



ASPECTS OF SALVATION

Where in
Heaven's
name are
you
going?

How on
Earth do
you
Know?

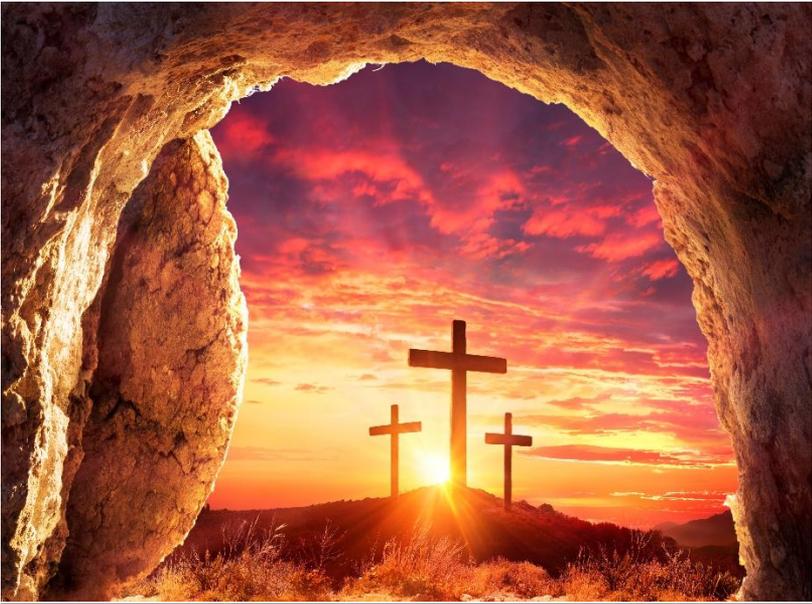
Jerrold J. Reams

Savedbygracealone.org

*For by grace are ye saved through faith;
and that not of yourselves: it is the gift
of God:*

Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Ephesians 2:8-9



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In thankfulness for what the Lord, in His love has done for me, and for the people who in their love, answered His call, and took the time to tell me about it.

BEFORE JESUS MADE US, HE KNEW WHAT HE WOULD HAVE TO DO IN ORDER TO REDEEM AND SAVE US.... HE MADE US ANYWAY. THIS IS THE LOVE OF GOD.

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The Infinite Perfect God Loves You,

By no means do I claim to be the best author around, but I will say without apology or doubt that what I am writing about here is the best thing you will ever read about. Thus, this very humble piece of writing just may indeed be the most important thing that you will ever read (outside of the 66 books of the Bible that it is based upon).

I will start by saying that it is of eternal importance that you understand that you are a person who is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), who is Jesus Christ. He is the Alpha, the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last (Revelation 22:13). He is the very Word of God, who was with God in the beginning, who IS God, through whom all things that were made were made (John 1:1-3). He humbled Himself and came to earth as a man and took your place; took your just punishment: death (and resurrected from the dead 3 days later [1 Corinthians 15:1-4]), so He could spend eternity with you. He loves you THAT much; this is far more than you or I can possibly comprehend in our current limitations in this life, this side of eternity. Far more than anyone else could ever love you. This makes you someone of extremely great importance and worth, with much to gain...or lose/forfeit, with potentially very much to live for. Some years ago, I was struggling with my own understanding of much of what is explained in this short book, and I would have very much liked to have had something like it in my hand to read at that time. For the aforementioned reasons, along with the prompting of the Holy Spirit, I thought it right to write it and make it available.

Some of the points that I will present here may seem redundant, and for that, I [sort of] apologize in advance, but I very deeply want you to understand and/or be refreshed and fully assured in the Gospel message; the good news, which is the key message proclaimed in this writing, and most importantly, throughout the Bible. It is the most important and comforting message there is for all of humanity. The title of this writing is, of course, "Aspects of Salvation," so as we ponder these various aspects of looking at the single truth of the good news of salvation, some repetition is inevitable. I did not attempt to wholly and conclusively outline and solidify the "boundaries" of these various aspects here, which upon examination harmonize perfectly with one another. I will leave any such finalization of categorizing these aspects to be determined by you, along with the prompting of the Holy Spirit. I did, however, insert some headings in order to assist in ease of reading and mental organization. The wisdom of God is far beyond that of man (Isaiah 55:8-9), and therefore it need not, and will not, be confined and/or limited in order to fit neatly into any man-made categorization scheme.

Whether you are someone seeking the truth in regard to eternal life and salvation, or a seasoned saint enjoying a reassuring read about

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his/her blessed and irrevocable assurance of salvation, I pray that God uses this humble piece of literature to minister to you and to bless you. He certainly blessed me as I wrote it. That is just how He is; that is how He works.

Born In Sin

It is of utmost importance to also understand that you, myself, and everyone who has ever lived as a human being on this earth, with the exception of Jesus Christ Himself, was born in sin; born as a sinner (Psalm 51:5, Romans 3:10, 5:8, 12, 6:11, 8:10, Ephesians 2:5). You and I are not sinners because we have sinned; we sin because we are sinners; it is corruption that is deeply ingrained into our very nature right from the onset. Sin, therefore, comes naturally to us humans. Think of it this way: A cherry tree is a cherry tree before it ever has any cherries on it. It produces cherries because it was conceived as a cherry tree. It germinated as a cherry tree, its DNA is cherry tree DNA, and therefore it is a cherry tree. It is still a cherry tree even when it does not have any cherries on it, or even if it never produces any cherries at all, and it will always be a cherry tree as long as it exists. In the same way, you were born a sinner from sinners (yes, your parents), thus you ARE a sinner, even during a moment where you somehow manage to not be sinning at all (if such a moment were somehow even possible). Just as a cat is a cat and it behaves like a cat because it was born as a cat from cats, and a dog is a dog and it behaves like a dog because it is born as a dog from dogs, and so on, you are a sinner and you sin because you were born of sinners. Think about this: Does anyone have to teach a child how to be naughty? ALL have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). All have missed the mark of perfection, which is what sin is; sin is also transgression [violation] of the law (1 John 3:4), which is written on our hearts (Romans 2:15). These are one and the same, as God requires the law to be kept absolutely perfectly; 100% perfectly from birth to death; NO mistakes AT ALL; zip, zilch, nada. The kingdom of God is a perfect place and by its very nature can have no place for any corruption whatsoever.

Our Just Desserts

The wages of sin, ANY type of sin, and ANY amount of sin, is death (Romans 6:23, James 2:10), which also just so happens to be the state that the nonbeliever is currently in (John 3:18, Ephesians 2:1-3). Before we go any further, let us review what wages are. I think that the extremely noteworthy significance of what wages really are often gets lost when this verse/topic is discussed. Consider it like this: When I go to work and do my job, my employer deposits money into my bank account every 2 weeks. This is not because my employer is nice or naughty, neither is it because my employer hates me or loves me, it is because the money that I earned (my wages) is due to be paid to me. That money is rightfully MINE; I already rightfully own it (humanly

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speaking) as a result of keeping my end of an agreement; a contract; a set standard.

