:8; 6:12; Rom. 2:19; Acts 26:18; John 1:5; 8:12; Psa. 107:10–11) and “bondage” / “captivity”²³ under sin, Satan, and death (see Acts 8:23; Rom. 7:14; Luke 4:18; Gal. 4:3; Eph. 4:8; 2 Tim. 2:26; cf. Psa. 107:10–11).

For “just as through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death through sin” (Rom. 5:12), another Man, Jesus of Nazareth, *willingly* “gave Himself up for us” (Eph. 5:2; cf. Eph. 5:25; John 10:11, 15, 17–18; Matt. 20:28; 26:53; Isa. 53:7–8), being put to “death on a cross” (Php. 2:8; cf. Acts 5:30; 10:39; Eph. 2:16) for *our* sins to redeem us: “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him” (John 3:16–17).²⁴

Jesus came to earth the first time as a humble and sacrificial lamb (1 Pet. 1:19; John 1:29, 36; 1 Pet. 2:22–24; 3:18; Acts 8:32; Rev. 5:6, 8, 12, 13; 22:1, 3), a Suffering Servant (Gen. 3:15; Isa. 53:7, 10–12; Matt. 20:28; 27:22–50), “despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief” (Isa. 53:3), a friend of sinners (Matt. 9:10–11; 11:19; Luke 5:30; 7:34; 15:1–2; 19:7), “pierced through for our transgressions” (Isa. 53:5), to save those who are sick with sin (Matt. 9:12; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:31), but also sick of sin (1 Pet. 1:14; 4:1–5; Acts 17:30; Eph. 2:2–3; 4:17; 1 Thess. 4:5; Titus 3:3; Rev. 22:17; cf. Mark 7:20–23; Rom. 1:20–32; Rev. 17:4–5; 22:11; Josh. 24:15). He didn’t come dressed in the fine purple linen attire of kings or the so-called self-professing “elites,” nor in the business suit of commerce; He came as a Shepherd to gather His sheep (John 10:16, 26–27; Matt. 10:6; cf. John 21:16–17; Matt. 25:32–33); the lost and broken (Matt. 10:6; 18:11; Luke 15:6; 19:10), “the poor in spirit” (Matt. 5:3; cf. Matt. 11:25; Luke 4:18; Isa. 57:15; Zep. 3:12), the humble and contrite in heart (Matt. 5:5; 18:1–4; 23:12; Luke 1:52; 14:11; 18:14; Jas. 4:6, 9–10; 1 Pet. 3:8; 5:5–6; Psa. 51:17; cf. Psa. 19:9; 111:10; Pro. 1:7; 9:10), and those who are wandering “through the valley of the shadow of death” (Psa. 23:4; cf. Psa. 44:19; 107:10; Luke 1:79; 1 Cor. 15:55–57) of this fallen world.

²³ Also slaves to sin (Gal. 4:8; John 8:34; Rom. 6:6, 16–20; 16:18).

²⁴ Some refer to Jesus’s death on a cross a “substitutionary sacrifice”; but realize that Christ didn’t “take your place” on the cross—for even if you died on a cross, you would still have only died a sinner. He actually took your sins on Him on the cross (2 Cor. 5:21).

10 THE NEW TESTAMENT PLAN OF SALVATION

It is only by accepting Jesus as your Lord and Savior through belief and faith in Him, along with obedience to the Gospel and perseverance in faith until death, that one can be saved to eternal life. So, what exactly is Christian faith? Simply put, Christian faith is believing, trusting, and actively obeying God²⁵ and then approaching Him on His terms as written and instructed to in Scripture (not however we think or feel it should be done). The active part of faith expresses itself in obedience to God and His laws and commandments, as explained below.

ENTER THROUGH THE NARROW GATE

Scripture emphatically declares that there is no other way to heaven (described as “Paradise,” [Luke 23:43](#)): Jesus said “[I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me \[Jesus\]](#)” ([John 14:6](#); cf. [John 10:7–10](#)). Further, it is written: “[There is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus](#)” ([1 Tim. 2:5](#)), and “[there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved](#)” ([Acts 4:10–12](#)).

The gate to heaven and eternal life is called narrow (straight, difficult; see [Matt. 7:13–14](#)), because there is only one “door” through which you can enter, and that “door” is Christ ([John 10:7–9](#)). You will have to stop pursuing the things of this world, repent of your sins, and turn from your own selfish, lustful, sinful desires and instead pursue the things of God and His Christ. Jesus is that narrow gate—the Son of God, the Son of Man, our Savior, our Redeemer, our Hope, our Lord, our God, and our King!

Accepting Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior is the *only way* designated by God for all men to obtain eternal life. There is no other way to heaven, despite the many false yet popular teachings of man and the myriad of mysticism, “myths” ([1 Tim. 1:4](#); [2 Tim. 4:3–4](#); [Titus 1:14](#)), superstitions and wild speculation ([1 Tim. 1:4](#); [4:1–3](#); [6:20](#); [Col. 2:23](#); [2 Thess. 2:2–3](#); [Heb. 13:9](#)), “traditions” (see [Matt. 15:3, 6, 9](#); [Mark 7:6–13](#); [Col. 2:8](#); [Isa. 29:13](#)), “commandments of men” ([Titus 1:13–14](#)), and man-made schemes and religions that abound in the world!²⁶ The various man-made religions of this world offer no path to eternal life. Know also that simply going to church, being a “good person,” doing “good deeds” (i.e., “meritorious works”²⁷), performing religious rituals, or “traditions” will not save you to eternal life.

The easy (wide) way is to simply go on in life as you always have, in sin and without regard for God or others. That is also the worldly, popular way: “I’m gonna get what I can get now, by any means possible, for I only care about ‘me and mine.’ And when I die, so what? It’s just all over, and I go into nothingness.” But that broad way leads to eternal death, and as I have explained, you will not go into “nothingness” at death. Death is not an extinction event (our ending); it is the separation of the soul from the body. Your soul lives on forever; the only question is where—in heaven or in hell.

Please pay close attention to the fact that the verses above specifically say that Jesus is the only mediator between man and God—not Mary, or the Pope, or the dead, or angels, or false spirits, or idols, or men, or man-made religions. Also, we are not to pray to Mary; that is a false teaching of Roman Catholicism.²⁸

THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD

While salvation is “the free gift of God” ([Rom. 6:23](#); cf. [Eph. 2:8](#); [Rom. 5:15–17](#); [John 4:10](#); [Acts 8:20](#); [Rom. 3:24](#)), He has specified rules as to how we must claim that gift, and I do not want you to be uninformed about what God requires from those who desire to “call on His name” ([Isa. 12:4](#); cf. [Psa. 105:1](#); [116:4, 13, 17](#); [Acts 2:21](#); [Rom. 10:13](#); [1 Cor. 1:2](#)), lest you “die in the wilderness” ([Num. 26:65](#)) or be lost “for lack of knowledge” ([Hos. 4:6](#); cf. [Rom. 10:1–2](#)). We must approach God on His terms, not however men or committees *think* or *feel* it should be done.

²⁵ Note that a follower of God may not even see fulfillment of God’s promises in this life, but that doesn’t deter or discourage them ([Heb. 11:6–16](#); [Num. 20:10–12](#)).

²⁶ See the chapter “Beware the Wolves.”

²⁷ See the chapter “The Role of Works.”

²⁸ See again the chapter “Beware the Wolves.”

Scripture tells us eternal (final) salvation involves *all* the following²⁹ (Psa. 119:160). You must

1. Be “born again” (John 3:3–8; 1 Pet. 1:3–5, 23–25; cf. 1 Cor. 15:45–49; 2 Cor. 5:17; John 1:12–13; Titus 3:5; 1 John 3:9; 5:1, 18; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10; Gal. 2:20; Rom. 6:3–11; Jas. 1:18; Rev. 20:6; Psa. 23:3) by
 - 1.1. “Hearing” (see Rom. 10:13–17; Acts 8:30–35; cf. Acts 4:31; 13:7, 44; 15:7; John 6:44–45; Luke 8:21; 11:28; Mark 4:13–20; Amos 8:11–12; Rom. 1:16; Luke 16:29–31; 1 Cor. 1:18–24; Matt. 4:4; 11:5; 2 Tim. 3:16–17; Heb. 4:2, 12; Psa. 119:105) the Gospel message (*Gospel* means “good news,” Luke 1:19; 2:10; Acts 8:12; 13:32; Rom. 10:15; Heb. 4:2, 6; Isa. 41:27; 52:7; 61:1),
 - 1.2. “Believing” in Jesus, putting your faith and trust in Him—“believe” (see John 1:12; 3:14–18, 36; 2:11, 23; 5:24; 6:29, 47; 8:30; 9:35; 12:44; 14:1; 17:20; 20:29; 1 Tim. 1:16; Mark 1:15; 16:16; Acts 2:44; 4:4; 4:32; 8:37; 9:42; 10:43; 13:48; 19:4; Rom. 4:5; 9:33; 10:11; 1 Pet. 2:6, etc.), “faith” (Eph. 2:8; Rom. 1:17; 3:28; 4:16; 5:1; 2 Cor. 5:7; Gal. 2:16, 20; 3:8, 22, 24; 5:5; Acts 15:9; 26:18; Heb. 11:1–40, etc.; cf. Heb. 11:6), “trust” (2 Cor. 1:9; Pro. 3:5; 22:19; Psa. 37:3, 5; 62:8; 115:9–11; 125:1; 146:3–5; cf. 2 Cor. 4:13–14; Rom. 4:18–22; Luke 23:46; Eph. 1:13; Php. 1:14; 2:24; 1 Tim. 1:15; 2 Tim. 2:11; 1 Pet. 2:23; 4:19; Psa. 31:5; 37:7; 56:3, 11),
 - 1.3. “Repenting” of your sins (see Matt. 4:17; Mark 1:15; Luke 5:32; 13:3; 15:7; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30–31; Rom. 2:4–5; 2 Cor. 7:9; cf. Rev. 2:5, 16, 21–22; 3:19; 9:20–21; 16:9, 11; 22:11),
 - 1.4. “Confessing” Christ before men (see Matt. 10:32–33; Luke 12:8–9; Rom. 10:9–10; 1 John 2:23; cf. Rom. 1:16; John 12:42; 2 Cor. 9:13; Heb. 4:14; Php. 2:11; 1 John 4:2–3)^{30,31}, and
 - 1.5. Being “baptized” by immersion (“be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins,” initial salvation; Acts 2:38; cf. Acts 8:36–39; 16:33; 18:8; 19:5; 22:16; Mark 16:16; Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3–4; Col. 2:12; cf. 1 Pet. 3:21; 1 Cor. 12:13; John 3:5).

And then, you must

2. Be “obedient” (see Matt. 7:21–23; 12:50; John 3:36; Acts 5:29, 32; 6:7; Rom. 1:5; 15:18; 16:26; Heb. 5:9; 1 Pet. 1:2, 22; Jas. 1:22; cf. Rom. 2:13; 5:19; 6:16; Acts. 7:39; Heb. 4:11; 11:8; 2 Thess. 1:8; 2 Cor. 9:13; 10:5–6; 1 Pet. 1:14; 4:17; Josh. 24:15) to the NT “commandments” of Christ and His apostles (see John 14:15, 21; 23–24; 15:10; Matt. 5:19; 19:17; 22:40; 28:20; Mark 10:19; Luke 1:6; 18:20; 1 Cor. 7:19; 1 Thess. 4:2; 1 John 2:3–5; 3:22–24; 4:21; 5:2–3; 2 John 4–6; Rev. 12:17; 14:12). A Christian’s motive for obedience is “love,” not coercion (see John 14:15, 21–24; 15:9–14; 1 John 2:3–6; 4:19; 5:2–3; 2 John 6; cf. Gal. 5:6; Eph. 3:16–18; 6:24; 1 Pet. 1:8). Note also that you were bought and paid for by Jesus, He owns you (gladly!), and you have willingly become a “bond-servant”³² of Christ (Rom. 1:1; Gal. 1:10; Col. 1:7; 4:7; 2 Tim. 2:24; Titus 1:1; Jas. 1:1; 2 Pet. 1:1; Jude 1; Rev. 15:3; cf. Acts 4:29; 16:17; 2 Cor. 4:5; Php. 1:1; Rev. 1:1; 2:20; 7:3; 11:18; 19:2, 5; 22:3, 6),
3. “Bear fruit” for the Lord³³ (see Matt. 3:8; 7:19; Mark 4:20; Luke 8:15; John 15:2, 4, 16; Rom. 7:4), for “faith without works is dead” (Jas. 2:26)—bearing fruit results from being “doers of the word” (Jas. 1:22), that is,

²⁹ You are not saved to eternal life by saying a one-time so-called “sinner’s prayer” inviting Christ into your heart, no matter how often or vociferously you hear that taught or preached. The “sinner’s prayer” is nowhere to be found in the Bible and is an example of a fake gospel such as Paul warned about (see Gal. 1:6–9). See also the chapter “Beware the Wolves.”

³⁰ You are making a statement to the effect that you believe all of the following to be true:

- He is the Christ, the Messiah, the anointed one of God, the Savior;
- He is God in the flesh (i.e., the Son of God, the Son of Man, God’s only-begotten Son, fully man but also fully God);
- He died for your sins on the cross as your Savior—that is, that His death on the cross was a complete, final, and total atonement (sacrifice, payment) for your sins;
- He rose again (literally) from death to life after three days;
- He is your Lord and King, to whom you are committing your allegiance and obedience;
- You are stating a desire and willingness to repent of your sins and to turn your life over to Him in all areas, to trust in Him for all things at all times, and for His will to be done, not yours;
- He is coming again (literally, physically, visibly in person) to judge all mankind for their deeds (sins) and to get you (literally and physically) to take you where He is, which is in heaven, where He has made a place for you; and
- He will raise you to eternal life.

³¹ Note also that confession is more than just a mere verbal act; it also implies *active obedience* to the Gospel and the commandments of Christ.

³² Also, “slave” (Matt. 25:21; 1 Cor. 7:22).