Just as a given amount of money is my due WAGE for working for my employer, death is the due WAGE for my sin. Death is what sin EARNS, just as my work for my employer earns me money. God does not punish sin because He enjoys doing so (Ezekiel 33:11 makes it clear that He does not enjoy doing so), just as my employer does not necessarily want to pay me, it is simply what is demanded, thus what must be done. Again, my employer is rendering unto me what already BELONGS to me; what is rightfully MINE. There is no gift giving involved here. Granted, humans are not always just and reliable to do what they say they are going to do, because they are imperfect, thus they will make mistakes. It is therefore of course possible that the amount of the wages paid for someone's work (by humans) to be unfair, or that wages which are due may not be paid or be late due to an error of some sort. God, however, is error-free (PERFECT), just, and He is ALWAYS on time. The wages of sin are just and MUST be paid, and therefore WILL be paid...this is part of God's nature, which is ABSOLUTE PERFECTION, which also means that He is not even capable of making a mistake.

God Does Not Want To Give Us Our Just Desserts

God does not want to condemn you! Even though the wages of sin is indeed death, and as already stated, these wages MUST be paid, God does not want you or me to receive the rightly deserved wages of our sin. 2 Peter 3:9 tells us, "*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*" I will talk more about what repentance is below. The wages of sin (death) may seem like very bad news, but this is by no means the end of the story. God has provided us with a way out. The second part of Romans 6:23 is: "*but the **gift** of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*"

We Cannot Earn Even Part of Our Salvation

Ephesians 2:8 and 9 tell us: "*For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the **gift** of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast.*" Salvation; being saved; the way out of receiving what our sin has earned us; receiving the irrevocable gift of everlasting life, CANNOT in any way be earned by anything good that we do or anything bad that we keep ourselves from doing. We are not even a little bit capable of earning even a tiny part of our salvation. No matter how hard we may try to work for it, we CANNOT. It does not matter how many good things we do or may promise or try to do, or how hard we try not to do bad things. We all miss the mark (God's mark, which again is perfection...the bullseye, as it were). In fact, even if someone were

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able to somehow miraculously manage to NEVER sin again on this side of eternity, he or she still could not have eternal life, based on that. Again, all of us have already sinned, and therefore we have rightfully earned the wage of sin; just like if I were to only work one hour at my job this week and then quit, I still have a paycheck (wages; money) coming. The wage of sin is MINE; I have that “paycheck” of death coming no matter how “good” I may now be, even for the rest of my life. James 2:10 tells us that if we break even one of God’s laws, we have broken the whole of God’s law. Therefore, even if by some miracle, if someone were only to sin once in their lifetime, it would still earn the wage of sin; death.

Our “Goodness” Is Not Good Enough

You may still be thinking something like: “Well, I’m a good citizen; I only drive 9 mph over the speed limit and don’t even pull the tags off of mattresses, so I’m certainly nothing like a serial rapist or a mass murderer, or that loser across the street, so I should be OK.” That does not matter. Think of it this way: Liquid raw sewage may be fouler to us than water in the bowl of a public toilet. I am not, however, going to kick back and sip on a tall cool glass of either one of them, because they are both UNFIT FOR CONSUMPTION! They are both polluted and tainted; worthy only of being disposed of. The parallel here is that even though your sinful behavior (toilet water) may not appear to you to be as bad as someone else’s sinful behavior, especially not nearly as bad as someone like Adolf Hitler’s (raw sewage); he being a person we may typically think of as someone who “should be in Hell,” you still have sin; you are still a sinner and fall short of the glory of God. You still miss the mark of perfection; the bullseye that God requires. Your sin and Adolf Hitler’s sin both fall short of the glory of God. Your sin and Hitler’s sin both miss the bullseye that you are required to hit. Your sin and Hitler’s sin make both of you unfit to enter God’s kingdom (just as both the toilet bowl water and raw sewage are unfit to enter my body and only fit to be disposed of). Your sin and Hitler’s sin both ultimately earn the same wage, that being death; more importantly (and more tragically) they both earn the terrible second death (more on this below). I know that this may sound absurd and even offensive to some of you, but I humbly implore you to keep reading, because despite this perhaps disturbing truth, there is another wonderful truth that ever so greatly overshadows it. That overshadowing truth is that no matter how bad any of us may be, Jesus is able, willing, and desires to (Revelation 3:20) save us from this terrible fate (more on this below); he wants to cleanse us so He doesn’t have to dispose of us. Remember, we are dealing with the infinite wisdom and perfection of God, which supersedes the finite wisdom and imperfection of men (more on this below as well).

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The Just and Loving Judge

As we ponder all of this, we could say that Jesus took our rightful paycheck for sin. This paycheck, so to speak, is, however, also a perfectly just judgment, and a just judge (God) MUST judge justly; otherwise, He is no longer just. Think of it like this: You are in a hypothetical courtroom in a hypothetical country. You have committed a very costly offense, something that has resulted in around \$3 million in damages. According to the law of this hypothetical nation, the judge MUST sentence you to pay complete restitution for the damage that you caused; the full \$3 million plus other incurred costs. Under this law, you will also be obligated to remain incarcerated until you have paid the entirety of the restitution and other costs, even if that incarceration winds up being for the rest of your life. The judge is just. He, therefore, hands down the sentence that he MUST hand down to you, which you deserve in accordance with the law, which he MUST be true to and uphold. His gavel falls. The bailiffs escort you out of the courtroom. In this example, you do not, nor will you ever have, anywhere near enough money to pay what is required of you in order to be free. The judge, who is a compassionate man of means, being aware of your inability to pay, in the meantime takes off his robe, leaves the bench, and begins to walk out of the courtroom, not far behind you. This parallels how Jesus, the Creator of all (John 1:3), the ultimate just Judge (John 5:22-23), left His glory and humbled Himself to become a man and walk among us, as described in Philippians 2:5-8. As the bailiffs are walking you in front of the clerk's desk, to your surprise, you hear the judge's voice behind you. He orders them to wait. He approaches the clerk and tells her that he will be paying the fine for you. He gets out his checkbook and begins writing. Please understand that he is not revoking the sentence! He has handed it down, and HE IS PAYING THE REQUIRED FINE ON YOUR BEHALF, AND IT WILL COST HIM THE FULL AMOUNT OUT OF HIS OWN PERSONAL RESOURCES AND COST YOU NOTHING!! This action parallels how the perfect and sinless Jesus, the ultimate just Judge, took the mandatory wage/judgment for our sin upon Himself, on the cross at Calvary (Romans 5:8, Philippians 2:8, 2 Corinthians 5:21). However, at this point, you have a choice to make. You can either trust the judge and let him pay the fine for you, accepting his wonderful and generous GIFT, and then experience immediate freedom, or you can, in shame and/or arrogance/pride, refuse the gift, and go back to your cell. If someone truly and genuinely gives me a gift (which is the only way a perfect God could possibly give a gift) and I accept it, then I did ABSOLUTELY NOTHING to earn ANY of it. If I do not accept it, it is NOT mine, and it does not belong to me. Perhaps you will tell the judge that you have the situation under control, and that you will find your own way of earning the money to pay the fine yourself, or something ridiculous like that. Again, this is something that you will never be able to do, especially under the circumstances of being incarcerated, where

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you are in no position to earn any significant amount of money whatsoever. Relying on your own efforts in this example will result in lifelong incarceration. Unfortunately, this response of rejection is what parallels the response of most people to Jesus: They will reject the free gift (Romans 5:15) of removal of their sins with the promise of incomprehensibly wonderful eternal life; something that only He can provide (John 14:6), out of ignorance, shame, or arrogance/pride, or a combination thereof. Because of this rejection, they will remain in bondage, and then tragically die in their sin and reap the unspeakably terrible, but just and eternal consequence thereof.

To TRULY Believe

Please understand, in the above example, if I let the judge pay my fine for me, I am relying totally on him to do so, as I am unable to help myself AT ALL. This is how we must trust Jesus. He tells us in John 6:47: "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that **believeth** on me **hath** everlasting life.*" The original Greek word "pisteuo" that is used in the New Testament, which is translated as "believe" in the English New Testament translations, means to totally rely upon; to commit one's trust to something; to truly have faith in something. I like to think of it like this: I am up on a balcony of the fourth or fifth floor of a building that is very much on fire, so much so that I cannot go back inside of it. The fire escapes have also been compromised. I am obviously too far up to jump to safety either. I am alone, and I am trying to figure out a way to get myself out of the mess that I am in that is going to most certainly result in my death if I do not find a way to get myself out of it. Obviously, there is no way that I am going to be able to get myself out of it. While I am pondering my dire situation, the first response team shows up with their truck with the big extension ladder. It is extended up to me, along with a first responder, who tells me to take his hand and step over to him. At that point, I have to **repent**. In most of the New Testament, the English word "repent" is translated from the Greek words "metanoia" or "metanoeo." Both of these words mean to change (meta) your mind (noia is the noun, noeo is the verb). In other words, I have to change my mind about relying on any of my own feeble and useless efforts to get myself out of this deadly predicament of fire and a long drop to the ground; I must make the decision instead to simply put my trust in the first responder and his team's ability and commitment to save me from my otherwise fatal predicament. In the same way, I must repent of; as in change my mind about relying on any of my feeble and useless works at all, including promises to somehow change my life, as well as religious rites and rituals, etc., to somehow help to make me good enough or "eligible" to be saved from the fate that I deserved, and thus be able to come into God's presence. None of these useless efforts that I make contribute even a little bit to making me eligible for the free gift of salvation. Instead, I must simply trust and fully/completely rely

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upon Jesus, and Jesus alone, to save me. My example with the first responders is, however, somewhat flawed. In the example, I had to actually do a few small things in order to help the first responders save me. In terms of Jesus saving me, I simply trust him, PERIOD. In terms of salvation: Jesus plus something is NOTHING, Jesus plus nothing is EVERYTHING!

Our Cleanest Is Filth

Isaiah 64:6 tells us that our righteousness, as in our attempts to be good or to not be bad, are as filthy rags. The English translators of this passage were gentlemen, however, because the filthy rags that the original Hebrew language actually points to are used menstrual cloths; something extremely vile, filthy, and nasty. This shows us just how unimpressed God is with our best efforts to be righteous, outside of the righteousness of Jesus, which He freely gives to (imputes, or places upon) those who put their trust in (believe on) Him (Romans 4:24).

Skip The Religion and Do the Father's Will

Just about every religious system, other than the true Gospel of Jesus Christ (gospel means good news), including many forms of "Christianity," falsely teach that it is necessary for us, to one degree or another, to somehow work at being good or enlightened enough to go to Heaven, get reincarnated into something better, go into Nirvana, or whatever the case may be, in terms of the afterlife. People who ardently follow a false "Christian" gospel, that somehow mixes works with grace for salvation, who never **fully** put their trust in the finished work of Christ; the Gospel (again, good news), which is His death for our sins according to Scripture, His burial and Resurrection according to Scripture (1 Corinthians 15:1-4), and die in such a state (die in their sin), are in for a very rude awakening, so to speak, at their final judgment. Jesus portrays it like this in the following passage:

Matthew 7:21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Matthew 7:22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

Matthew 7:23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Notice in verse 21 where Jesus points out the fact that those who enter the kingdom of Heaven are those who do the will of His Father which is in Heaven. With that in mind, at this point I think it would be extremely

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wise and of ETERNAL importance for us to nail down just what the will of His Father is! Is the will of His Father that we keep the law? We cannot keep the law! If we could have done so, Jesus never would have needed to do what He did for us in order to save us. As I pointed out at the beginning of this writing, we were BORN in sin; we ALL fall short of God's standard; God's standard is perfection. Therefore, if the will of the Father were for us to simply keep the law, something that Jesus laid out the specific requirements for to an even greater and more specific and difficult degree than in the Old Testament, in passages such as Matthew chapter 5, NO ONE from the human race could EVER enter the kingdom of Heaven, and the sacrifice that Jesus made for us on the cross at Calvary would have been nothing more than a tragic waste of life (Galatians 2:21). Jesus Himself tells us the will of His Father in the following passage:

John 6:37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

John 6:38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

John 6:39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

John 6:40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. [emphasis mine]

Verse 40 sums it up and nails down what the will of the Father is. This is what one must do to enter the kingdom of Heaven: To look upon the Son (Jesus) and believe on Him. Obviously, you can't visually see Him right now, however, you can see Him in the sense that you can recognize and acknowledge Him for who He is; the sinless Son of God; the Alpha and Omega; the beginning and the end; the creator of all things, who has come to us in the flesh to save us from our sins (Hebrews chapter 1 and John chapter 1, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Romans chapters 3, 4 and 5, and numerous others), and what He has done for us (1 Corinthians 15:1-4), and BELIEVE on Him. He states/emphasizes what is necessary again in verse 47 of the same chapter: "*Verily verily I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life.*" Please note that only God COULD have done what He did for you (1 Peter 1:19-20, Hebrews 1:3), and that only God WOULD have done what He did for you (Romans 5:6-8). The more you walk with God and study His Word, the more self-evident this truth will become to you.