³³ Do not be deceived by the false teaching and fake gospel that says that you are “saved by faith alone/only,” which is rampant today and not in agreement with Scripture. Further, this false teaching is almost always accompanied by the “sinner’s prayer” false teaching, which claims that all one has to do is say a one-time prayer (which is nowhere found in the Bible) to be saved to eternal life.

doing good works that result from obedience to Christ (Jas. 2:14–26; 1:22–25; Matt. 3:8, 10; 7:15–23; Mark 4:20; Luke 8:15; John 15:2–8; Rom. 7:4; 1 Cor. 15:58; Rev. 3:2, 15–16; Eph. 2:10; 1 Tim. 6:18; cf. Matt. 5:16; 12:50; 16:27; Luke 3:8; 1 John 2:17; 2 Cor. 5:10; Jonah 3:10),³⁴ and

4. “Persevere” in faith:³⁵ continue in “perseverance” (Rev. 1:9; 2:2–3, 19; 3:10; 13:10; 14:12; Rom. 2:7; 5:3; 8:25; 15:4; 2 Thess. 1:4; Luke 8:15; cf. 2 Tim. 4:7–8; 1 Cor. 9:24–27; Heb. 4:1; Jas. 1:12; Php. 2:12–13; 3:12–14; 2 Pet. 1:10; Rev. 2:4; 3:15–16), “be faithful until death” (Rev. 2:10), “hold fast” (1 Cor. 15:2; Heb. 3:6, 14; 4:14; 10:23; Rev. 2:13, 25; 3:11), “stand firm in the faith” (1 Cor. 16:13; cf. 1 Cor. 15:2, 58; Eph. 4:14; 6:11–14; Php. 1:6; 4:1, 13; 1 Thess. 1:3; 3:8; 5:21; 2 Thess. 2:15; 1 Pet. 5:12; 2 Pet. 3:17; Heb. 3:6, 14; 4:14; 6:19; 12:2; Col. 1:11, 23; Jude 3; Jas. 1:2–4; 5:11; 2 Tim. 2:3; Psalms 62:2), and “endure to the end” (see Matt. 10:22; 24:13; Mark 13:13; cf. 1 Cor. 4:12; 9:12; 10:13; 13:7; 2 Cor. 6:4; Heb. 10:32; 12:1–2, 7; Jas. 1:3; 5:11; Luke 21:19; Rev. 2:3; 12:11; Php. 3:8; 2 Thess. 1:4; 2 Tim. 2:10–12; 3:11; 4:5; 1 Pet. 2:20), which is final eternal salvation when you receive your “crown of life” (Jas. 1:12; Rev. 2:10; cf. 2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Pet. 5:4; Rev. 3:11),³⁶
 - 4.1. Also, one who does not “fall away” (see Matt. 13:21; 24:10; 26:31, 33; Mark 4:17; 14:27, 29; Luke 8:13; 1 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 3:12; 6:6; 2 Pet. 3:17) from the faith due to hardship or “persecution” (see Matt. 13:20–21; 5:11–12; 24:10; 26:31; Mark 4:16–17; 14:27–29; Luke 8:6, 13; cf. John 15:18–20; Acts 5:41; 9:16; Luke 14:26–33; 1 Cor. 4:12; 2 Cor. 6:4–5; 11:24–27; 2 Tim. 2:3, 8–12; 3:10–12; 4:5; Heb. 2:10; 3:12–14; 11:32–40; Php. 1:29; Rom. 8:17–18; 1 Thess. 3:4; 1 Pet. 2:20; 3:14–16; 4:9; 5:10; Rev. 2:10), “shrink back to destruction” (Heb 10:36–39), return to the ways and things “of this world,”³⁷ become “lukewarm” in faith (Rev. 3:16), or “[leave] your first love” (Rev. 2:4)—which is Jesus and a desire above all else to be obedient to Him and be with Him in heaven. Note that one can even “fall away” due to negligence and immature faith.³⁸
 - 4.2. Know that you may have your faith “tested” (see Jas. 1:2–4, 12; Rom. 5:3–5; 8:17–18; 1 Pet. 1:6–7; 4:12–14; Rev. 2:10; 3:10; Heb. 11:17–19; cf. Psalms 66:10–12; Proverbs 17:3; Isaiah 48:10; Jeremiah 9:7; Zechariah 13:9; Malachi 3:3; Heb. 2:10), as you face “trials” (Acts 20:19; Jas. 1:2–3; 1 Pet. 1:6–7), “tribulation” (Matt. 24:9; John 16:33; Acts 14:22; Rom. 5:3; 8:35; 12:12; Eph. 3:13; Heb. 10:33; Rev. 1:9; 2:9–10; 7:14), and even “discipline” (see 1 Cor. 11:32; Heb. 12:5–11; Rev. 3:19; John 15:2; Psalms 118:18) by the Lord at times. Understand that it is also written that “you will be hated by all because of My [Jesus] name” (see Matt. 10:22; 24:9; Mark 13:13; Luke 21:17; cf. John 15:18–20; 16:2; 17:14; Luke 6:22; 2 Tim. 3:12; 1 John 3:13; Rev. 12:7–17).
 - 4.3. Also understand that the life of a Christian is one of continued “repentance” (1 John 1:8–10; 2:1) and avoidance of deliberate, willful sin; as it is written: “Go. From now on sin no more” (John 8:11; cf. Gal. 2:20).³⁹ You also mustn’t “quench [grieve] the Spirit” (1 Thess. 5:19–22; cf. Eph. 4:30) by continued worldliness (Jas. 4:4; 1 John 2:15–16; cf. John 15:19; 17:14) and partaking of sin and fleshly lusts (John 8:11; Heb. 12:1, 4; 1 Pet. 1:14–16; 2:11; 4:2–4, 15–16; Rom. 6:1–23; 7:5; 8:1–14; 13:12–14; Eph. 2:2–3; 4:17–32; 5:3–21; 1 Thess. 4:3–5; 5:4–5, 22; 1 Tim. 6:10–11; 2 Tim. 2:19, 22; Titus 2:12; 3:3; 2 Cor. 7:1; 12:21; Col. 3:5–9; Gal. 5:16–24; cf. Acts 15:20, 29; Matt. 5:27–30; 26:41; Mark 7:20–22; Rom. 1:20–32; 7:18–25; 12:2; 1 Cor. 6:9–10, 19–20; Jas. 1:14–15, 21, 27; 3:2–8; 4:4; 2 Pet. 3:3, 14; 1 John 2:17; Jude 16–18; Proverbs 23:29–35; Isaiah 5:11; 28:7; Rev. 22:11, 14–15). Remember that “you are not your own” any longer and that “your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you” (1 Cor. 6:19). You are now living for Christ, and you are also an example for others (Matt. 5:14–16; Php. 2:15–16; 3:17; 1 Thess. 1:7; 1 Tim. 1:16; 4:12; Tit. 2:6–8; 1 Pet. 2:9; 5:3).
 - 4.4. Also, one who remains in, and true, to the “faith which was once for all handed down to the saints” (Jude 3). Please realize that when you are born again, you are just an “infant in Christ” (see 1 Cor. 3:1; cf. Heb. 5:11–14; 1 Pet. 2:1–2), a new baby Christian, if you will, immature in the faith, and you *can* still be lured, tricked, seduced, “deceived” (2 Cor. 11:3; Rev. 18:23), or led astray (either willfully or through sheer

³⁴ See also the chapter “The Role of Works.”

³⁵ Also, do not be deceived by the false teaching/fake gospel that claims that one cannot lose their salvation. This is known as “once saved, always saved” or “perseverance of the saints” under Calvinism (which, by the way, is another group of false teachings!).

³⁶ See also the chapter “Persevere in Faith.”

³⁷ See the chapter “The Day of Judgment” for “of this world” verse references.

³⁸ See also the chapter “Press On to Maturity.”

³⁹ See also the chapter “Changing Your Worldly Habits.”

ignorance of God's Word) by the false teachings and fake gospels of man, committees, and institutions (1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 4:3-4; Gal. 1:6-9; 5:7-8).⁴⁰ You must “[press on to maturity](#)” in faith ([Heb. 6:1](#)), or you can have your “[crown of life](#)” ([Jas. 1:12](#); [Rev. 2:10](#); cf. [2 Tim. 4:8](#); [1 Pet. 5:4](#); [Rev. 3:11](#)) snatched from you (stolen; see [Rev. 3:11](#)) due to ignorance of what is actually written in Scripture!⁴¹

⁴⁰ See also the chapter “Beware the Wolves.”

⁴¹ See also the chapter “Press On to Maturity.”

11 WHAT HAPPENS AT BAPTISM

Some wrongly teach that baptism is any or all of the following:

- 1) Not a required element/component of salvation
- 2) A “good work” of man
- 3) Merely an “outward sign of inner faith done out of obedience”

Nothing could be further from the truth. Let’s look into what happens at your baptism in more detail:

1. It is at baptism that you are born again. You die to your old self (2 Cor. 5:17; Psa. 23:3), having been “[crucified with Christ](#)” (Gal. 2:20; 5:24) and “[buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead](#)” (Rom. 6:4; cf. Col. 2:12; Acts 2:24; 3:26; 4:10; Rom. 1:4; 10:9), you also are “[raised up with Him through faith](#)” (Col. 2:12) to “[walk in newness of life](#)” (Rom. 6:4), “[a new creature \[person\]](#)” (2 Cor. 5:17; cf. Gal. 6:15; John 3:3, 5) “[dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus](#)” (Rom. 6:11)—in effect, we “[put on](#)” (Gal. 3:27 ESV; Rom. 13:14; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10) Jesus’ righteousness like “[white garments](#)” so we will be clothed in it (see Gal. 3:27; Rev. 3:4–5, 18; 4:4; 7:13–14; cf. 2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 6:11; 7:9, 13; 19:14; 16:15) on Judgment Day (if you persevere in faith as explained prior). Christ’s righteousness is counted as our own (Rom. 5:17; 8:10; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21; Php. 1:11; 3:9).
2. It is at baptism that you “[wash away your sins](#)” (Acts 22:16), as Scripture clearly states: “[be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins](#)” (Acts 2:38). This is initial salvation, but it doesn’t mean you will never sin again (1 John 1:8–10; 2:1). The idea that “Christians don’t sin” after being born again is not biblical, for you must still struggle with the flesh until you receive your glorified body on Judgment Day. The flesh continues “[waging war](#)” (Rom. 7:21–24) against your new, born-again Spirit (1 Pet. 2:11; 4:1–3; Gal. 5:16–17; Rom. 7:7–25; 8:1–13; 12:1; Eph. 4:1; Matt. 26:41; 2 Cor. 4:16).⁴²
3. It is at baptism that you are “[reconciled to God](#)” (Rom. 5:10–11; 2 Cor. 5:18–20; cf. Eph. 2:16; Col. 1:20–22).
4. It is at baptism that you become a “[friend](#)” (see John 15:13–15; Luke 12:4; Jas. 2:23) of God and Jesus and no longer “[an enemy of God](#)” (Jas. 4:4; cf. Acts 13:10; Col. 1:21; Rom. 5:1, 10–11; 8:7; John 15:23; Gen. 3:15).
5. It is at baptism that you become a “[child of God](#)”⁴³ with God as your “[Father](#)” (Matt. 6:9; 23:9; Rom. 8:14–17; Gal. 1:3; 4:1–7; Php 1:2; Col. 1:2; 2 Thess. 2:16; Phm. 3).
6. Even further, it is at baptism that we become “[fellow heirs](#)” (Rom. 8:17; cf. Gal. 3:29; 4:7; Eph. 3:6; Titus 3:7; Jas. 2:5) with Christ. You are actually adopted into the family of God (Rom. 8:15–17, 23; Eph. 1:5) and leave the family of Satan (John 8:38, 44; Matt. 13:38; Acts 13:10; 1 John 3:8–10)! Please take a moment to stop and reflect deeply on what that means: The eternal, omniscient, omnipresent, all-powerful God and Creator of the entire universe, the One who simply spoke all things into existence (Gen. 1:3), the Source of all life itself (Acts 3:15; John 1:4; 4:10, 14; 10:28; 11:25–26; 14:6; 17:2; Rev. 1:17–18; 22:1, 17), wants to adopt you as His son or daughter so that you can live with Him forever in eternal life! And He wants that so much that He died for you! Amazing, and amen!
7. It is at baptism that you willingly become a “[bond-servant](#)”⁴⁴ of Christ (Rom. 1:1; Gal. 1:10; Col. 1:7; 4:7; 2 Tim. 2:24; Titus 1:1; Jas. 1:1; 2 Pet. 1:1; Jude 1; Rev. 15:3; cf. Acts 4:29; 16:17; 2 Cor. 4:5; Php. 1:1; Rev. 1:1; 2:20; 7:3; 11:18; 19:2, 5; 22:3, 6), for He fully bought and paid for you (“[purchased,](#)” Acts 20:28; Rev. 5:9; 14:4).
8. It is at baptism that you are “[sanctified](#)”⁴⁵ (1 Cor. 1:2; 6:11; Heb. 2:11; 10:10–14; John 17:19; Acts 20:32; 26:18; 2 Tim. 2:21; cf. Rom. 6:19, 22; 1 Thess. 4:3–7; 2 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 10:29; 12:14) for Christ, for He “[called](#)” you (Rom. 8:29–30; 1 Cor. 1:9; Gal. 5:13; Eph. 4:4; 1 Tim. 6:12; 1 Pet. 2:9) “[out of the world](#)” (John 15:19; cf. Rom. 12:2; John 17:14–16).

⁴² See also the chapter “Changing Your Worldly Habits.”

⁴³ See the chapter “Come, All Who Are Thirsty” for “[child of God](#)” verse references.

⁴⁴ Also, “[slave](#)” (Matt. 25:21; 1 Cor. 7:22).

⁴⁵ Set apart for the Lord.

9. It is at baptism that you “become sons [and daughters] of Light” (John 12:36; cf. Luke 16:8; 1 Thess. 5:5; 1 John 2:8–11), no longer walking in sin and “the domain of darkness” (Col. 1:13; cf. John 1:5; 8:12) “of this world.”⁴⁶
10. It is at baptism that you become “blessed and holy” as part of the “first resurrection” (Rev. 20:6; cf. Psa. 23:3), which is spiritual, as you are born again, resurrected from death in sin to new life in Christ and have your name recorded in “the book of life” (Php. 4:3; Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; cf. Rev. 21:27).
11. It is at baptism you are given “the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38; 10:45), and you now “abide in Me [Jesus], and I in him [you]” —You are now living “by the Spirit” of God, not by your own power.⁴⁷
12. It is at baptism you are “sealed” (see 2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30; Rev. 7:3–4; 9:4; cf. Psa. 23:5) by the Holy Spirit, which marks⁴⁸ (signifies) that you now belong to God (as opposed to being marked as being owned by the devil; see Rev. 13:16; 14:9; 20:4). This also serves as a down payment (Eph. 1:14; 4:30; 2 Cor. 1:22) of your eternal, glorified inheritance to come (Rom. 8:29–30; 1 Cor. 15:40–57), a guarantee for “the day of redemption” (Eph. 4:30)—if you remain faithful.
13. It is at baptism that you become part of the worldwide “body” (Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18; Col. 1:24) of “believers” in Christ (Acts 5:14; 10:45; 1 Thess. 1:7; 2:10; 1 Tim. 4:10; 6:2; 1 Pet. 1:21), which is the “[church] of Christ” (Rom. 16:16; also “church [or churches] of God,” Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 1:2; 10:32; 11:16, 22; 15:9; 2 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:13; 1 Tim. 3:5; 1 Thess. 2:14; 2 Thess. 1:4). The Church is also referred to as the “bride” of Christ (John 3:29; Rev. 19:7; 21:2, 9; 22:17).⁴⁹
14. It is at baptism that you become a “fellow partaker” of (Rev. 1:9) and a “fellow worker[s]” in (Rom. 16:3, 9, 21; 1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 8:23; Php. 2:25; 4:3; Col. 4:11; 1 Thess. 3:2; Phm. 1:1, 24; 3 John 8), “the kingdom of God” (Matt. 12:28; 19:24; 21:31, 43; Mark 1:15; 10:14; Luke 4:43; 6:20; 7:28; 9:2; Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 4:20; 2 Thess. 1:5; cf. Col. 1:13; 1 Thess. 2:12; Rev. 1:6, 9; 5:10). Note that there is also a future heavenly kingdom of God/kingdom of heaven,⁵⁰ which occurs on the “last day” (John 6:39–40, 44, 54; 11:24; 12:48; cf. Matt. 16:27; 24:36–51; 25:31–46; 1 Cor. 1:7–8; 15:22–25; 50–55; Php. 1:10; 1 Thess. 3:13; 4:15; 5:2, 23; 2 Thess. 1:6–10; 2:1; 2 Pet. 3:7–13; Jude 14; Dan. 7:9–11; Rev. 1:7; 21:5; 22:20), and that is when we get our glorified heavenly bodies (1 Cor. 15:50–57; 1 Thess. 4:16; 2 Thess. 1:10).
15. It is at baptism that you become one of “A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God’s OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY” (1 Pet. 2:9–10), becoming “priests” (Rev. 1:6; 5:10) in His kingdom, and even further, “ambassadors for Christ” (2 Cor. 5:20; cf. Eph. 6:20).
16. It is at baptism that you become a “living stone” (1 Pet. 2:4), having been made “a pillar in the temple of My God” (Rev. 3:12), as you “sit down with Me [Jesus] on My throne” (Rev. 3:21), “[ruling] all the nations with a rod of iron” (Rev. 12:5). Note that we do *not* rule anyone by force, threat, intimidation, coercion, or violence (of any kind), but by and through love, service, self-sacrifice, “good deeds” (Titus 2:7, 14; 3:8, 14; Heb. 10:24; 1 Pet. 2:12) and the “preaching the gospel of God” (Mark 1:14; cf. Mark 16:15; 13:10; Matt. 28:19; Luke 14:21–23; 24:47–48; Eph. 6:19–20; Luke 9:6; 20:1; Acts 1:8; 8:25, 40; Rom. 1:9; 16:25; Col. 1:23; Php. 4:15; Rev. 14:6)—“THE GOSPEL OF PEACE” (Eph. 6:15; cf. Isa. 9:6), “the word of truth” (2 Cor. 6:7; Col. 1:5; 2 Tim. 2:15; Jas. 1:18), “the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation” (Eph. 1:13), and “the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 3:15).
17. And lastly, please note that every example in Scripture shows the new believer being baptized *immediately* (Acts 8:36; 10:47; 16:33; 18:8) after they have heard the Gospel message and professed faith in Christ—not days, weeks,

⁴⁶ See the chapter “The Day of Judgment” for “of this world” verse references.