Note also the present tense expressed in verses 40 and 47 (and numerous other verses). The Greek word "echo," rendered in the English translation as "hath," indicates present possession of something. That something is EVERLASTING LIFE. If something is everlasting/eternal and

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presently in my possession, that means that I HAVE IT and I CANNOT lose it (verse 37 emphasizes this as well), otherwise it would not be eternal/everlasting and I would not be in present possession of it. It is not something I might be rewarded with if I manage to behave well enough throughout my life. When you put your trust in Jesus you HAVE everlasting life. If not, then God would be a liar. God CANNOT LIE!! (Hebrews 6:18, Numbers 23:19, Titus 1:2). Dr. Hank Lindstrom rightly said that this is a message of confirmation, not probation!

Now notice what the people are saying to Jesus in verse 22 of Matthew 7. They are bragging about their works. They are not talking at all about their TRUST in the finished work of Jesus, because they NEVER had it; they had NEVER been saved. Remember Ephesians 2:8-9: "*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.*" They had never put their faith/trust in Jesus, thus had never been born of the Spirit (I will discuss that below), thus they were "serving" God out of their own sinful nature. We have already talked about how unimpressed God is with that. Meaningful service to God ONLY occurs when it is done in the Spirit; in whom we are sealed with at our new birth, which takes place at the moment we believe on/trust in the finished work of Jesus (Ephesians 1:13, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4). A side note: In a sense one may indeed correctly argue that the will of the Father is for us to perfectly keep the law, however the Father is quite aware that we cannot, so He sent His Son to keep it for us. We have the sinless perfection of Jesus (which is the law kept perfectly and not transgressed [1 John 3:4, 9]) placed upon us at the moment we believe on Him; when we do the will of His Father (John 6:40, Romans 4:11, 21-25). It is a gift of love, not a reward for supposedly "good behavior."

The saddest verse of our passage in Matthew 7 is verse 23: He tells them that He NEVER knew them; NOT that he once knew them and then didn't know them anymore. The worst part of that verse is where He tells them to depart from Him, while he pointed out the fact that they were WORKERS of INIQUITY (sin). Look at Nahum 1:7 "*The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.*" The people in this passage never trusted Jesus, thus He never knew them.

Another thought that I take from the Matthew 7:21-23 passage is that Satan does not care if you follow Jesus, if you serve Jesus, or even if you worship Jesus; just as long as you do not TRUST Jesus (the following, the serving, and the worshiping will however be quite empty without receiving what comes from the trusting). A prime example is Judas Iscariot, who in Jesus' earthly ministry followed, served, and worshiped Jesus, but never trusted in Him, particularly for salvation. The fate of Judas was very tragic indeed (Acts 1:25). More about this concept in the section below entitled "Former Christians" (you may have

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figured this already: there really is no such thing as a former Christian, if one rightly defines a Christian as a sinner who has been saved by grace, as a result of truly believing on Jesus).

Saved By Grace Means Saved by Grace

When someone tries to add their works to what Jesus did for us, in order to somehow "do their part" in "earning" or "making themselves eligible" for salvation (as in NOT fully trusting and relying on Him, which is blatant disobedience to the will of the Father), it pollutes the finished work of Jesus and is thus a meaningless and impotent "faith." With this kind of "faith," I have something to wrongfully boast about in my sinful state. Jesus purged our sins by Himself (Hebrews 1:3). In the previous section, we have clearly seen the tragic results of adding works to grace regarding salvation. Salvation is either of grace or works, not of both (Romans 11:6). Your works fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23) because you were born in sin (Psalm 51:5, Romans 3:10, 5:8, 12, 6:11, 8:10, Ephesians 2:1-5) and thus they are tainted/polluted by sin, so salvation must therefore be accomplished by Jesus alone. If you are relying at all on your works to obtain the irrevocable gift of salvation, you are not trusting Jesus; you are disobeying (sinning), and thus failing to meet the one and only requirement for salvation.

Let us briefly revisit the metaphor of the filthy menstrual rags that I discussed earlier. Let us compare Jesus to someone who is cleaning an operating room, using only proper technique, sterile equipment, and cleaning agents in order to do so. Let us compare someone (perhaps the patient that is to be operated on) insisting upon the supposed "necessity" to somehow "do their part" in order to somehow ensure, earn, or somehow make themselves "eligible" for or "worthy" of God's grace/salvation; who has never fully put their trust in the finished work of Jesus for salvation, to someone trying to help Jesus clean the operating room with some of those filthy menstrual rags. They may meticulously wipe the scalpels, probes, tables, etc. with the filthy rags, however, it obviously does not help, no matter how meticulous their efforts may be. It obviously fouls all of the cleaner's efforts and ruins everything, and it will likely result in a dead patient! The cleaner not only does not need their "help," their "help" is a hindrance of the worst order! This metaphor works well because, as I emphasized earlier, sin results in death. Everything that one does in the flesh, without the new birth, is somehow tainted with sin (contaminated), to one degree or another. Therefore, our efforts to "help" with our salvation serve only to contaminate, infect, foul, and thus ruin (and insult) the pure, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice that Jesus made for us.

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One Gospel Means Only One Gospel

There are many who preach false (and fouled) gospels that mix grace with works for salvation. Perhaps blatantly, perhaps subtly. Please DO NOT listen to them. These people may be eloquent, they may indeed [mis]use the Bible to "prove" their point, and they may even be well intended. Their message may sound very intellectual, wholesome, inspiring, clever, convicting, convincing, spiritual and deep, and have only subtle differences from what I am telling you about here (what I am telling you about here is what the Bible says). But such teachings are of course false gospels; damnable counterfeits. They are much like counterfeit money that looks almost just like the real thing, but it is not only worthless, it is also terribly deceitful and robs people of what should be theirs. Such false teachings are to be discerned (recognized) by comparing them to the true Gospel, and then completely dismissed and rejected. The Apostle Paul proclaims in Galatians 1:6-12 that anyone preaching ANY OTHER Gospel other than the one that he preaches to us, the one that Jesus Himself revealed to him (which is summarized in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4), is to be accursed. He even goes out of his way in this passage to say it twice! Satan masquerades as an angel of light, and his ministers will do the same (2 Corinthians 11:14-15). They are often very attractive and convincing, but they ultimately lead to, and lure people into eternal destruction/damnation. Again, some of these ministers may indeed be well intended, however the truth is that they are very sadly deceived, and even more sadly, are deceiving others.

Always remember that God is not the author of confusion, and that the true Gospel of Christ is straight forward and simple, not difficult and/or confusing, or out of reach (2 Corinthians 11:3, 1 Corinthians 14:33), as Satan would like you to believe. Remember that Jesus already did the hard work that you or I could never do (Hebrews 1:3).

We Are All Sick

Matthew 9:12 But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.

...and we are ALL sick, meaning that we all have sin. This does better than to simply serve as a metaphor, because sin, which is a spiritual sickness, like physical sickness, ultimately ends in death, unless something or someone intervenes. We all need Jesus, the Great Physician, the Savior, to intervene. **You do not get better to get saved, you get saved to get better!** Please know, however, that you are not too sick or too far gone for Jesus to heal and save you, no matter what you may have done or what you may have failed to do. [Please keep in mind that much of the Bible was written by 3 murderers: Moses, David, who was also an adulterer, and the Apostle Paul.] Once again, He is the Great Physician. Yes indeed, neither you nor I are

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worthy of what Jesus did for us on the cross at Calvary; no one is. Remember, the ultimate and only cure for death (the current condition of the unsaved person [Ephesians 2:1]) is salvation, which is a free gift that Jesus gives to you (Romans 5:15), that He completely paid for, and is there for the (your) taking. Teaching that promotes the idea that you need to somehow "clean up your act" before you can come to Jesus and have Him save you (or the notion that you are even remotely capable of adequately cleaning up your act) is not only absolutely ludicrous, it is flat-out heresy (which means teaching that is contradictory to the Bible; A.K.A. false). Again, James 2:10 makes it very clear that if we have broken one point of the law, we have broken all of the law. Sin is transgression (breaking of) the law (1 John 3:4). Again, you get saved to get better, you do not get better to get saved!

Think of it like this: You are sitting with a friend and he starts showing very serious signs that he is having a heart attack. You get out your phone and start to dial 911 to get help. Your friend then says to you, "No, don't call. I am in no shape right now to see a doctor. I would be embarrassed to be seen in a hospital looking like this, and they probably won't even let me come in, being such a wreck as I am right now. I am going to go home, start working out, make sure that I eat right, get enough sleep, and lower my stress level first. I'll see a doctor about this problem when I'm in better shape and looking presentable. Thanks, but no thanks." Now how stupid would that be?! This is obviously not going to work! It is going to most likely result in death (again, like sin)! It is fatally out of order!

Unfortunately, this example correctly reflects the incorrect mentality, the uselessness, and the flat-out danger of the erroneous teaching (false gospel) that says (or implies) that we somehow have to "clean up our act" before Jesus will save us. Such a false gospel can only lead to damnation. Tragically, some variation of this false (counterfeit) gospel is being preached and taught in many churches today; it is often taught that one way or another you somehow have to manage to repent of all of your sin (in this case "repent" erroneously means to somehow forsake and turn from all of your sinful ways), or genuinely promise to do so, BEFORE Jesus will save you (look out if you somehow break your promise!...and you WILL break such a promise!). NO ONE can do this (James 2:10, Romans 7:14-25)! Even if someone were actually able to do this, it is still an unbiblical (heretical) and worthless WORKS-based "salvation" message (although many preachers will deny this fact as they preach grace out of one side of their mouth and works out of the other, in some subtle way). Again, we are saved entirely by grace, NOT of works AT ALL (Ephesians 2:8-9 again, Romans 11:6, etc.). The phrases "repent of your sin(s)," or "turn from all your sin(s)," as well as other phrases with implications like it, such as "surrender your life/all to Christ," or "make Jesus Lord of your life," are found nowhere in the New Testament in connection with the message of receiving the free gift of

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salvation and the promise of eternal life that is given to (and in NO way earned by) the believer. These all imply works of the law and we are not saved by works of the law (Galatians 2:16, Romans 3:20). A couple of additional notes: 1) Jesus IS LORD of all, whether you or I like it or not (Philippians 2:9-11, Luke 2:11)! He is in absolutely no need of any of us to somehow "make" him Lord. 2) The wage of sin is death (Romans 6:23), not [supposedly] cleaning up your act; someone's death must pay ALL for your sins; either yours or Jesus'.

Order Please!

Indeed, once someone is saved by grace, they absolutely should live for the Lord (Ephesians 2:10); fully surrendering their life (their all) to Him and fully obeying Him. They should be seeking Him for increasingly more power to continuously keep progressing in conquering the sins of the flesh that they were originally born into. There is no question that this is indeed the very best and most fulfilling way to live, for many reasons. God blesses a believer's obedience (in this life and in the hereafter) and chastises (punishes) a believer's disobedience (Proverbs 3, 1 Corinthians 3:11-15, Hebrews 12:5-11), possibly even with an early physical death (1 Corinthians 11:30, Acts 5:1-10). But this is an issue of **discipleship**; which is growing in the Lord once we have been saved; as in born again (I will get to that shortly). There cannot be any real discipleship until there is salvation, which again, one can be fully assured of, and cannot lose once they have it (John 6:47, 10:28, Romans 11:29, and many more)!

Let us revisit the example of the friend that you are sitting with who is having the heart attack: Now let us say that he lets you call 911, then goes to the hospital, then gets his heart repaired and ultimately heals. Then he goes home and exercises, eats right, avoids undue stress, etc., in order to get in better physical condition. This scenario parallels the order of salvation (which is permanent and cannot be undone) being followed by discipleship (growing in the Lord). This is the correct order that the Bible teaches; we have the proverbial horse before (pulling) the cart now. Please remember this: we do not turn from our sin for Jesus to save us, we turn to Jesus to save us from our sin!

The Perfect, Sinless Second Birth...

Now, let us talk about what it is to be "born again." Consider the following passage from the Gospel of John, chapter 3; arguably the most famous chapter of the Bible:

John 3:1 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

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John 3:2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

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

John 3:4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

John 3:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

John 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

We are born first of water, which is our physical birth; born of our earthly parents; our flesh. The majority of our body mass is water. There is also lots of water in the womb, as well as in the materials that are involved in conception. After this, we must be reborn sinless (born of sinless God) in order to enter the kingdom of God. When does this happen? It happens ONLY when we put our trust in the finished work of Jesus. Note that the verse directly below, which is one of the most famous verses in the Bible, is in the very same chapter, even in the very same conversation (between Jesus and Nicodemus) as the verses that are directly above:

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Being born of the Spirit (born of God) and belief in Jesus (fully trusting in who He is and what He has done for you plus nothing else) are mutually inclusive. In this conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus tells him that we must be born again in order to enter the Kingdom of God. He also tells him that when we believe in Jesus, we have eternal life. Therefore, when we believe, it is only logical to conclude that we have been born again because the only people who could ever have eternal life are sinless people; people who have not earned death, death of course being the wage of sin (Romans 6:23). The only kind of people that are sinless are those born of the Spirit; born again; born of God (1 John 3:9). Only born-again people have everlasting life and can enter the Kingdom of God. God can have no sin whatsoever dwelling in His kingdom. A reason for this is that if sin were to dwell there, then death (the due wage of sin) would then be required to dwell there also. The Kingdom of God is a place of eternal life and perfection. Sin and death have absolutely no place in a perfect place, whatsoever (see Revelation, chapters 21 and 22). Again, belief in Jesus and the second birth are mutually inclusive. Those of us who have eternal life have believed in

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Jesus, thus we are born again. Our new/Spiritual birth is sinless (1 John 3:9), therefore we must be ultimately free from death; the wage of sin. This is a condition which is absolutely necessary in order to enter the Kingdom of God (and to truly/meaningfully serve God). We are also told in 2 Corinthians 5:17 that anyone who is in Christ is a new creature. Ponder the passage below that also weighs in on this wonderful truth.