⁴⁷ See the chapter “Living in the Spirit” for the verse references.

⁴⁸ This is symbolically described as having a mark placed on your forehead, and this mark identifies you as now being a child of God. King David writes about this: “You have anointed my head with oil” (Psa. 23:5), and the Book of Revelation says, “sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads” (Rev. 7:3). These verses speak symbolically of being marked as belonging to Christ, being sealed by the Holy Spirit, for those having been born again of the Spirit and following Him in mind, body, and spirit. Note that this is not a literal mark placed on your forehead, as many falsely teach.

⁴⁹ See also the chapter “Finding a Church.”

⁵⁰ See also the chapter “The Kingdom of God.”

months, or even years later, as is common today in many “lukewarm” (Rev. 3:16), apostate, so-called “Christian” churches.

IMPORTANT NOTE ON BAPTISM

If you are hearing the truth about baptism for the first time and have been baptized prior by man-invented baptismal rites that are not in agreement with Scripture, such as being baptized by sprinkling, or as an infant, or in a church that teaches that baptism is a “good work” of man or that it is merely “an outward sign of an inward grace or faith done out of obedience” (i.e., not “[for the forgiveness of your sins](#)” as stated in Scripture; Acts 2:38; cf. Acts 22:16), I strongly encourage you to be rebaptized into truth (Hos. 4:6; Rom. 10:1–2).^{51 52} I was rebaptized in a Church of Christ myself after I learned the truth—remember, it is your eternal destiny/salvation that is at stake here. I don’t know about you, but I wanted to be rebaptized into the correct Gospel and into truth, and I did not want to take any chances whatsoever on my eternal salvation! I also hope you can see that those who proclaim that being baptized is not necessary for salvation are doing so against the overwhelming evidence given in Scripture. See also the footnotes below.^{53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58}

⁵¹ Many Christians are very close to worshipping the Lord “[in spirit in truth](#)” (see John 4:23–24; cf. Jude 3) and “[they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge](#)” (Rom. 10:2). Therefore, after coming to an understanding the correct Gospel, if you find that you are not worshipping the Lord “[in spirit in truth](#),” please carefully consider: 1) Being re-baptized into truth—i.e., that you are not saved by saying a one-time “sinner’s prayer” which is nowhere to be found in the entire Bible, and that it is at baptism that one is actually born-again and “[washes away](#)” their sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16), and then, 2) Start attending the only Church which Jesus founded (Eph. 4:4–6; 1 Cor. 12:13), which is also the only Church without a single false teaching/fake gospel of man, committees, and institutions (Rev. 13:1–18; 14:9–11; 15:2; 16:2; 18:4; 19:20; 20:4). See also the chapters “Beware the Wolves” and “Finding a Church.”

⁵² See also the chapter “The New Testament Plan of Salvation” for verse citations about “[destroyed \[lost\] for lack of knowledge](#).”

⁵³ Wayne Jackson, “Baptism: Essentials and Nonessentials,” *Christian Courier*. Access date: April 29, 2019. <https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/baptism-essentials-and-nonessentials>.

⁵⁴ Wayne Jackson, “8 Mistaken Ideas About Baptism,” *Christian Courier*. Access date: March 17, 2019. <https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/8-mistaken-ideas-about-baptism>.

⁵⁵ Wayne Jackson, “Does the Grace in Ephesians 2:8–9 Exclude Baptism?” *Christian Courier*. Access date: November 8, 2018. <https://christiancourier.com/articles/does-the-grace-in-ephesians-2-8-9-exclude-baptism>.

⁵⁶ Wayne Jackson, “A Dispute About the Purpose of Baptism,” *Christian Courier*. Access date: March 17, 2019. <https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/dispute-about-the-purpose-of-baptism-a>.

⁵⁷ Jason Jackson, “The Truth on Baptism Should Not Be ‘Watered Down,’” *Christian Courier*. Access date: March 17, 2019. <https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/truth-on-baptism-should-not-be-watered-down-the>.

⁵⁸ Wayne Jackson, “Do I Need to Be Re-baptized?” *Christian Courier*. Access date: May 6, 2022. <https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/do-i-need-to-be-re-baptized>.

12 THE NATURE OF SALVATION

It's important to understand the nature of salvation. Some think that the Gospel, salvation, and eternal life are just about being “born again” (John 3:3)—but, friend, being born again is only the first step (but by far the most important step) on the path to eternal life. Said another way, being born again is necessary but not sufficient for eternal (final) salvation. Eternal salvation doesn't occur in an instant, nor is it a one-time event or prayer; salvation is a continually progressive process called “sanctification”⁵⁹ (Rom. 6:19, 22; 1 Cor. 1:30; 1 Thess. 4:3–7; 2 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 12:14; cf. 1 Cor. 1:2, 6:11; Heb. 2:11; 10:10–14, 29; John 17:19; Acts 20:32; 26:18; 2 Tim. 2:21) that starts when you are “born again” (which is initial salvation, “forgiveness of sins”) but continues throughout the life of a Christian as they walk with the Lord, and it doesn't complete until a person receives his “crown of life” (Jas. 1:12; Rev. 2:10; cf. 2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Pet. 5:4; Rev. 3:11), which is awarded to you on “the Day of Judgment” by Jesus (final eternal salvation).

Wayne Jackson explains how the words “saved” and “salvation” are used in Scripture:^{60,61}

The verb “saved” is a perfect tense, suggesting the idea of a past act that results in a present state. Salvation from past sins occurs at the point of one's conversion [being born again], and that state abides as long as the child of God walks “in the light” (1 Jn. 1:7 [ASV]).

And further on the nature of salvation:⁶²

When many people hear the term “salvation,” they immediately think of something that occurred in their past. Many Protestants believe that salvation was received the instant they expressed a genuine faith in Christ as their personal Savior, and that it never can be forfeited. As we shall notice, these ideas are not accurate.

Let us consider several passages that speak of salvation—from varying “time” vantage points.

Future Salvation

In the Great Commission, according to Mark's record, Jesus said: “He who believes and is immersed shall be saved . . .” (Mark 16:16 [TLV]). This passage speaks of the sinner who has never known Christ, but who learns of the Lord, believes his gospel, and, based upon penitent faith, is immersed in water.

What is the result? He “shall be saved.” The verb is a future tense form, the salvation being contingent upon the obedience specified. It is regrettable that so many repudiate this very clear declaration.

First, the text negates the false notion of “universalism,” i.e., the idea that all people will be saved ultimately. Second, it refutes the Calvinistic theory that “election” is “unconditional.” Third, as noted already, it contradicts the erroneous idea that salvation is by “faith alone”; rather, “works” [obedience] also are involved in salvation (see Jas. 2:24). [Note: J.H. Thayer described the “works” in Jas. 2 as having to do with “the conduct of men, measured by the standard of religion and righteousness” (Clark, p. 248).⁶³]

Past Salvation

Writing from a different time perspective, Paul reminded Titus that as a result of his kindness and mercy, God “saved us, through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:4–5 [ASV]).

The verb here is a past tense form. It refers back to the salvation received when one submitted to the “washing” (baptism—cf. Acts 22:16) of “regeneration” (the new birth—John 3:3–5). This was a result of the “renewing” instruction of the Holy Spirit, operating through the gospel message (Ephesians 6:17). At the point of our baptism, all our past sins were pardoned forever.

⁵⁹ Sanctified means to be “set apart” (Acts 13:2; Rom. 1:1) for the Lord and being made to conform more and more to the image of Christ. God is still “at work in you” (Php. 2:13) and will be for the rest of your life.

⁶⁰ Wayne Jackson, “Does the Grace in Ephesians 2:8–9 Exclude Baptism?” *Christian Courier*. Access date: November 8, 2018. <https://christiancourier.com/articles/does-the-grace-in-ephesians-2-8-9-exclude-baptism>.

⁶¹ You will hear many say they are “saved.” However, recognize that people mean different things when they say that. Some mean that they said a “sinner's prayer” once and believe they are saved “by faith alone” all the way to eternal life regardless of how they live the rest of their lives (in obedience to Christ or not). Both of those are false teachings. See the chapter “Beware the Wolves.”

⁶² Wayne Jackson, “The Word-tenses of Salvation,” *Christian Courier*. Access date: November 8, 2018. <https://christiancourier.com/articles/word-tenses-of-salvation-the>.

⁶³ J. J. Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1958).

Present Salvation

Contrary to the belief of many, the salvation process does not end with our conversion to Christ. One's redemption is not a "done deal" that never can be forfeited. That is the dogma of Calvin, not Christ.⁶⁴

In a letter to the church at Corinth, Paul wrote: "Now I make known unto you [brothers], the gospel which I preached unto you . . . by which also [you] are saved" (1 Corinthians 15:1–2 [ASV]). The Greek verb rendered "are saved" is a present tense form; literally, "are being saved" (see also 1:18, ASV footnote.). Salvation is a continuous process as we faithfully live the Christian life.

Future Final

Paul once stated that: "our salvation is nearer than when we first believed" (Romans 13:11 [NKJV]). Later, he would tell Timothy, "The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will save me unto his heavenly kingdom" (2 Timothy 4:18 [ASV]). The apostle Peter would speak of Christians "receiving the end [goal] of your faith, even the salvation of your souls" (1 Peter 1:9 [ASV]).

Furthermore, we don't (can't) reach a state of perfect salvation while still in our earthly, fleshly bodies (Rom. 7:18, 23–24; Matt. 26:41; Mark 14:38; 2 Cor. 5:1–4; 1 Cor. 15:50–55; 1 John 3:2; Eph. 1:13–14). Wayne Jackson writes:⁶⁵

We are in the kingdom now (Col. 1:13), but there is a more glorious phase to yet be entered (2 Pet. 1:11). We enjoy salvation presently (Mk. 16:16), but there is a greater dimension, a heavenly salvation, to be received at death (2 Tim. 4:18). There is a sense in which we are with Christ now (Mt 18:20; 26:29; 28:20), but there is a more exalted state in which we will be with Him ultimately (Phil. 1:23; 2 Cor. 5:8).

CHRISTIANITY IS A WAY OF LIFE, NOT A ONE-TIME EVENT

Therefore, know that Christianity is a way of life unto death; it is not simply a one-time event or prayer that happens in an instant and it's all done with and over with for the rest of your life, regardless of what you choose to do or not do thereafter. Salvation (present-tense verb in the Bible) means all of these: you have been saved, you are being saved, and you will be saved (in the future). Salvation is an ongoing activity throughout the life of a Christian.

The life of a Christian involves all of the following:

- ✓ Continued faithfulness—perseverance in faith, remain faithful, "stand firm in the faith,"⁶⁶
- ✓ Continued repentance—avoidance of deliberate, willful sin (1 John 1:5–10; 2:1, 28; 3:6, 9; 1 Cor. 9:27),
- ✓ Continued obedience—to the Word of God and specifically the commandments of Christ (John 14:15, 21; 15:10; 1 John 2:3–5; 5:2–3),⁶⁷
- ✓ Continual service—"good works" (see 1 Cor. 15:58; Matt. 5:16; 7:19; Eph. 2:10; 1 Tim. 6:18),⁶⁸
- ✓ Continual reading and studying (eating) of the Word of God—so that we "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18; cf. Matt. 4:4; Psa. 1:2; Acts 17:11),
- ✓ Continual prayer (Acts 1:14; Eph. 6:18; Php. 4:6–7; Col. 4:2; 1 Pet. 3:12; 4:7; Jas. 5:16; 1 Tim. 2:1, 8; 1 Thess. 5:17; Jude 20; Rev. 8:4),
- ✓ Continual worship (Matt. 4:10; Luke 4:8; 24:52; John 4:23–24; 9:38; Rom. 12:1; Php. 3:3; Rev. 19:4, 10; 22:9; cf. Matt. 22:37), and
- ✓ Continual praise and thanksgiving (Col. 1:3; 3:16–17; Acts 16:25; 27:35; Matt. 15:36; 26:27; Mark 8:6; 14:23; Luke 2:38; 17:16; 22:17, 19; John 6:11, 23; Rom. 14:6; 1 Cor. 10:30; 11:24; 15:57; 2 Cor. 2:14; 4:15; 1 Thess. 5:18;

⁶⁴ None of the so-called pillars of Calvinism ("TULIP") are in agreement with Scripture. Be not deceived. According to Calvinism, we are all mindless robots with no choice in the matter of our salvation whatsoever, as God had already "predestined" some people to be saved and some to be lost—even before the world began. This is not what Scripture teaches (e.g., Josh. 24:15; cf. Rev. 22:11, 17; Pro. 1:29; John 6:67–68). If Calvinism were true, the Calvinist churches could simply play re-runs of "Gilligan's Island" (or anything) at their church services because nothing they say or do can affect anyone's salvation anyway; they could also stop soliciting donations, because again, God has already predetermined everything before the world began, according to them.

⁶⁵ Wayne Jackson, "What Is the Morning Star of Revelation 2:28?" *Christian Courier*. Access date: November 8, 2018. <https://christiancourier.com/articles/what-is-the-morning-star-of-revelation-2-28>.

⁶⁶ See the chapter "The New Testament Plan of Salvation" for "stand firm in the faith" verse references.

⁶⁷ See *The Commandments of Christ* book that we publish.

⁶⁸ See the chapter "The Role of Works" for verse references.

1 Tim. 2:1; Heb. 13:15; Rev. 4:9; 7:12; 11:17; cf. Psa. 28:7; 30:11-12; 47:6-7; 63:4-6; 71:23; 103:1-2; 138:1; 146:1-10; Rom. 1:21).

13 THE ROLE OF WORKS (“BEARING FRUIT”)

This chapter explains the role of works (action on the part of the believer) in the plan of (eternal) salvation for a Christian. A Christian who is living his life in obedience to the Gospel and the commandments of Christ can't help but “bear fruit” (Mark 4:20; Luke 8:15; John 15:2–4, 16; Rom. 7:4–5; cf. Matt. 3:8) for the Lord (i.e., do “good works,” Matt. 5:16; John 10:32; Eph. 2:10; 1 Tim. 2:10; 5:10; 6:18; cf. Col. 1:10; 2 Thess. 2:17; 1 Tim. 5:10; 2 Tim. 2:21; 3:17). This is a lengthy chapter, for we must confront and clear away the rampant and widespread false teachings of man on this subject. We must make our way through this chapter carefully, so that we understand the truth of what Scripture actually teaches as opposed to relying on the opinions and doctrines of man, committees, and institutions.

THERE ARE THREE TYPES OF WORKS

Much of the confusion about the role of works comes from trying to reconcile what Paul and James, both inspired writers, wrote in Scripture. So, before we begin, please turn to the Book of James in your Bible—Is it still there? Yes, it is?—Whew, you can breathe a big sigh of relief, and we can therefore continue along on the path of truth. First, we must understand that there are three types of works under consideration in Scripture:⁶⁹

- 1) Works of the Mosaic Law
- 2) Works of human merit (meritorious works),
- 3) Works of faith done in obedience to the commandments of Christ

Understanding this is key to reconciling what James and Paul wrote. The verses under consideration are:

- a) “You have been saved through faith . . . not as a result of works” (Eph. 2:8–10, Paul),
- b) “A man is not justified by the works of the Law” (Gal. 2:16, Paul),
- c) “A man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law” (Rom. 3:28, Paul),
- d) “A man is justified by works and not by faith alone” (Jas. 2:14–26, James)?

Keep in mind that the totality of Scripture is truth (Psa. 119:160; cf. 2 Tim. 3:16)—therefore all of the verses have to be true statements when correctly interpreted!^{70,71} Since Scripture can't contradict itself, we must go beyond just a simple reading of the words and carefully consider the context of the verses:

- In Eph. 2:8–10, Paul is referring to trying to earn salvation through works of human merit.
- In Rom. 3:28 and Gal. 2:16, Paul is referring to “works of the [Mosaic] law” (see also Php. 3:9).
- In Jas. 2:14–26, James is talking about works of faith done in obedience to Christ.

There is no contradiction—the verses have different contexts.⁷² When reading and studying Scripture, you must first expand outward to see the context for the verse(s).⁷³ Failure to do so leads to many false teachings.

FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD

First, it is important to understand, and we see it is clear from the verses, that one does *not* “earn” salvation or forgiveness of sins by or through one's works (i.e., either works of the law or works of human merit). Only the shed blood of Christ on the cross forgives sin. There is nothing whatsoever that a man can do of himself to earn

⁶⁹ See Wayne Jackson, “The Role of ‘Works’ in God's Plan of Redemption,” *Christian Courier*. Access date: November 8, 2018. <https://christiancourier.com/articles/role-of-works-in-gods-plan-of-redemption-the>.

⁷⁰ No correct interpretation or understanding of one part or verse of Scripture can contradict another part or verse of Scripture. If your interpretation of one verse causes it to conflict with another verse, then it is your interpretation that is wrong, not Scripture. Additionally, you cannot interpret verses of Scripture that may be more difficult to understand (i.e., passages that are more obscure or symbolic) in a way that contradicts another simple, clear, direct, literal, and easily understood verse of Scripture.

⁷¹ See also Wayne Jackson, “Buy a Sword?” *Christian Courier*. Access date: November 8, 2018. <https://christiancourier.com/articles/buy-a-sword>.

⁷² We must remember that the Jewish religion under the Mosaic Law was one based in large part on works; Paul is correcting them sternly in the Books of Galatians and Ephesians that salvation is not of those works done under the Mosaic Law. The early Christians, many of whom were Jews, kept wanting to return to that old system, which was done away with (abolished and fulfilled) on the cross, and they also were turning others (Gentiles) back into doing works of the Law to obtain salvation. Thus, they were placing themselves once again under the curse of the Law instead of under grace in Christ.

⁷³ See the chapter “Reading and Studying Scripture.”

forgiveness of sins or salvation—it is “the gift of God” through God’s grace (Eph. 2:8–9). It was “the grace of God” (Acts 13:43; 20:24; Rom. 5:15; Titus 2:11) that put Christ on the cross for you—“the blood of Christ” (Eph. 2:13; Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:19; 1 Cor. 10:16) cannot be earned, bought, or purchased.

However, at the same time, we also see that Scripture tells us that works of faith done in obedience to Christ do play a role in our salvation (Jas. 1:22; 2:14–26; John 15:8; Matt. 5:16; 7:16–20; 9:37; 2 Tim. 3:17; 1 Cor. 15:58; Rev. 2:2; 3:2, 15–16; 14:13). As you can see, Scripture has much to say on the works of faith done in obedience that come naturally from a newly born-again heart (Heb. 8:10; 10:16; Psa. 37:4), one that has given itself to God in a changed life (Matt. 6:10; 7:21; 12:50; Psa. 40:8; Acts 13:22; 21:14; Eph. 6:6; Heb. 10:7, 36; 13:21; 1 Pet. 4:2) as a “bond-servant”⁷⁴ of Christ (Rom. 1:1; Gal. 1:10; Col. 1:7; 4:7; 2 Tim. 2:24; Titus 1:1; Jas. 1:1; 2 Pet. 1:1; Jude 1; Rev. 15:3; cf. Acts 4:29; 16:17; 2 Cor. 4:5; Php. 1:1; Rev. 1:1; 2:20; 7:3; 11:18; 19:2, 5; 22:3, 6). These works of faith do not diminish “the grace of God” one iota (Gal. 2:15–21). Scripture says we “will know them by their fruits” (Matt. 7:16, 20); a true Christian will produce fruit for the Lord, “some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty” (Matt. 13:8, 23; cf. Mark 4:8, 20).

FAITH IS AN ACTION TERM

Christianity is as much about action as it is about the profession of faith (Matt. 7:21; Rom. 2:13; Jas. 1:22). Wayne Jackson writes that faith is demonstrated to be an action term:⁷⁵

It is important to note that “faith” in the biblical sense has never denoted a mere passive acceptance of certain facts. Rather, it is a term of active obedience. Actually, faith consists of three elements:

- An acknowledgement of historical facts;
- A willingness to trust the Lord, and;
- A wholehearted submission to the divine will.

One cannot but notice how “faith” is demonstrated to be an action term in Hebrews 11. “By faith” Abel offered; Noah prepared; Abraham obeyed; etc. The inspired James made it wonderfully clear that faith, divorced from obedience, is dead (Jas. 2:26).

Faith and works are like two sides of the same hand, both working together (Jas. 2:22; cf. Jas. 1:22–24; 2:21–25; Rom. 2:13), with one important exception: faith comes first, and it is only by and through your faith in Christ, “abiding in Him [Jesus]” (see 1 John 2:6, 10, 24, 27–28; 3:6, 9, 17, 24; 4:12–13, 15–16; 2 John 9; John 6:56; 14:20; 15:4–7; cf. John 15:9–10; 17:21) and “He [I, Jesus] in you” (see John 5:38; 6:56; 14:17, 20; 15:4–7; 2 Tim. 1:14; 1 John 2:14, 24, 27–28; 3:24; 4:12–13, 15–16; 2 John 2; John 6:56; 14:20; 15:4–7; Rom. 8:9, 11; 1 Cor. 3:16; cf. John 15:9–10; 17:21), that you can do any “good works” (see John 15:5).

Further, your “good works” of faith (Matt. 5:16; cf. Eph. 2:10; 1 Tim. 2:10; 6:18; 2 Cor. 9:8; Titus 2:7, 14; 3:1, 8, 14; Heb. 10:24; 1 Pet. 2:12; Rev. 3:2), which result from an active faith and obedience, not only result in “bearing fruit” for the Lord (by helping to build His kingdom), but they also serve to demonstrate the sincerity of your faith and prove your faith genuine—both before man and before God. Scripture is clear that the Lord notices what a man does as much as what he says (Jon. 1:1–3:10; Rev. 2:2; 3:2; Rom. 2:13; Pro. 5:21; 15:3). “Hypocrites” (Matt. 6:2, 5, 16; 15:7–8; 22:18; 23:13–15, 23–29; 24:51; Mark 7:6; Luke 12:56; 13:15; cf. Matt. 15:8; Mark 7:6) who idly profess faith in Christ and yet do not do the will of God as expressed in the commandments of Christ and His apostles will be judged accordingly on “the Day of Judgment,”⁷⁶ as it is written: “Prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves” (Jas. 1:22–25).

THE SECULAR WORLD ALSO UNDERSTANDS THIS PRINCIPLE

To drive the point home even further, let’s list a few things that the secular world says on this subject:

- “Talk is cheap.”
- “This is where the rubber meets the road.”
- “Actions speak louder than words.”

⁷⁴ Also, “slave” (Matt. 25:21; 1 Cor. 7:22).

⁷⁵ Wayne Jackson, “God’s Great Plan Consummated,” *Christian Courier*. Access date: September 14, 2020. <https://christiancourier.com/articles/gods-great-plan-consummated>.

⁷⁶ See the chapter “The Day of Judgment” for verse references.

- “Put up or shut up.”
- Giving “lip service” to something (but not doing it).
- “Put your money where your mouth is.”
- “You’ve got to walk the walk and not just talk the talk.”

Now, don’t get me wrong: I’m not suggesting that you get your Christian doctrine⁷⁷ from the secular world, but I think you can see that even the secular world understands that your actions demonstrate and prove your professions to be genuine. In the same way, God expects you, and Scripture commands you, to prove your faith is real by backing it up with action. Scripture is abundantly clear that you must act on your faith in order to be saved (justified before God) and for your faith to be pleasing to God. What if Noah, Abraham, and Moses didn’t ever “do anything” after they proclaimed faith in God? What if Noah never actually built an ark and Abraham never offered up Isaac? Would you believe that their professions of faith were real and genuine? I don’t think you would.

Let’s take this up to the very top, the absolute highest pinnacle of authority: God Himself. What if God constantly talked about how He wants humanity to be saved from sin to eternal life with Him in heaven, but He never actually did anything about it? What if He never actually gave His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for you? What if Jesus made a lot of claims that He could heal people, but He never actually did heal anyone? And finally, what if Jesus said He would die on the cross for your sins, but He never actually did it? Would you take God seriously? You can see that even God backs up His professions and words with action!

BEWARE FALSE TEACHINGS

You are not “saved by faith alone/only,” as many false teachers and false prophets (“wolves in sheep’s clothing,” see [Matt. 7:15](#)) claim.⁷⁸ It’s as if the entire Book of James has been ripped out of the Bibles of many so-called “modern” or “reformed” Christians and their churches, which endlessly shout that you are “saved by faith alone.” You have just read that Scripture is abundantly clear that true Christianity is as much about action as it is about the profession of faith! Scripture explicitly states that “faith without works is dead” ([Jas. 2:26](#)) and that “a man is justified by works [of obedience] and not by faith alone” ([Jas. 2:24](#)). Those are very clear, literal, and direct verses that cannot be explained away or twisted into some other meaning; you simply cannot evade the force of those verses!

And yet, despite and in contradiction to the very clear, direct, literal, compelling Scripture I have now shown and explained to you, a couple of false teachings are absolutely rampant and widespread today. I point them out here, so that you will not be deceived:

- 1) **You are “saved by faith alone”:** Some falsely teach and preach that you are saved solely by a profession of faith (“faith alone”); that is, that obedience and works have no place whatsoever in the plan of salvation or the justification of the believer. They teach this despite the clear and direct Scripture that I have just shown you above! To support their “faith alone” false teaching, the “wolves” take Paul’s writing in the letter to the Ephesians ([Eph. 2:8–10](#)) completely out of context.^{79,80}
- 2) **Baptism Related:** Some of the “faith alone” advocates additionally claim that baptism is a “good work” of man, and therefore it is not required for salvation, since they exclude works from the plan of salvation. They arrive at this errant conclusion by ignoring Scripture and decreeing that baptism is a “good work” of man; then,

⁷⁷ Or your eschatology (end-times prophecy) either!

⁷⁸ See the chapter “Beware the Wolves.”

⁷⁹ It is helpful to understand where this “faith alone” false teaching originated. It didn’t start until many centuries after Christ. It came about when Protestantism arose during the Reformation movement to counter the blatantly unscriptural teachings of Roman Catholicism, which included concepts such as the “selling of indulgences” (i.e., the idea that you can buy forgiveness) and that “meritorious good works” justify man before God. This is what the “faith alone” advocates are usually referring to by a “works-based salvation”: the teaching that one can obtain salvation (justification before God, forgiveness of sins) by doing meritorious works. While opposition to the Roman Catholic Church’s corrupt teachings was much needed, the Reformed Protestant movement (generally credited to Martin Luther in 1517) erred by pushing the pendulum too far in the opposite direction by negating the role of works altogether from the plan of salvation. In fact, Martin Luther objected to the Book of James—he did not think it was part of the canon of Scripture (because he didn’t agree with it!). Even further, he then rewrote Romans 3:28 by adding the word “only” to it! The word “only” is not found in the original Greek texts from which he was translating. Yes, Luther changed (added to) Scripture to make it conform to his own beliefs!

⁸⁰ Note: Those who teach this usually also teach the “sinner’s prayer” false teaching—that you are saved to eternal life by simply saying a one-time prayer, “inviting Christ into your heart,” which is nowhere to be found in the Bible!

because of their “faith alone” bias, they exclude it from salvation because they classify it as a “work.” I hope you followed all that twisted logic!

This book is showing you that those who proclaim this “saved by faith alone” false teaching are triply wrong:

- 1) Baptism is *not* a “good work” of man.
- 2) Baptism *is* required for salvation (to be born again, to receive forgiveness of sins).
- 3) Works (of obedience) *do* play an important role in the biblical plan of salvation.

Wayne Jackson writes:⁸¹

It is utterly incredible that some, professing an acquaintance with the New Testament, deny the role of works (obedience) in the sacred scheme of redemption. Jesus plainly taught that one must “work” for that spiritual sustenance which abides unto eternal life (Jn. 6:27), and that even faith itself is a divinely appointed “work” (Jn. 6:29).

The “saved by faith alone” false teaching comes primarily from those who call themselves “Reformed Protestants,”⁸² and it is blaring out in ferocious volume 24/7/365 from so-called “Christian” pulpits, publications, radio stations, books, movies, and even seminary schools that train up new pastors in so-called “modern” and “Reformed” Christianity. You see, I, too, was initially deceived by this false teaching, because it was the only thing that I had ever heard taught and preached in any church that I attended! Astounding!