John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

John 1:13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

The Apostle Paul, of course, adds emphasis to this in Ephesians 1:13, where he tells us that we are sealed with the Holy Spirit when we believe the Gospel. See also 1 Corinthians 15:42-49 for another angle on contrasting the flesh birth and the spiritual birth.

Those of us who have put our trust in Christ have indeed put off the old sinful self and put on the new self; the second birth that is empowered by the Holy Spirit and Christ living in us (Colossians 3:9, Galatians 2:19-20, 5:16, 2 Corinthians 5:17). Please remember, however, that on this side of eternity, we born-again people still reside in our fallen flesh that was born in sin; therefore, we obviously still sin. The new sinless man, the one born of the Spirit, and the sinful flesh will be opposed to one another (Galatians 5:16-17). Please refer to Romans 7:14-25, where the Apostle Paul talks about his own personal struggle with the flesh that he continuously had AFTER his conversion (being born again/receiving salvation). We will one day shed the sinfulness of our flesh once and for all when we meet Jesus face to face (1 John 3:2, 1 Corinthians 13:12, 15:50-54). More on that below.

...That Cannot Die!

God inspired the Apostle John to write more Scripture: three letters, also referred to as epistles (1, 2, and 3 John), and the book of Revelation. Look at 1 John 3:9:

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

Once again, my new birth is sinless, in other words, it has NO sin, past, present, or future; this is why Jesus can tell me that I HAVE (as in present tense) everlasting life when I believe in Him. Again, no sin, no wage of sin, which means no death! No death means EVERLASTING LIFE! Notice how the verse says "*for his seed remaineth in him,*" that would be the seed of Jesus; His irrevocable gift of righteousness

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(Romans 4:20-25, 11:29). Galatians 6:7-8 tells us that we reap what we sow, how much truer would this be of God?! Jesus has sown His seed in me, He WILL reap me! He WILL also sow His seed in you and reap you if you will put your trust in Him and believe the Gospel. If you do so, there is no one, including yourself, that can prevent this reaping once that seed has been planted (John 10:28, as well as the numerous other passages, plainly tell us that we have eternal life, present tense, when we believe on Jesus). Again, He promises everlasting life to us because of the sinless spiritual rebirth that He gives us: No sin means no wage of sin, thus no death. No death means everlasting life! If you do not die, you obviously remain alive!

Live In Your New and Sinless Self

Galatians 5:16 tells us to walk in the Spirit, which is, of course, sinless, and it in the power of our new sinless self, that we may not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Being sinless not only refers to not doing what is evil, it equally refers to doing what is good. In Scriptures such as 1 John and in Matthew 22, we see commandments and admonitions to love one another. Failing to obey such things would be sin. Not doing what we should do (often referred to as sins of omission) is sin, just as much as doing what we should not do (often referred to as sins of commission) is sin (James 4:17). If you have broken one law (sinned), you are guilty of them all (James 2:10). If the new birth/new self is not sinless in both respects, then it is not sinless. This would then render what I have been talking about in this book to be complete nonsense. This emphasizes why it is so important for believers to walk in the Spirit, which again is sinless and directly opposed to the sins of the flesh, so we will be occupied with what is of God, thus unavailable to fulfill that sinful lust of the flesh (Galatians 5:16-17), and then have to deal with the consequences of doing so. We, of course, cannot walk in the Spirit unless we have the Spirit. We only get the Spirit when we put our trust in (believe on) Jesus. We can only truly serve God and submit to God when we walk in the Spirit, in whom we are sealed when we believe the Gospel (Ephesians 1:13, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4). The wording in Ephesians 1:13 indicates that the Holy Spirit Himself is the seal. This is something (someone) that is most certainly not going to be broken.

When we have the Spirit, again who is the power of the new and sinless self, only then can we bring forth the fruit of the Spirit (see Galatians 5:22-23) that rightly serves and honors God, and grow in our walk with God. Trying to do so without the new birth; the righteousness that He gives us, takes us right back to the examples of the nasty filthy rags of Isaiah 64:4 and the impure works of Matthew 7:21-23. They are one and the same and are absolutely useless (and often counterproductive) for serving and honoring God.

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His Grace Is ENOUGH

Jesus tells the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:9 that His grace is **SUFFICIENT** for him and that His (Jesus') strength is made perfect in (Paul's...our) weakness. Sufficient and necessary are not the same thing. For example: My beating heart is necessary for me to sit here and type the words of this book. However, a beating heart by itself is not enough to get the job done. It is not sufficient. For me to actually be able to accomplish my task, I also need the rest of my body, a computer, etc., to get the job done, to be sufficient for accomplishing my task. The grace of Jesus is SUFFICIENT for us; not just necessary for, but sufficient for our salvation. Jesus accomplished the task BY HIMSELF (Hebrews 1:3) without any help from you or me! We are indeed weak, and His strength WILL be made perfect in the weakness of the believer. Weakness is something that we all have plenty of, especially in comparison to the infinite power of God. JESUS is the savior! HE is the AUTHOR and the FINISHER of our faith (Hebrews 12:2). In other words, it is He who gives us the ability to trust Him, and it is He who did ALL of the work that we trust Him ALONE for! HE ALONE saves us (Hebrews 1:3). His grace is enough. I cannot begin to emphasize (or even begin to comprehend, for that matter) just how powerful, magnificent, and all-sufficient Jesus really is!

God Needs ZERO Help In Saving You

...and He will not accept any. If by some strange turn of events I have not managed to do so already, I want to make it abundantly clear that salvation is not a result of any works or law keeping (Romans 3:28, 11:6). Salvation is not a 2-step process, which it is often falsely (and often subtly) presented as. It is a one-step process and it is purely a result of what **God does for you** when you put your trust in the finished work of Jesus. Remember, you are not saved by giving your life to Jesus, you are saved because Jesus gave His life for you! He did the hard work that you could never do! In Acts 16:31 Paul and Silas answered the Philippian jailor, who fell down before them and asked them what he must do to be saved. "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved...*" was their response. Paul and Silas mentioned nothing about water baptism, church liturgy, church rituals, penances, going to weekly confession, turning from one's sins, praying any sort of prescribed "sinner's" prayer, getting up the nerve to walk down a church aisle in front of a bunch of people, promising to turn over every aspect of one's life to God (which is however what every saved person should be striving to do by the grace of God, who has already saved them, for the best possible life on this side of eternity and in the hereafter), or anything else like that, in order to get saved or to stay saved. We believe on Jesus, period, to get saved, and then we stay saved once and for all. Again, HIS grace is SUFFICIENT. How do we believe on Jesus? As I pointed out earlier, we fully trust Him; take Him

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at His Word, and believe that He finished the WHOLE job; we believe the Gospel (again, summarized in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4). We believe that He is who He says He is. We do not try to add ANYTHING to what HE has done for us. We RECEIVE His GIFT and do not try to somehow pay Him (not even partially) for it, or try to help Him (again, not even partially) with it. We then enter into His rest (Hebrews 4:3). Gifts are not earned, otherwise they are not truly gifts! Also, we read in Romans 11:29 that God does not repent of His gifts and callings, in other words, He does not change His mind about them or take them back once He has given them. Again, when God gives us the gift of eternal life, we HAVE it FOREVER! Again, if it can be lost, then it is not eternal/everlasting.

An important note: Every believer of the Gospel should most certainly receive water baptism. Water baptism is an act of obedience and a blessing that is to be received by saved people (Acts 8:37, 16:33). You do not want to miss out on it.

God Is A Whole Lot Smarter Than We Are

There are those that think that what I am presenting here is crazy. They will argue that it is too easy or cheap, or that it is the proverbial nonexistent "free lunch," etc. I think that very often the reasoning of these people ultimately stems from pride (a lust of the flesh), because they want at least some of the credit for their "purity," thus for their salvation (whether they will admit it...or even fully realize it or not). This is of course of the old self and the flesh of someone who has not been born again. Another possibility is that a person has been born again, but they have gone astray from the truth of the Gospel (they are living in the flesh). It is important to note here that going astray (which can happen to a saved individual) and becoming unsaved (which cannot happen to a saved individual) are NOT the same thing. Whether the folks who disagree with me like it or not, what I have been asserting here about the free gift salvation is what the Bible (and thus God) also asserts about the free gift of salvation. Please understand that this is not human wisdom. This is the INFINITE wisdom of God (Psalm 147:5, Proverbs 15:3, Jeremiah 32:17, Matthew 19:26, Colossians 1:17), which is inconceivably higher than the extremely finite "wisdom" of men, or the ways of men (Isiah 55:8-9). Please also read 1 Corinthians 1:18-31 for a better understanding of this.

We Have to Be Born Before We Can Grow

Some may read this book and think that I am somehow promoting the idea of a "license" to sin. Nothing could be further from the truth! I talked about walking in the Spirit, which is just the opposite of sinning (Galatians 5:16, 19-21), and I said that you cannot walk in the Spirit unless you have Him (the Holy Spirit). Logic would follow that if you have the Spirit to walk in, you are saved (sealed with the Holy Spirit, as

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we have already discussed), and thus you are going to Heaven. To be clear, the Apostle Paul was writing these words (and the words in all of his epistles; letters/books of the Bible) to believers; saved people that are guaranteed everlasting life; people who had/have been born again (born of/sealed with the Spirit). Logic dictates that you have to be born first before you can grow! Think of it like this: when you were physically born, you were helpless. You learned and you grew. You learned to walk, talk, etc., and as time went by, you progressively matured. You obviously did not know everything and have your whole life mapped out at your physical birth. You needed to grow and needed others to instruct you. The same applies to Spiritual birth. We are of course born again when we trust in/believe on Jesus. Old, wise, and mature people are not physically born as old, wise, and mature people. They are physically born as helpless babies and then they mature. Neither are people spiritually born as mature Christians/believers. They are born as babies in Christ, and then they progressively grow and mature as they walk with God (some mature much faster than others). Please note that sometimes even the most mature Christians make mistakes (even what we may think of as major mistakes) and have setbacks. God uses those for good as well (Romans 8:28).

Paul spends a great deal of time in his epistles (the books of Romans through Philemon in the New Testament) instructing SAVED PEOPLE on how to grow in God, and live for Him. This is quite the opposite of giving them the proverbial "license to sin" (Romans 6:1-2). As believers/saved people, we do indeed need to pay very close attention to and obey the instructions that Paul gave to us under the inspiration of God! Failure to do so is of course sin, and as stated before, there are consequences for sin, perhaps even early physical death. And of course, when we are obedient, there are blessings/rewards, both here and in the hereafter (Hebrews 12:5-11, 1 Corinthians 3:11-15, 5:5, 11:30, Revelation 22:12). Yes, as a believer I can indeed go off and sin. It is somewhat like how a citizen of the USA can choose to commit a crime. No one gets a "license" to commit a crime, but they can choose to commit one. There are consequences for committing that crime, perhaps very severe consequences, but not loss of citizenship. Again, when a believer sins (lives according to the flesh), there may indeed be consequences (again, possibly very severe consequences) for that sin, but not ejection from the family; not loss of salvation! A believer cannot become unborn, and his/her new birth is eternal!

As already stated, believers most definitely should live for the Lord and serve Him (Ephesians 2:10, Romans 12:1, etc.), but we do not serve to get saved. We are also not to look at our service to God for proof of our salvation, or at anyone else's for theirs. Doing so wrongfully takes the focus off of the sinless Christ and puts it on the sinful us, and back-loads works into salvation for "proof" of it. This amounts to work-based "salvation." As I have pointed out already, it is impossible for our

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works to earn us even a minuscule portion of our salvation. We are saved purely because of what the infallible Bible tells us; not at all because of what our very fallible feelings may be on any given day (Jeremiah 17:9), or by what we may do or fail to do. We serve in order to deepen our fellowship with God and thus have the most fulfilling life here on earth that we possibly can, followed by an abundantly rewarded life in the eternal hereafter (1 Corinthians 3:8, 14, 2 John 1:8). The all-knowing, all-powerful, and omnipresent God does not need for His children (believers/saved people) to do anything at all for Him. He allows (privileges) them to do so in order to bless them, and it pleases Him.

Another note: If true Christians (again, who Paul was addressing in his epistles) were going to automatically live perfect lives, they would not need instructions in order to do so. The Holy Spirit did, however, see fit to have Paul write down many instructions in these epistles for us Christians. We are imperfect. Again, we still have the flesh as well as the new sinless nature. Christians (I) desperately need these instructions.