I have explained that there is a difference between initial salvation (forgiveness of sins, being born again) and final eternal salvation.⁸³ A lack of understanding of that difference can cause one to succumb to both the “saved by faith alone” false teaching as well as the “once saved, always saved” false teaching. Furthermore, false teachings are usually all interwoven and interconnected together, tangled up into a giant web and knot of deception, and they also usually travel as a pack (like the “wolves” who teach them).⁸⁴

ON BOASTING ABOUT WORKS

When discussing works, we must also talk about boasting. Always remember that we are only sinners before God, and very frankly, we have nothing that God needs—we have no righteousness of our own, it all comes from Christ, and no man can stand justified and righteous before God without being covered by the blood and righteousness of Christ. We can only offer our worship, love, and service to God, and our service is manifest through our works done for others. Therefore, nothing in this chapter should be misconstrued to mean you can or should boast about your good works—not before men and most certainly not before God:

1. “**There is none righteous, not even one**” (Rom. 3:10; cf. Rom. 3:23; 11:32)—all righteousness comes from Christ, not from yourself (for we have none).
2. You were saved from your sins and death (born again with your sins forgiven) by the grace of God through the blood of Christ, for it is that grace of God out of love (not your works) that put Christ on the cross so that your sins can be forgiven (Eph. 2:8).
3. You are only able to be obedient by the power of Christ living (abiding) in you (John 15:1–10).⁸⁵
4. You are only able to do good works through Christ living (abiding) in you (John 15:1–10).
5. You also persevere in faith by the strength of Christ living (abiding) in you.⁸⁶

We must always remember that we have no righteousness of our own, for all righteousness is derived from the blood of Christ, but oh, how that covers us like a white garment! As the apostle Paul writes, if we boast, let us boast of Christ and not of ourselves (Gal. 6:14; 2 Cor. 12:9–10; 1 Cor. 1:26–31; Php. 2:3; cf. Gal. 5:26; John 3:30; Rom. 3:10;

⁸¹ Wayne Jackson, “JUSTIFICATION: By Faith or Works?” *Christian Courier*. Access date: November 8, 2018. <https://christiancourier.com/articles/justification-by-faith-or-works>.

⁸² Also Calvinists or Calvinism.

⁸³ When you receive your “**crown of life**” (Jas. 1:12; Rev. 2:10; cf. 2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Pet. 5:4). See the chapter “The Nature of Salvation.”

⁸⁴ The “saved by faith alone,” “sinner’s prayer,” and “once saved, always saved” false teachings almost always come together as a pack—where you find one, you will almost always find the others.

⁸⁵ See the chapter “Living in the Spirit” regarding Christ abiding in you and you in Him.

⁸⁶ See the chapter “Living in the Spirit” for verse references.

11:32; Job 7:17; 15:14; 38:1–42:6; Psa. 103:14; 144:3–4). We can do no good thing of ourselves (John 15:5; Psa. 16:2). Always remember that “every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above” (Jas. 1:17), and it is also written, “I can do all things through Him [Christ] who strengthens me” (Php. 4:13). So, boasting of any kind is wholly excluded from the behavior of the true Christian (John 3:30).

Additionally, remember that grace means undeserved favor, wholly undeserved by anyone, for we have forfeited it (and the right to eternal life) a thousand times already by our own actions (sins). In our standing before God, it is Christ’s righteousness that counts, not ours. God is no respecter of abilities; the wisest, strongest, smartest, richest, most powerful man is but a mere puff of wind, soon passing away again, back to dust. Pride is still a formidable enemy of the Christian, and it’s helpful to keep the words of John the Baptist in mind (John 3:30; cf. Rom. 12:3).

IN SUMMARY

It was the grace of God that brought Christ down from heaven for us; this is what offers us the gift of salvation. We have been forgiven of sins and redeemed to new life only by the blood of Christ through faith in Christ. Forgiveness of sins (the blood of Christ) cannot be bought with money or earned through works—it is the gift of God through His kindness, love, mercy, and grace.

However, it is never written in Scripture that you are saved by “faith only”; in fact, just the opposite is *explicitly* stated (Jas. 2:24)! Once born again, Scripture teaches us that genuine Christian faith, which is pleasing to God (i.e., not a “dead” faith), has as its natural result “good works” for the Lord, which result from active obedience to Christ and His commandments, out of love for Christ, as a “bond-servant” of Christ, as a “friend” of Christ, as a true “child of God,”⁸⁷ as we love and serve others, and as we love and serve God. Such obedience and resulting works do not diminish anything about what Christ did on the cross—on the contrary, they glorify Christ and bring glory to the Father.

As God’s grace was made manifest in Jesus, true genuine saving Christian faith is made manifest by your works or deeds. “Faith without works is dead” (Jas. 2:26; cf. Jas. 2:20); “faith was working with his works [of obedience], and as a result of the works, faith was perfected” (Jas. 2:22)! Do you think that a “dead” faith will save you to eternal life? Will a “dead” faith please God? So now I ask you straight up: Do you want “dead” faith? Does the Bible state that God accepts “dead” faith? Does the Bible state that God even accepts “lukewarm” faith (Rev. 3:16)? The answer is unequivocally no to all those questions. It is further written that Christ expects to find you “doing” (see Matt. 25:14–30) when He returns (Matt. 3:10; 7:13; Luke 3:9).⁸⁸

In the previous chapter,⁸⁹ we learned that the life of a true Christian is marked by continued, willful obedience to the commandments of Christ as given in the New Testament. Since many of Christ’s commands involve taking action of some kind, you cannot be obedient to Christ and obey His commandments and yet not do anything!⁹⁰ Following those commands will result in us doing work for the Lord—“bearing fruit” for the Lord, helping to build “the kingdom of God” (Matt. 12:28; 19:24; 21:31, 43; Mark 1:15; 10:14; Luke 4:43; 6:20; 7:28; 9:2; Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 4:20; 2 Thess. 1:5; cf. Col. 1:13; 1 Thess. 2:12; Rev. 1:6, 9; 5:10), of which you are now a “fellow partaker” as a born-again Christian.⁹¹ God expects those who are saved to work in His vineyard (Matt 20:1–16), which is His kingdom. God does not condone or tolerate idleness; on the contrary, idleness is condemned (Matt. 3:10; 7:13; Luke 3:9), and those who bear no fruit will be cut off. Scripture tells us that we will know false prophets by their fruit (Matt. 7:16, 20), and we as Christians will also be known by our fruit.

This isn’t to imply that you are being placed again under a great burden to produce good works continually (i.e., nonstop) or else you will lose your salvation. In fact, it is written: “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light” (Matt. 11:28–30). Compared to being in bondage under sin with Satan as your master, or trying to fulfill 100 percent of the requirements of the Mosaic

⁸⁷ See the chapter “Come, All Who Are Thirsty” for “child of God” verse references.

⁸⁸ See also the chapter “The Day of Judgment.”

⁸⁹ See the chapter “Understanding Obedience.”

⁹⁰ You must study Scripture enough to know what all the commandments of Christ actually are, for if you don’t even know what they are, how can you keep them? For more information, see *The Commandments of Christ* book that we publish.

⁹¹ See the chapter “The Kingdom of God.”

Law yourself (which no man can do), you are under the amazing Law of Grace in Christ! Furthermore, Christ now “abiding in”⁹² you gives you the necessary wisdom, strength, power, and perseverance to produce fruit (through good works) for the Lord. Amazing! I hope you see how easy and light that is!

A Christian who lives his or her life in obedience to the Gospel and the commandments of Christ can’t help but “bear fruit” for the Lord. It will be the natural result if you wake up each day seeking to do God’s will instead of your own (Matt. 6:10; Eph. 1:11; Col. 1:9; Heb. 13:21; 1 John 5:14; Acts 21:14; cf. Jas. 4:15; 1 Cor. 4:19; Matt. 26:42), as you love God and love and serve others (Php. 2:4; Jas. 2:15–16; Luke 3:11), working (Matt. 7:19; 24:45–51; Luke 12:43; 1 Cor. 15:58; Rev. 2:19; cf. John 6:28; Eph. 2:10; Gal. 6:9) to help grow the Kingdom of God. If you love God, you will do what pleases Him (John 14:15). What pleases Him is that you love and serve others. How do you show love? You support, help, instruct, provide for, care for, and serve others as if they were yourself. You place other people’s needs first. We are also told to share the Gospel far and wide, to the very ends of the Earth;⁹³ I don’t believe there is any dispute over this “good work” that is commanded. These actions (works) are what produce fruit for the Lord.

Please also realize that we are not all called to do the same works. Some examples of good works might include the following:

- Helping those who are needy, widows, homeless, sick, in prison, and so on (Luke 3:11; 6:29–31, 38; Matt. 5:42; 6:2–3; Php. 2:4; Acts 2:45; 4:34–35; 20:34–35; Heb. 13:16; 1 John 3:17; 1 Tim. 6:17–18; 2 Cor. 8:14–15; 9:6–7; Rom. 12:8, 13; Jas. 2:15–16; Pro. 3:27; 19:17; 22:9; 28:27; 31:8–9)
- Leading someone to Christ by sharing the Gospel with them
- Raising your children to know and love the Lord
- Looking after the needs of your family
- Being kind and considerate to others so that you “let your light shine before men” (Matt. 5:16)
- Doing your job well, with integrity and honesty, and with an attitude that “whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men” (Col. 3:23; cf. 1 Cor. 9:23)
- Loving others as yourself
- Just doing a kindly deed

Some will be called to great works and others to more routine works—but all works done in obedience to Christ are good works. Remember, it is written: “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them” (Eph. 2:10). We are following the examples set before us of the giants in the faith that have preceded us—Noah, Abraham, Moses, Paul, and even Jesus Himself.

So, faith and works aren’t mutually exclusive, nor are they in opposition to each other. Christ expects your faith to be an active faith, not passive or idle (or even “lukewarm”). When God says He will do something, He always does; in contrast, what man says, he seldom does. It is not the hearers and idle professors (“pretend believers”) of the Word that will be saved, but “doers of the word” (Jas. 1:22; cf. Rom. 2:13). I hope you can see that it is by actual deeds and works that you prove your faith is a real, genuine, saving faith, for if you do not act on your faith, your faith will neither justify you nor save you to eternal salvation; it is what the Bible calls a “dead faith” (paraphrase, Jas. 2:17, 26).

It is my works that testify (demonstrate, prove) that I am a Christian, and it is your works that testify (demonstrate, prove) that you are a Christian. Your works actually complete (perfect) your faith (Jas. 2:22). You may choose to stand before the Lord on “the day of judgment”⁹⁴ without any works (of faith done in obedience), but I want to be able to stand before Him on that Day covered by the “righteousness” of Christ (Rom. 5:17, 31; 8:10; 10:6; 1 Cor. 1:30; Php. 1:11; Php. 3:9; 2 Pet. 1:1), “by the blood of Christ” (Eph. 2:13; cf. 1 Pet. 1:2; Rev. 1:5), “for the forgiveness of your sins” (at baptism, Acts 2:38; cf. Acts 22:16), and also “justified” (Jas. 2:21, 24–25) by being able to say, Lord, “I will show you my faith by my works” (Jas. 2:18), and by doing so, stand in the blessed company of Noah, Abraham, and countless others who will be able to do the same.

⁹² See the chapter “Living in the Spirit.”

⁹³ See the chapter “Go and Tell Others” for verse references.

⁹⁴ See the chapter “The Day of Judgment” for verse references.

I hope that this chapter has helped the following verses become clear:

But someone may *well* say, “You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.” – [Jas. 2:18](#)

You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected. – [Jas. 2:22](#)

Let’s close this chapter with a verse:

Then He [Jesus] said to His disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the *workers* are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out *workers* into His harvest.” – [Matt. 9:37–38](#) (emphasis mine)

14 PRESS ON TO MATURITY, PERSEVERE IN FAITH

Jesus has already won final victory for us through His death and resurrection: “It is finished!” (John 19:30; cf. Eph. 1:20–22; Heb. 10:10–13; Col. 2:14–15; Rev. 1:17–18). He fully and completely defeated sin, Satan, and death at the cross for us (Luke 10:18; John 12:31; Heb. 2:14; 1 John 3:8; 2 Tim. 1:10; 1 Cor. 15:24–26; Rev. 1:18; 12:7–9; 20:14; 21:4). But while Jesus has already done His part, we are strongly admonished in Scripture not to “fall away” (see Matt. 13:21; 24:10; 26:31, 33; Mark 4:17; 14:27, 29; Luke 8:13; 1 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 3:12; 6:6; 2 Pet. 3:17) from the faith. While it is written that He will never leave you: “I [JESUS] WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU” (Heb. 13:5), you can still leave (quit) Him and long to return to this world and the ways “of this world.”⁹⁵

We must continue to “walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7; cf. 2 Cor. 4:18; Rom. 8:24–25; Gal. 2:20; Heb. 10:38; 11:1–40), “deny himself [ourself], and take up his [our] cross daily and follow Me” (see Matt. 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23), “fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called” (1 Tim. 6:12), and “press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Php. 3:14), so we can say, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing” (2 Tim. 4:7–8). Look directly towards Christ each and every day, no matter how hard, bleak, or difficult things seem to appear (Heb. 12:1–2; Php. 4:13; John 16:33; 19:30; 2 Cor. 12:10; Rom. 8:36–39; Psa. 23:4).

IT TAKES COURAGE AND STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Scripture tells us to “calculate [count] the cost” of following Jesus (Luke 14:28; cf. Matt. 6:19–24; 8:19–20; 10:37; 16:25; 19:21, 29; Mark 8:35; 10:21; Luke 5:28; 9:24; 12:33; 14:25–27, 33; 17:33; John 12:25; Acts 21:13; Php. 3:8; Heb. 10:34; 2 Tim. 3:12) and “take up his [our] cross” each day (Matt. 16:24–26; Mark 8:34–37; Luke 9:23–25; cf. Matt. 5:10–12; 10:22, 38; 24:9; Mark 13:13; Luke 6:22; 14:27; 21:17; John 15:19–21; 17:14; Acts 5:41; 9:16; 16:23–25; 2 Cor. 4:11; 12:10; Php. 1:29; 1 Pet. 4:13–16; 2 Tim. 3:12; Rom. 5:3; 14:7–8; Gal. 2:20; Jas. 1:2–4; Heb. 10:34). You must want eternal life with God and His Christ Jesus in heaven more than anything in this world, and you must be willing to sacrifice and leave everything behind,⁹⁶ including your own life, if necessary, in order to obtain it (Matt. 8:19–20; 10:39; 16:25; Mark 8:35; Luke 9:23–24; 14:26–33; 17:33; John 12:25; Acts 20:24; 21:13; Rom. 14:7–8; Php. 3:8; Heb. 11:35; Rev. 12:11). You must want eternal life and God “WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH” (Mark 12:30; cf. Matt. 22:37; Jer. 29:13; Luke 11:9–10; Acts 8:37; and conversely, Matt. 6:24; 15:8; Mark 7:6; 2 Tim. 4:10).⁹⁷

You may have your faith “tested” (see Jas. 1:2–4, 12; Rom. 5:3–5; 8:17–18; 1 Pet. 1:6–7; 4:12–14; Rev. 2:10; 3:10; Heb. 11:17–19; cf. Psa. 66:10–12; Pro. 17:3; Isa. 48:10; Jer. 9:7; Zech. 13:9; Mal. 3:3; Heb. 2:10), as you face “trials” (Acts 20:19; Jas. 1:2–3; 1 Pet. 1:6–7), “tribulation” (Matt. 24:9; John 16:33; Acts 14:22; Rom. 5:3; 8:35; 12:12; Eph. 3:13; Heb. 10:33; Rev. 1:9; 2:9–10; 7:14), and even “discipline” (see 1 Cor. 11:32; Heb. 12:5–11; Rev. 3:19; John 15:2; Psa. 118:18) by the Lord at times. Understand that it is also written that “you will be hated by all because of My [Jesus] name” (see Matt. 10:22; 24:9; Mark 13:13; Luke 21:17; cf. John 15:18–20; 16:2; 17:14; Luke 6:22; 2 Tim. 3:12; 1 John 3:13; Rev. 12:7–17).

Know that proceeding onward from here to eternal life in Christ takes “courage” (Matt. 9:2, 22; 14:27; Mark 6:50; 10:49; 15:43; John 16:33; Php. 1:14; 5:6–8; Acts 23:11; 27:25; 28:15; cf. 1 Cor. 16:13; 2 Cor. 4:11; 5:6–8; Josh. 1:9), “boldness” (Acts 4:29–31; 2 Cor. 3:12; Eph. 3:12; 6:19; Php. 1:20; 1 Thess. 2:2; cf. 2 Tim. 1:7–14; Rom. 1:16–17; Matt. 5:14–16), “strength” of character (Mark 12:30; Luke 21:36; Eph. 6:10–11; cf. Eph. 3:16; Php. 4:13; 2 Tim. 2:1,

⁹⁵ See the chapter “The Day of Judgment” for “of this world” verse references.

⁹⁶ “Calculate [count] the cost” (Luke 14:28).

⁹⁷ If only people ran towards heaven with the same determination they have for the upcoming weekend football game or barbeque (1 Cor. 9:23–27)! I strongly recommend reading *The Heavenly Footman*, by John Bunyan, so you can get another author’s perspective on the need to be extremely diligent about ensuring our eternal salvation—we are not to take our eternal salvation lightly or for granted, or just casually stroll toward heaven (Heb. 4:1; 2 Cor. 13:5; Php. 2:12; 2 Pet. 1:10; 3:14; Php. 3:12–14; 1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7–8; cf. Matt. 19:30), but rather run toward it with all our energy, attention, and seriousness, for our eternal life is at stake. It must be noted that the Lord Jesus even condemned those who had just “lukewarm” faith (Rev. 3:14–19).

3; Rom. 15:1; Col. 1:11; 1 Cor. 16:13; Jas. 5:8), “confidence” (see Acts 2:29; 4:13, 29; 1 Tim. 3:13; Php. 1:6; Eph. 3:12; Titus 3:8; Heb. 3:6; 10:19; 13:6; Phm. 8; 1 John 3:21; 4:17; 5:14; 2 Cor. 1:12; 3:4), “integrity” (Psa. 7:8; 15:2; 25:21; 26:1, 11; 41:12; Pro. 2:7; 10:9; 11:3; 19:1; 20:7; 28:6), and “endurance” or “perseverance” (see Rev. 1:9; 2:2–4, 10, 13, 19, 25; 3:10–11, 15–16; 12:11; 13:10; 14:12; Rom. 2:7; 5:3–4; 8:25; 12:12; 15:4–5; 2 Thess. 1:4; 2:15; Luke 8:15; 21:19; 1 Cor. 4:12; 9:12, 24–27; 10:13; 13:7; 15:2; 16:13; Heb. 3:6, 14; 4:1, 14; 10:23, 32, 36; 11:25, 27; 12:1–3, 7; Jas. 1:3–4, 12; 5:11; Php. 3:12–14; 4:1; 2 Pet. 1:6; Eph. 6:11–18; 1 Thess. 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:20; 1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Cor. 1:6; 6:4; Matt. 10:22; 24:13; Mark 13:13; 2 Tim. 2:10–12; 3:10–11; 4:3, 5, 7–8) to “stand firm in the faith”⁹⁸ and in our “trust in the Lord.”⁹⁹

I hope you can see the emphasis that Scripture places on enduring and persevering in faith from the sheer number of verses cited in this paragraph.¹⁰⁰

MAKE OUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE

While it is my responsibility to accurately “preach [present and teach] the word” to you (2 Tim. 4:2; cf. Jas. 3:1; 2 Tim. 2:15) so you do not “die in the wilderness” (Num. 26:65) and are not “destroyed [lost] for lack of knowledge,”¹⁰¹ it is your responsibility to ensure your own salvation and to “be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you” (2 Pet. 1:10; cf. Heb. 4:1), to “work out your salvation with fear and trembling” (Php. 2:12), to “test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!” (2 Cor. 13:5), and to make sure that you are indeed in “the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints” (Jude 3; cf. Luke 18:8).

We are strongly and repeatedly admonished and exhorted not to take our eternal final salvation lightly or for granted:

- “Make your calling and election sure” (2 Pet. 1:10 KJV);
- “Be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you” (2 Pet. 1:10);
- “Work out your salvation with fear and trembling” (Php. 2:12);
- “Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it” (Heb. 4:1),
- Not to be “foolish” (careless) about our preparation to meet Christ when He returns (Matt. 25:1–13);
- “Be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,” that is, when you meet Christ—which happens either at our death or His return, whichever comes first (2 Pet. 3:14);
- “Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!” (2 Cor. 13:5);
- “Not that I have already obtained *it* or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of *it* yet; but one thing *I do*: forgetting what *lies* behind and reaching forward to what *lies* ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Php. 3:12–14);
- “Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called” (1 Tim. 6:12);
- Make sure you “will not be disqualified” (1 Cor. 9:24–27);
- “But many *who are* first will be last; and *the last*, first” (Matt. 19:30),
- “Finish the course . . . keep the faith. . . In the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day [the Day of Judgment]” (see 2 Tim. 4:7–8).

These verses involve several different aspects, but the central theme is that we must do our utmost to be serious, attentive, and determined to make sure that we are always on the path to eternal salvation. Even the great apostle Paul clearly states that He has not yet obtained it (eternal salvation; Php. 3:12–14)—so, how much more should you and I also be diligent in this matter!¹⁰²

⁹⁸ See the chapter “The New Testament Plan of Salvation” for “stand firm in the faith” verse references.

⁹⁹ See the chapter “Come, All Who Are Thirsty” for “trust in the Lord” verse references.

¹⁰⁰ The false doctrine of “once saved, always saved” (i.e., perseverance of the saints under Calvinism) is not biblical.

¹⁰¹ See also the chapter “The New Testament Plan of Salvation” for verse citations about “destroyed [lost] for lack of knowledge.”

¹⁰² See also Heb. 3:13–14; 1 Cor. 4:14; 15:58; 1 Pet. 1:13; 2:11; Rom. 2:7; Gal. 6:7–9.

CAUSES OF FALLING AWAY

There are several prominent reasons why Christians can “fall away” from or quit (abandon) their faith:

1. **Ignorance (and Indifference):** They don’t take the warnings given in Scripture seriously—that one must “work out your salvation with fear and trembling” (Php. 2:12) and to “be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you” (2 Pet. 1:10), so they fail to “grow in the grace and knowledge [understanding] of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18). They often stop reading the Bible, stop praying, stop going to church, and so on. I’ve also heard it said that it’s “boring” to read the Bible. May I kindly suggest that if you find it boring to read the Bible, then you are not really living in the Spirit. Just something to consider. If you are not feeding your new Spirit with the Word of God, it will die.¹⁰³
2. **Cares of This World:** They let the cares and concerns of this world along with a continued lustful desire for fame, fortune, power, and wealth reassert itself as the controlling force in their lives, and they stop pursuing the “things above” (Col. 3:1–2) and once again set their minds on the things “of this world”¹⁰⁴—that is, they are thorny soil (Matt. 13; cf. 2 Tim. 4:10; Matt. 6:19–21, 24).
3. **The Threat of Persecution:** They wish to preserve their own life (or income) instead of “stand[ing] firm in the faith” (1 Cor. 16:13; cf. Eph. 6:11–14; Php. 4:1; 1 Thess. 3:8; 2 Thess. 2:15; 1 Pet. 5:12; Psa. 62:2; 1 Cor. 4:12; Jas. 4:4; 2 Tim. 2:3) when severe “trials” (Acts 20:19; Jas. 1:2–3; 1 Pet. 1:6–7), “tribulation” (Matt. 24:9; John 16:33; Acts 14:22; Rom. 5:3; 8:35; 12:12; Eph. 3:13; Heb. 10:33; Rev. 1:9; 2:9–10; 7:14) come their way,¹⁰⁵ and they “calculate [count] the cost” (Luke 14:28; cf. Matt. 6:19–24; 8:19–20; 10:37; 16:25; 19:21, 29; Mark 8:35; 10:21; Luke 5:28; 9:24; 12:33; 14:25–27, 33; 17:33; John 12:25; Acts 21:13; Php. 3:8; Heb. 10:34; 2 Tim. 3:12) of following Christ as too high and therefore they return to the ways “of this world”¹⁰⁶ and obey men (and their own flesh) instead of God.
4. **They Follow Fake Gospels:** They are led astray¹⁰⁷ into following false teachings or fake gospels of man, committees, and institutions.¹⁰⁸ This results in large measure from item 1 above. Yes, you *can* be “tricked” (see Eph. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:3–4) out of your “crown of life” (Jas. 1:12; Rev. 2:10; cf. 2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Pet. 5:4; Rev. 3:11) by false teachings of man, who are teaching contrary to the Word of God. “Do not be deceived” (1 Cor. 6:9; 15:33; Gal. 6:7; Jas. 1:16).

DO NOT DISQUALIFY YOURSELF!

When the great apostle Paul wrote on this topic, he indicated that even he had not yet obtained it (final salvation, eternal life), despite all the things he had already done—including hearing the Gospel directly from Jesus (Php. 3:12–14)! Paul writes about not being “disqualified” (1 Cor. 9:25–27) even after having started out, and even (especially) after he had preached it to thousands. And if Paul could have been disqualified (by his own actions), how much more can you and I!

Understand that the life of a Christian is one of continued repentance (1 John 1:8–10; 2:1) and avoidance of deliberate, willful sin, and as it is written: “Go. From now on sin no more” (John 8:11; cf. Gal. 2:20). You also mustn’t “quench [grieve] the Spirit” (1 Thess. 5:19–22; cf. Eph. 4:30) by continued worldliness (Jas. 4:4; 1 John 2:15–16; cf. John 15:19; 17:14) and partaking of sin and fleshly lusts (John 8:11; Heb. 12:1, 4; 1 Pet. 1:14–16; 2:11; 4:2–4, 15–16; Rom. 6:1–23; 7:5; 8:1–14; 13:12–14; Eph. 2:2–3; 4:17–32; 5:3–21; 1 Thess. 4:3–5; 5:4–5, 22; 1 Tim. 6:10–11; 2 Tim. 2:19, 22; Titus 2:12; 3:3; 2 Cor. 7:1; 12:21; Col. 3:5–9; Gal. 5:16–24; cf. Acts 15:20, 29; Matt. 5:27–30; 26:41; Mark 7:20–22; Rom. 1:20–32; 7:18–25; 12:2; 1 Cor. 6:9–10, 19–20; Jas. 1:14–15, 21, 27; 3:2–8; 4:4; 2 Pet. 3:3, 14; 1 John 2:17; Jude 16–18; Pro. 23:29–35; Isa. 5:11; 28:7; Rev. 22:11, 14–15).¹⁰⁹

¹⁰³ See the chapter “Reading and Studying Scripture.”

¹⁰⁴ See the chapter “The Day of Judgment” for “of this world” verse references.

¹⁰⁵ And even “discipline” (see 1 Cor. 11:32; Heb. 12:5–11; Rev. 3:19; John 15:2) by the Lord at times.

¹⁰⁶ See the chapter “The Day of Judgment” for “of this world” verse references.

¹⁰⁷ “Tricked” (see Eph. 4:14; cf. 2 Tim. 4:3–4) or “deceived” (2 Cor. 11:3; Rev. 18:23).

¹⁰⁸ For example, by legalism, Sabbath-keeping, cults that deny Christ, and so on. See the chapter “Beware the Wolves.”

¹⁰⁹ See also the chapter “Changing Your Worldly Habits.”

Even further, a Christian is to refrain from any action or behavior that the Lord finds to be an abomination, detestable, or one that He hates; the list is quite extensive.¹¹⁰ The wise Christian will familiarize himself with that list and steer well clear of all those behaviors. The difference between a “man of God” (1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 3:17) and a man of sin (a man of the flesh) is that the man of God resists urges and temptations while the man of the flesh simply gives in to whatever urge, desire, temptation, or lust that comes his way, acting for the most part just like a wild animal, without any restraint, discipline, or self-control (1 Cor. 9:26–27; 16:13; Gal. 5:16; Eph. 2:1–3; Gal. 6:7–8; 1 Pet. 4:3; 1 Tim. 1:13). You must refrain from engaging in sin and socializing with those who partake of sin (2 Cor. 6:14–18; 1 Cor. 5:6–9; 15:33; Rom. 12:1–2; Eph. 5:7–11; 2 Tim. 2:21–22; Jas. 4:4; 1 John 1:6; Rev. 18:4; cf. 1 Cor. 5:11; Gal. 5:9; Psa. 26:4–5; 50:18; 106:35; Pro. 1:10–17; 14:7–9; 13:20; 22:24; Job 15:16; Num. 16:26).

You will very likely have to change your worldly and entertainment habits to avoid being drawn back into temptation and sin; you cannot continue to participate in, or even watch, things that only appeal to the lust of the flesh, and so on.¹¹¹ Remember that for the Christian, the New Testament is our instruction manual for how one is to live his or her life in Christ—not what the world thinks is acceptable or fashionable (or even allowed under the civil law statutes!).

This section applies not only to all Christians but even more so to teachers and preachers of the Gospel; as it is written, they will face a “stricter judgment” (Jas. 3:1)—both for their teaching (if incorrect and it causes souls to be lost) and for their own behavior and actions.

I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH HIM WHO STRENGTHENS ME

I’d like to offer you some encouragement. Know that you will be able to “stand firm in the [your] faith”¹¹² (i.e., persevere), and not by your own strength or willpower, but by faith and the strength and power of Christ who lives in you.¹¹³ You are now living “by the Spirit” (Acts 20:22; Rom. 2:29; 8:13–14; 1 Cor. 2:13; 12:3; Gal. 3:3; 5:18, 25; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 John 3:24; cf. Eph. 4:24) of God, and not by your own might or power (Zech. 4:6; John 15:5; Eph. 6:10; Php. 4:13; 2 Cor. 12:10; cf. John 14:16; 16:7; 1 John 4:4; 5:4; Rom. 8:31–39; Eph. 3:20; 6:13; 1 Cor. 10:13; Heb. 12:2; Php. 1:6). The same Spirit of power that raised Jesus from the dead now lives in you (Rom. 8:11; John 15:1–10; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:20).

If you trust in Him and seek Him diligently each day, He will hold you in His power through His lovingkindness (Psa. 23:1–6). If you want to persevere in faith, He will give you the strength, power, might, wisdom, courage, ability, and means to do so; as it is written: “I [JESUS] WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU” (Heb. 13:5), “I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20), “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me” (Psa. 23:4), “For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus” (Php. 1:6; cf. Rom. 8:28–39; Heb. 12:2).

¹¹⁰ See 1 Cor. 6:9–10; Rom. 1:18, 28–32; Matt. 5:37; Mark 7:22; Luke 11:39; Acts 13:45; 26:11; Gal. 5:19–21; Col. 3:5; Rev. 13:1, 5–6; 16:9, 11, 21; 21:8; 22:14–15; 1 Tim. 1:9–11, 13, 20; 4:2; 5:13; 6:4, 10–11; 2 Tim. 2:14; 3:2–5; Titus 1:7, 10; 2:2–3, 9–10; 3:10–11; cf. Pro. 3:32; 6:16–19; 8:13; 11:1; 12:22; 15:8, 26; 16:5; 17:15; 20:10, 23; 24:9; 28:9; Deut. 25:14–16; Psa. 5:6.

¹¹¹ See also the chapter “Changing Your Worldly Habits.”

¹¹² See the chapter “The New Testament Plan of Salvation” for “stand firm in the faith” verse references.

¹¹³ See the chapter “Living in the Spirit” for verse references.

15 SOME ENCOURAGEMENT

I'd like to offer you with some encouragement. Know that you will be able to “stand firm” in your faith (persevere, see 1 Cor. 16:13; 15:58; Eph. 6:11-14; Php. 4:1; Col. 1:11, 23; 1 Thess. 1:3; 3:5, 8; 2 Thess. 2:15; 1 Pet. 5:12; 2 Pet. 1:4-9; 3:14, 17; Heb. 6:19; cf. Eph. 4:14; Jas. 6) not on your own strength or willpower, but by faith and the strength/power of Christ who lives in you (Zech. 4:6; John 15:5; Eph. 6:10; cf. John 14:16; 16:7; Php. 4:13; 2 Cor. 12:10; 1 John 4:4; 5:4; Rom. 8:31, 37; Eph. 6:13; 1 Cor. 10:13). If you trust in Him and seek Him diligently each day, He will hold you in His power through His lovingkindness (Psa. 23:1-6). If *you* want to persevere in faith, *He* will give you the strength, power, might, wisdom, courage, ability, and means to do so, as it is written: “I [JESUS] WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU” (Heb. 13:5), “I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20), “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me” (Psa. 23:4), “For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus” (Php. 1:6), and furthermore:

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to *become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren. – Rom. 8:28-29

What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written,

“FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG;
WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED.”

But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. – Rom. 8:31-39

16 BEWARE THE WOLVES

Now, you will hear much disagreement among men as to what I have written in the “New Testament Plan of Salvation” chapter, but we must approach God on His terms, not however men, committees, or institutions think or feel it should be done. We must examine and harmonize “the sum” (Psa. 119:160; cf. 2 Tim. 3:16) of what Scripture has to say about salvation to arrive at correct doctrine and teaching—we cannot pick and choose some verses while ignoring others (or even entire books), nor can we rewrite Scripture to suit our own beliefs, as some have done.^{114, 115}

While it is my job to present, preach, and teach the Gospel to you accurately and completely,¹¹⁶ it is your job to “be diligent” (2 Tim. 2:15; Heb. 4:11; cf. 2 Pet. 1:10; 3:14) about your own salvation, to “work out your salvation with fear and trembling” (Php. 2:12), and to “Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!” (2 Cor. 13:5)—to make sure that you are, indeed, in the faith “which was once for all handed down to the saints” (Jude 3) in NT Scripture and that you have not strayed from the truth into false teachings and fake gospels of man, committees, and institutions.

Please understand that you *can* be “tricked” (see Eph. 4:14) or “deceived” (see 2 Cor. 11:3; Rev. 18:23; cf. 1 John 2:26; Rev. 12:9; 13:14; Col. 1:23; Gal. 1:6–9; 3:1) out of your “crown of life” (Jas. 1:12; Rev. 2:10; cf. 2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Pet. 5:4; Rev. 3:11) by the false teachings, “snares”¹¹⁷ (see Rom. 11:9; 1 Tim. 3:7; 6:9; 2 Tim. 2:26; cf. Psa. 35:7; 119:85, 110; 140:5; 141:9; 142:3; Jer. 5:26; 18:22; Hos. 5:1), and “schemes” (2 Cor. 2:11; Eph. 6:11) of man and the devil (Rev. 3:11; 1 John 3:7; Rom. 10:2; 16:18; Eph. 5:6; 2 Tim. 3:13; Titus 1:10; 1 John 2:26; Rev. 12:9; 13:14; 18:23; 19:20; 20:8; Hos. 4:6; Heb. 2:1; Jude 3)—there is a “spirit of error” (1 John 4:6) in the world.^{118, 119, 120}

Yes, “beware the wolves” (paraphrase; see Matt. 7:15; cf. Gal. 4:16; 2:5, 14; 5:7; Ecc. 3:7), for you are surrounded on all sides by “wolves” (Matt. 7:15; 10:16; Luke 10:3; Acts 20:28–31), “vipers” (Matt. 3:7; 12:34; 23:33; Luke 3:7), “false prophets” (Matt. 7:15; 24:11, 24; Mark 13:22; 2 Pet. 2:1; 1 John 4:1; cf. Rev. 16:13; 19:20; 20:10), and modern-day “Pharisees” (Matt. 5:20; 15:1–9; 16:6, 11–12; 23:1–36; Mark 8:15; Luke 12:1; 18:11; John 12:42; cf. Matt. 3:7; 12:34–35; 14; 26:59; John 8:44; Luke 6:39; 11:39–44; 22:2; Rom. 10:1–4; 16:18; Php. 3:2; Rev. 2:9; 3:9; Ecc. 1:9; Psa. 140:5) who are teaching fake gospels. These “ravenous wolves” (Matt. 7:15) will try to lure or seduce you with their false teachings, that is, “a different gospel ... a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you” (Gal. 1:6–9; cf. 2 Cor. 11:3–4; Acts 4:12), but you must “contend earnestly for [actually fight for] the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints [the apostles]” (Jude 3; cf. 1 Tim. 2:5; Eph. 4:4–5). “Do not be deceived” (Jas. 1:16; cf. Heb. 2:1; Gal. 1:6; 3:1–3; Matt. 24:24; Acts 8:9–11; 2 Cor. 11:3, 13–15; Eph. 4:14; 2 Thess. 2:9–12; 2 Pet. 2:18; Rev. 2:20; 12:9; 13:13–14; 18:3, 23; 19:20; 20:8, 10)! The naïve, those lacking sense (i.e., gullible), those “wanting to have their ears tickled [itching ears, KJV]” (2 Tim. 4:3–4), and those seeking a feel-good, easy form of Christianity will seek out and follow these schemes, doctrines, and deceptions of man and Satan! Jesus explicitly warned us to be

¹¹⁴ For example, Martin Luther added the word “only” into his rewrite of Romans 3:28! Yes, he actually rewrote Scripture to change it to match his own opinion! Luther also denied the inspiration of the Book of James—simply because it didn’t fit his own theology.

¹¹⁵ Other groups have used false prophets to introduce so-called newly “inspired” books.

¹¹⁶ Note that preachers and teachers of the Word are called to a higher standard, in both their teaching and in their behavior (Jas. 3:1; 1 Cor. 9:27; 2 Tim. 2:15; 4:2). Should their teaching (i.e., false teachings) cause souls to be lost, they will be held accountable.

¹¹⁷ Also “pit” (Psa. 35:7; 119:85; Jer. 18:22; Matt. 15:14; Luke 6:39) or “trap” (Matt. 22:15; Mark 12:13; Luke 21:34; Rom. 11:9; Jos. 23:13; Job 18:10; Psa. 69:22; 140:5; 141:9; 142:3; Jer. 5:26).

¹¹⁸ Another good book to read is *The Pilgrim’s Progress* by John Bunyan, as it shows the various trials, snares, false teachings, wolves, and pitfalls that a Christian can face on his (or her) pilgrimage to New Jerusalem (heaven).

¹¹⁹ See also the chapter “The New Testament Plan of Salvation” for verse citations about “destroyed [lost] for lack of knowledge.”

¹²⁰ Yes, you can, in fact, have your “crown of life” stolen (taken) from you (Rev. 3:11) by other men (or women—the “wolves,” “vipers,” “false prophets,” and modern-day “Pharisees”! How do you lost your crown? By being seduced or lured into following their fake teachings, false gospels, and commandments of men (2 Tim. 4:3–4; Matt. 15:9; 1 Tim. 4:1–3; 2 Cor. 11:3–5, 13–15; Gal. 3:1–3; 4:9; 5:7–8; Eph. 4:14; 2 Thess. 2:9–12; 2 Pet. 2:18; Acts 8:9–11; Matt. 24:24; Rev. 2:20; 13:13–14; 18:3–4; etc.). Sadly, many will not realize this has happened until Judgment Day, and many will also refuse to believe this can actually happen, but that is what I am explaining to you in this chapter. It can happen if one is “ignorant” of what is actually written in Scripture, by not spending enough time seriously reading and studying the Word of God—you must really, *really*, **REALLY** want to know and understand the truth of the Word of God as if your very (eternal) soul depends on it (which it does). In some cases, these “ravenous wolves” even go out of their way to prevent you from reading the Word of God, by hiding it from you so you can be gullible and easy to deceive. You can be led to destruction by these the “wolves” and “vipers”—so “Be on guard” (Acts 20:28; 2 Tim. 4:15), and “beware” (Matt. 7:15; 16:6; Php. 3:2)!

“shrewd” (i.e., wise) in this regard so we are not deceived (Matt. 10:16; cf. Luke 10:3; 16:8; Acts 20:29; 1 Cor. 14:20; 2 Cor. 11:3, 14; Eph. 5:17; Col. 1:9).

Scripture says we are to worship the Lord “in spirit and truth” (John 4:24), meaning the Lord’s truth as given in Scripture itself, not man’s truth. It is very easy, especially for someone new to the Gospel message, to be confused about which is which. We’ve had centuries now (over two thousand years!) of man-made false teachings, false doctrines, fake gospels (2 Cor. 11:3–5; Gal. 1:6–9), fanciful interpretations, opinions, beliefs, rites, rules, rituals, catechisms, ceremonies, superstitions, “myths” (1 Tim. 1:4; 2 Tim. 4:3–4; Tit. 1:14), “traditions” (see Matt. 15:3; Mark 7:4–13; Col. 2:8), “commandments” (Titus 1:14), “precepts” (Matt. 15:9; Mark 7:7), “schemes” (2 Cor. 2:11; Eph. 6:11), wild speculation, mysticism, fake prophecies, a myriad of sectarian and denominational divisions,¹²¹ and dozens upon dozens of theological systems and frameworks made up by man, committees, and institutions¹²² all piled up on top of one another and masquerading as so-called “Christianity,” obfuscating the pure truth of the Gospel (Luke 18:8; John 4:23–24; Acts 17:11; Jude 3; 2 Cor. 11:3–4, 13–15; 13:5; Eph. 4:14; 5:6; 1 Tim. 4:1–3; Php. 3:2; 2 Pet. 2:1–3; 3:16–18; Heb. 13:9; Rev. 3:11; 18:4–5). Whew!

Further compounding the situation is the staggering amount of noise generated by the secular world, with its God-denying media and institutions trying to drown out the Gospel message and the name of Jesus altogether by creating even more false teachings that masquerade as science, which are in reality fake science. We are being fed today fake news, fake science (e.g., the so-called “theory” of evolution), fake entertainment (e.g., lip-synced performances, so-called “reality” but scripted TV), fake food (e.g., margarine, “meat substitutes”), fake body parts (e.g., vanity cosmetic surgery), fake economics (e.g., Keynesian Economics, debt as an asset), fake money (e.g., fiat currencies), fake “religions,” fake prophecy, and yes, even fake gospels (e.g., “lukewarm” [Rev. 3:16], apostate, so-called “Christianity”).

These false teachings are shouted 24/7/365.25 (i.e., nonstop, every day, all day long) in blaring volume from both secular media sources as well as so-called “Christian” pulpits, broadcasts, books/authors, movies, publications, and even seminary schools. And we are gradually conditioned by repeated, frequent, and persistent marketing propaganda (for that is exactly what it is) to accept the fakes (the false teachings) as the real thing and even to begin to believe them in place of the real. The same thing has happened to Christianity over the last two thousand years—we have been gradually trained and conditioned to accept and even believe that the fakes are the real thing, and in many cases, we cannot even tell the difference anymore!

Some of these false teachings come from secular sources (obviously), but sadly (and shockingly), others come from what appear to be “Christians” and “Christian” churches. Jesus warned us about them, calling them “**ravenous wolves in sheep’s clothing**” (see Matt. 7:15; cf. Acts 20:29–31; 2 Cor. 11:14–15). Remember that Satan disguises himself as an “angel of light,” and his ministers can also disguise themselves as “servants of righteousness” (2 Cor. 11:14–15).¹²³ It is these “wolves” who pretend to serve Christ, appearing (dressed up) as “Christian” ministers and pastors, but they are actually “of their father the devil” (see John 8:44; i.e., modern-day “Pharisees”). These “wolves” and “false prophets” appear in churches that *seem* to be Christian, and they may even use Jesus Christ in their names—but they are not of Christ.

This is a very sad state of affairs, as very few today are even able to recognize true Christianity as defined in Scripture, and people are more confused today than ever before by all the false teachings as well as by seeing an almost endless stream of hypocritical pretenders proclaiming to be “Christians”¹²⁴ parading before and all around them. Many today aren’t even sure who is a true Christian or what a true Christian church even looks like, nor how to truly be saved *according to the instructions given in Scripture*. Even worse, many who are lost or new to Christ

¹²¹ There is only one God, one faith, one Gospel, one Spirit, and one Body (Church)—not hundreds of man-made denominations (Eph. 4:3–6; John 17:20–23; 1 Cor. 12:12–13, 20, 25, 27; Php. 1:27).

¹²² Gnosticism, Montanism, Manichaeism, Monasticism, Docetism, Arianism, Sabellianism, Paganism, Mysticism, Nestorianism, Pelagianism, Rationalism, Apollinarianism, Monophysitism, Eutychianism, Adoptionism, Catholicism, Protestantism, Reformed Protestantism, Arminianism, Calvinism, Adventism, Modernism, etc. ad nauseam’ism...

¹²³ Giving what appears to be biblical truth but isn’t.

¹²⁴ When I use “Christian” in quotes, it’s because many groups and so-called “Christian” churches are “neglecting the commandment of God” and “teaching as doctrines the precepts of men” (Mark 7:7–8). They are not teaching the Christianity “which was once for all time handed down to the saints” (Jude 3), but the doctrines of their own opinions—for they have either added to, taken away from, or distorted what is written in Scripture. Some of these “Christian” groups are well-meaning but simply misguided, while others intend to deceive.

simply give up when confronted with so many differing and conflicting teachings (and hypocritical preachers and teachers)—which all claim to be true Christianity (but are not)!

Understand that these “wolves” come in many shapes and sizes, from innocent-looking little old ladies to the casual hipster preacher to the powerful pastor/elder/author of authority in a popular church all dressed up in an expensive, well-tailored suit with lots of initials and abbreviations placed before and after their name—even having Doctoral Degrees in Divinity!¹²⁵ They use intentional deception to deceive the unsaved masses into following worthless man-made religious rituals, false doctrines, traditions, and nonsense that lead to eternal death instead of eternal life. I hope you are taking this warning seriously!

I experienced many of these false teachings (both secular and “Christian”) firsthand as I began my own journey. It’s time for a good dose of solid food—the truth of the New Testament Gospel as it was given and practiced in the apostolic era.¹²⁶ If you will, I am a “VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS” of modern, liberal, corrupt, apostate, “lukewarm,” dead, pretend “Christianity”: “MAKE STRAIGHT” the Gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ (see Matt. 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4; John 1:23)!

You must really want pure Gospel truth with every fiber of your being and “press on to maturity” (Heb. 6:1)¹²⁷ so that you are not deceived or led astray by the false teachings of man through being naïve, gullible, or ignorant, either of “the snare [wiles] of the devil” (2 Tim. 2:26; cf. 2 Cor. 2:11; Eph. 6:11) or of what is actually written in Scripture—you must know Scripture exceedingly well (better than the “wolves”) by diligently reading and studying the Bible as if your very life depends on it—and it does so eternally! An example of this is being “tricked” or “deceived” into thinking that saying a one-time “sinner’s prayer” (which is nowhere found in the Bible!) saves you to eternal life or into thinking that you are “saved by faith alone.” Neither of those are supported by Scripture. But beware; there are many, many more false teachings and fake gospels of man—all designed to lead you astray!

To the professing Christian reader, if you have any doubt that you are obedient to the Gospel or that you have been properly born again according to the instructions given in NT Scripture and explained correctly in this book,¹²⁸ it would be eternally wise to recheck your understanding of what Scripture actually teaches to ensure your eternal salvation (2 Cor. 13:5; Jude 3; Gal. 1:6–9; 2 Tim. 4:3–4).

¹²⁵ These “wolves” and “false prophets” will suffer a stricter judgment (see Jas. 3:1).

¹²⁶ In the years just after Christ’s death.

¹²⁷ See the chapters “Press On to Maturity” and “Reading and Studying Scripture.”

¹²⁸ E.g., regarding baptism, the “sinner’s prayer,” being “saved by faith only,” Calvinism, Adventism, Catholicism, Mormonism, Jehovah’s Witnesses, keeping the Mosaic Law Jewish Sabbath, or you are in one of the endless flavors of Protestant denominations that are not the church that Jesus founded.

17 AN EXAMPLE OF FALSE TEACHINGS

In closing, before I send you on your way, along “the Highway of Holiness” (Isa. 35:8; cf. Jer. 6:16), I would like to give you an example of how false teachings show up in the real world. Jason Jackson writes about receiving a “Christian” tract that was being handed out. In examining the tract, he writes:¹²⁹

Two ladies walked up the driveway. They handed me a small, tri-folded brochure that contained the service times of their church group. It advertised the religious group as being “independent of any denomination, Bible-based in every part of ministry, soul-winning and missions minded, and distinctively Christian.” The tract claimed that the religious body is “an old fashioned, independent, Baptist Church that believes, preaches, and practices the Bible.”

Their claims to being Bible-based, however, are negated in that section of the tract titled, “How to have a home in Heaven.” Four points are designed that, supposedly, guide one to salvation. Unfortunately, the teaching is hardly “independent of any denomination . . . and distinctively Christian.”

Some may object to this review, saying that it is neither friendly nor loving. But Paul asked on one occasion, “So then am I become your enemy because I tell you the truth?” (Gal. 4:16 [RV]).

The loving thing to do is to tell the truth. We must not judge people superficially or hypocritically (Mt. 7:1), but we are required by God to evaluate what we hear, “handling aright the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15 [ASV]). The truth will set us free; error will cause us to be lost (Jn. 8:32; 2 Tim. 2:18).

So what does the tract say about “How to have a home in Heaven”? Here are the points and scriptures that are discussed—just as they appear in the tract.

1. All have sinned. “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23 [KJV]).
2. The penalty for sin is death and hell. “For the wages of sin is death . . .” [Rom. 6:23 ASV] “And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death” (Rev. 20:14 [KJV]).
3. Jesus died to pay for our sins. “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8 [KJV]).
4. Trust Jesus as your Savior and your only hope for Heaven. “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Rom. 10:9 [KJV]). “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Rom. 10:13).

After making these four points, the following conclusion was given:

“Pray a simple prayer to God, from your heart, such as the following: ‘Dear Jesus, I know that I am a sinner. If I were to die today, I would deserve to go to hell to pay for my sins. I believe that you came to earth, lived a perfect life, and died on a cross to pay for my sins. I believe that you arose from the grave, and I ask you to forgive my sins. I am trusting only You to take me to heaven. Thank you for saving me, Jesus. Amen.’”

A Kindly Response

Like the Bereans of Acts 17:11, let us examine the Scriptures to see whether these things are so.

1. While allegedly pointing people to heaven, there is nothing said about repentance. But Jesus said, “Except you repent you shall all likewise perish” ([see] Lk. 13:3 [RV]). And Paul declared that God commands men everywhere to repent. (Acts 17:30). If God commands it, can we ignore it, and still be faithful teachers of his Word?
2. There is no mention of baptism in this section. But Paul was urged to arise, be baptized, and wash away his sins, “calling on his name” ([see] Acts 22:16). Peter preached, “Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto [to obtain] the remission of your sins” (Acts 2:38 [ASV]). The apostles taught that baptism is essential for salvation because Jesus had said, “He who believes and is baptized will be saved” (Mk. 16:16 [NKJV]). Can we teach less than what Jesus taught?
3. There is not a single example in the New Testament where the non-Christian was instructed to pray for salvation. There are many examples, however, when believers were baptized for the forgiveness of sins.

Error is often mixed with truth. The devil himself quoted the Scriptures (cf. Mt. 4:6). There are a number of truths within this tract. Every verse is true, because they are quotations from the Bible. But one must consider all that the Bible says about salvation if he is going to obtain a home in heaven.

“The sum of thy word is truth; And every one of thy righteous ordinances endureth for ever” (Psalm 119:160 [ASV]).

¹²⁹ Jason Jackson, “How to Go to Heaven—Sincere, but Wrong.” Christian Courier. Access date: May 31, 2018. <https://christiancourier.com/articles/1183-how-to-go-to-heaven-sincere-but-wrong>.

As you see, the tract was full of false teachings despite being from a well-meaning “independent of any denomination, Bible-based in every part of ministry, soul-winning and missions minded, and distinctively Christian” church (their very own words). And unfortunately, false teachings won’t be clearly labeled as such for you when you encounter them in the real world—they are cleverly disguised by mixing some Bible verses in with what *appears* to be other very biblically sounding language. It can be very hard to spot false teachings, especially for the immature Christian. Indeed, the tract appears to be very biblical on the surface, but in fact, it is not in agreement with what is taught in Scripture, as you should now know after reading this book. It contains (at least) two false teachings/fake gospels: (1) the “sinner’s prayer,” and (2) it implies you are “saved by faith alone” without regard to baptism, obedience, the role of works, and perseverance in faith.

I hope you are starting to see the daunting task you will be facing in seeking actual Scriptural truth as opposed to man-made opinions, schemes, and false teachings. I had to sort through all these false teachings myself, trying to find truth, as I was also deceived by the wolves for many years. Please don’t just blindly believe whatever you hear being taught or preached as actual biblical truth (by me or anyone else) without fully checking it against Scripture for yourself ([Acts 17:11](#)). It doesn’t matter if you hear it from a man on the street corner or from someone in a position of authority with lots of important-sounding initials, abbreviations, and titles placed before and after their name all dressed up in an expensive suit behind a fancy pulpit at a large and famous church ([Gal. 1:6–9](#)). As I wrote prior, but it is worth repeating, you are surrounded by a veritable sea of “wolves,” “vipers,” “false prophets,” and modern-day “Pharisees,”¹³⁰ who either willingly or through ignorance will lead you astray and out of the narrow path to eternal life. Remember, it is your eternal destiny/salvation that is at stake!

And finally, in my experience, whenever you see someone (a church, group, book, etc.) leading off with the “sinner’s prayer” false teaching, you can rest assured that you will find many other false teachings in their materials as well (as a general rule), because false teachings, like wolves, seem to travel in packs.

¹³⁰ See the chapter “Beware the Wolves” for the verse references.

18 CLOSING VERSES

I'd like to close with a few verses that are among my favorites:

And working together *with Him*, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain— for He says,

“AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME I LISTENED TO YOU,
AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU.”

Behold, now is “THE ACCEPTABLE TIME,” behold, now is “THE DAY OF SALVATION.” – 2 Corinthians 6:1–2

Seek the LORD while He may be found;
Call upon Him while He is near.
Let the wicked forsake his way
And the unrighteous man his thoughts;
And let him return to the LORD,
And He will have compassion on him,
And to our God,
For He will abundantly pardon. – Isa. 55:6–7

“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” – Matt. 11:28–30

“I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” – Matt. 28:20

The LORD is my shepherd,
I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside quiet waters.
He restores my soul;
He guides me in the paths of righteousness
For His name's sake.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I fear no evil, for You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
You have anointed my head with oil;
My cup overflows.
Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life,
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. – Psa. 23:1–6

And He who sits on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” And He *said, “Write, for these words are faithful and true.” Then He said to me, “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.” – Rev. 21:5–7

Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve *kinds of* fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His face, and His name *will be* on their foreheads. And there will no longer be *any* night; and they will not have

need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever. – Revelation 22:1–5

The Spirit and the bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost. – Rev. 22:17

“I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown. He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name.” – Rev. 3:11–12

Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen Me, and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him [you!] up on the last day.” – John 6:35–40

He [Jesus] said, “It is finished!” – John 19:30

I hope to stand with you among “the redeemed of the LORD” (Psa. 107:2; cf. Psa. 31:5; 1 Pet. 1:18–19) who are gathered “on His [Jesus] right” (Matt. 25:33–34) on “the day of judgment” (1 John 4:17) and hear “well done, good and faithful slave [servant]” (Matt. 25:21–23), “ENTER [INTO] MY REST” (Heb. 3:11; 4:3–5) as He “makes all things new” (see Rev. 21:5). And it is my hope and prayer that you can also use this booklet to lead others to a saving knowledge of our “Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 1:11; 2:20; 3:18). Amen.

– In Jesus Christ, R. John Anderson

19 HELPFUL RESOURCES

For a more complete presentation of the Gospel from start to finish, please see the books *The Message of Truth* and *The Gospel of the Grace of God*, published by Holy Spirit Prints, or visit our website at <https://eachday.org/>. Also, if you do not know what all the commandments of Christ are (and His apostles), we have summarized them in another book: *The Commandments of Christ*.

We are blessed to have available to us today the writings of many wonderful men of God who have come before us, true saints of the faith, some of whom also gave their lives for Christ as martyrs. Today, more than at any time in history, we have a wealth of information available to read and learn from, along with the freedom to openly read these materials (in most places). I've found the resources/books listed below to be helpful and predominantly free of false teachings. However, please note that I do not completely agree with or endorse all content in these resources. Great discernment must be used when reading, recommending, and using any non-inspired resources written by man. While many other wonderful resources are available, I've only included those I can vouch for personally as ones that will not lead you astray.

Be especially wary of all commentaries, notes contained in study Bibles, and even the headings in your Bible, which have been added by man (the ones inserted in between chapters/sections of the Bible by the publishers)—these are all simply the words of man and not inspired, and they offer a great opportunity for the authors, editors, and publishers to inject their own particular bias, doctrines, and false teachings. This warning applies especially to any notes, commentary, and headlines dealing with Bible prophecy and eschatology (end-times matters) published after the late 1800s, for they are nearly all infected with the dispensational premillennialism false teaching.

Some of the books are out of print and may be difficult to find. But I recommend that you try to find and read editions that were printed as close to the original author's first date of publication as possible, as newer revisions offer an opportunity once again for editors and publishers to twist, distort, or even rewrite the original author's content and introduce their own false doctrines and teachings. And lastly, before purchasing any book, look to see what other books that same author (and publisher) has produced, as doing so will help you understand if their books can be trusted to be in agreement with the Divine "message of truth" (Eph. 1:13), not the false doctrines of man.

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his original exposition version (up to the date 1721). What I've learned is that when someone says "revised" or "corrected," it often means that they have altered it to fit their own theology!]

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WEBSITES

- Each Day, <https://eachday.org>
- Iron Sharpens Iron, <https://isi.bible>
- Gospel IQ, <https://gospeliq.bible>
- Holy Spirit Prints, <https://holyspiritprints.com>
- Christian Courier, <https://www.christiancourier.com>
- Bible Study Tools, <https://www.biblestudytools.com>
- Bible Gateway, <https://www.biblegateway.com>
- Bible Hub, <https://www.biblehub.com>
- Open Bible, <https://www.openbible.com>
- E-Sword, <https://www.e-sword.net>
- Christianbook, <https://www.christianbook.com>
- Truth Publications, <https://truthbooks.com>
- Apologetics Press, <https://apologeticspress.org>
- World Video Bible School, <https://wvbs.org>
- Online Academy of Biblical Studies, <https://www.oabs1.net/>
- Insight into Bible Truth, <https://insightintobibletruth.net/>

The following websites are recommended for their scientific articles, not their Christian doctrine:

- Answers in Genesis, <https://answersingenesis.org>

- Institute for Christian Research, <https://icr.org>

LOCAL CHURCHES

- Cottonwood Church of Christ
- Sedona Church of Christ, <http://www.churchofchristsonedona.com/>
- Verde Valley Church of Christ, <http://verdevalleychurchofchrist.org/>

20 BOOKS BY HOLY SPIRIT PRINTS

FAITH SERIES BOOKS

- ***The Message of Truth***: Correctly explains the Bible and the Gospel message from start to finish, without the myriad false teachings of man which are common today. También disponible en español – *El Mensaje de la Verdad*.
- ***The Gospel of the Grace of God***: A pocket study guide summary presentation of the Gospel suitable for Bible study. También disponible en español—*El Evangelio de la Gracia de Dios*.
- ***The Commandments of Christ***: A study of the commandments of Jesus (and the apostles) contained in the New Testament. También disponible en español – *Los Mandamientos de Cristo*.
- ***Beyond the Tomb***: Explains what happens to your soul after death.
- ***The Pilgrim's Progress***: A reprint of John Bunyan's famous work which describes the pilgrimage of "Christian" from the city of destruction (this fallen, sinful world) to the heavenly city of New Jerusalem (eternal life).
- ***Jesus>Anxiety***: Explains how the born-again Christian overcomes anxiety by the power of Christ.
- ***Jesus>Addiction***: How the born-again Christian overcomes addiction by the power of Christ.
- ***The Last Day***: Explains the last day of human history, the Great Day of Judgment, which is simultaneous with Christ's return, the end of time itself, and the ushering in of eternity.

RAYS OF HOPE BOOKLETS

- ***Rays of Hope***: Booklet of 60 verse/photo cards created to share the messages of assurance and hope that can be found in the Lord Jesus Christ. Contains inspirational notes for those facing life's challenges and those who may find themselves in a lonely, dark, faraway, or dangerous place.
- ***The Peace of God***: Booklet of 60 verse/photo cards created to share the message of the peace of God that can be found in the Lord Jesus Christ. Contains inspirational notes related to prayer and the peace of God.
- ***Faith Cards***: Booklet of 60 verse/photo cards created to provide reminders of the core of the Christian faith. Contains inspirational study notes.
- ***His Perfect Strength***: Booklet of 60 verse/photo cards created to provide reminders of staying strong in your Christian faith. Contains inspirational study notes.
- ***Kingdom Cards***: Booklet of 60 verse/photo cards to provide reminders to seek first the Kingdom of God and His Christ.
- ***Sweet Psalms***: Booklet of 60 verse/photo cards with Bible psalms and inspirational photography.
- ***Sweet Psalms Arizona***: Booklet of 60 verse/photo cards with Bible psalms and inspirational photography from around Arizona.
- ***Sweet Psalms Sedona***: Booklet of 60 verse/photo cards with Bible psalms and inspirational photography from Sedona, Arizona.
- ***Psalms by the Beach***: Booklet of 60 verse/photo cards with Bible psalms and tropical beachside photography.
- ***Powerful Proverbs***: Booklet of 60 verse/photo cards with Bible proverbs and inspirational photography.
- ***Prayer Power***: Booklet of 60 verse/photo cards about Christian prayer with inspirational photography.
- ***Favorite Verses***: Booklet of 60 verse/photo cards with selected Bible verses and inspirational photography.
- ***More Favorite Verses***: Booklet of 60 verse/photo cards with selected Bible verses and inspirational photography.
- ***Wisdom Cards***: Booklet of 60 verse/photo cards with inspirational photography about seeking Godly wisdom.