I Need Holy Help to Confess the Lord Jesus

The Apostle John also affirms that God dwells in us when we Confess that Jesus is the Son of God (1 John 4:15-16). Confessing that Jesus is the Son of God means that we approve of the fact that Jesus is the Son of God; that we agree that Jesus is the Son of God; that we believe that Jesus is the Son of God, which is who He says He is (John 5, 8, 10, 14, 17). Seeing that He is who He says He is, we believe Him; take Him at His Word, and embrace and identify with the fact that He finished the work of salvation for us (Hebrews 1:3, John 19:30); the Gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). This is something that only the perfect and sinless Son of God could do, and those of us who truly confess Him are those of us who fully trust in/believe on Him. We cannot confess Him, the Lord (who He says He is; as in the Alpha, Omega, the beginning and the end, the Lamb who was slain), except for by the Holy Ghost, [synonymous with Holy Spirit] (1 Corinthians 12:3). Romans 10:9 also tells us: "*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.*" Once again, no one can truly confess the Lord Jesus; the Son of God without the Holy Spirit, whom we receive and are sealed with when we fully put our trust in the finished work of Jesus and believe the Gospel (Ephesians 1:13, 1 John 4:4, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

With The Son Comes the Father

We can in no way divorce Jesus from being God Almighty. Jesus tells us in John 10:30 that He and the Father are one. He goes on to tell His disciples in John 14:9 that if they have seen Him, they have seen the

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Father. Scripture makes it clear that the Father, whom Jesus is one with, raised Him from the dead, and that when we are truly believing on Jesus, we are believing on the Father also (Romans 4:24, 6:4, 10:9, Galatians 1:1). It would also be right to say that in order for one to rightly believe on the Father, that one must believe on the Son (Jesus). Therefore, if we are denying Jesus, we are denying the Father also. They, along with the Holy Spirit, are a package deal, so to speak. The three of them are one:

1 John 5:7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

“The Word” referred to in this verse is Jesus. (John 1:1-18). There are numerous other Scripture passages that speak to the wonderful mystery of the triune God (the oneness of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit), which is well beyond the human ability to fully comprehend. It would not be at all practical to attempt to fully develop this topic in the scope of this writing.

Know Who's Saying What, And to Who, And Why It Is Being Said

We must always be very careful to rightly divide the Word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15); this essentially means to correctly apply the Scriptures. The Bible is, among many things, a book of instructions. It contains instructions on a lot of topics. Those included are salvation (receiving the free gift of salvation/eternal life), and discipleship, which is the growing in the Lord that we do AFTER we have received the free gift of salvation. Salvation, of course, must come FIRST (I really hope I have made that clear). Think of a mechanic using a comprehensive repair manual for instructions to work on a car. If he is trying to fix the brakes but refers to the chapter on the electrical system for instructions on how to repair those brakes, no matter how diligently he may do so, it is not going to go well. It may very well wind up resulting in the death (again, like sin) of the driver, as well as anyone else who may be in the car with him, and/or whoever may be in his way! In comparison, when passages that are meant for instructions on discipleship are treated as instructions that are necessary for salvation (works being mixed with grace for “salvation”), a situation resulting in a far deadlier disaster very well may occur: that being people believing, as well as teaching and spreading, a deceptive false gospel that has zero power to save, thus resulting in them ultimately receiving the second death; eternal damnation; the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:14-15)!

Please know that this unspeakable, incomprehensibly terrible, and permanent second death is the fate of ANYONE, no matter how “good” or “nice” or religious they may be, who goes to their death without believing on/fully trusting in the finished work of Jesus! Satan does not care who or what you may trust or believe in, just as long as it is not the

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real Jesus Christ of the Bible, along with the finished work that He alone accomplished for you. Satan does not care, because no matter how he can keep you from fully believing on/trusting in Jesus, he gets the same result (John 14:6). He hates you and will go to any length to keep you out of the Kingdom of God and in eternal damnation, which he is destined for (Revelation 20:10). To those of you who are parents: Satan hates your children and wants eternal damnation for them as well. Ponder that for a little while! I have, and I take it personally!

Seeing Clearly Through the Correct Lens

When we read the Bible in the proper context; through the lens of the true Gospel message, with the understanding that the believer has two natures (the flesh that is born of man in sin, and the spirit that is born of God in perfection), treating discipleship passages as discipleship passages, and treating salvation passages as salvation passages, differentiating between the addressing of a nation or a church (such as the letters to the 7 churches in Revelation 2 and 3, and the numerous prophecies made about NATIONS in the Old Testament), versus the addressing of individuals, also differentiating between the addressing of people before the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, versus addressing people after the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, etc.; all of these being examples of rightly dividing, a great many of the supposed "contradictions" in the Bible seem to just go away. When we read the Bible this way (the correct way), we see a perfect love letter written to us from outside of/beyond time and space, at least as we are currently able to know and perceive it (just think of all of the fulfilled prophecies for starters!). This love letter shows us how to live life abundantly (John 10:10), and gives us ASSURANCE of the most wonderful promise imaginable; that being of eternal life in a state that is free of any sort of pain, physical or otherwise, in the presence of, as well as in perfect communion with God (Revelation 21: 1-7). A side note: When you find something that seems to be a "contradiction" in the Bible, do some proverbial digging (studying) and you will uncover a gem.

You're Not Too Far Gone; Jesus Loves You

Please know that there is NOTHING that you have done or failed to do, or could ever do or fail to do in this life that is too bad for God to forgive you, or make it so He does not love you, or make it so He cannot or will not use you, if you will simply choose to take Him at His Word and believe on Him. Let us look at the lives of three men who I mentioned earlier, who are often considered to be major heroes of the Bible. First, let's look at Moses; he was a murderer (Exodus 2:12). Nonetheless, God used him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt and write the first 5 books of the Bible, among other things that are still serving to advance the Kingdom of God today. Now let us take King David, whom the Bible refers to as a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14,

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Acts 13:22), who wrote over half of the Psalms of the Bible, among other things. He was both an adulterer and a murderer (2 Samuel chapter 11), and he committed plenty of other sins besides those. But God forgave him and never stopped loving him, and used him to accomplish great things with results that continue to extend far beyond the time of his earthly lifespan. There were, however, of course, consequences for his sins (2 Samuel 12:10-18). As a matter of fact, the beautiful and powerful Psalm 51 was written by King David as he lamented these sins of murder and adultery, after being confronted about them (wouldn't it be great if all leaders responded to confrontation about their sins this way?!).

The Apostle Paul, whom I have quoted many times in this writing, who, like David, wrote, under God's inspiration, a huge chunk of our Bible (Romans through Philemon, perhaps even Hebrews), relentlessly persecuted Christians, and likely was responsible for many of their deaths, before his conversion (Acts 7, 8, and 9). He made plenty of mistakes after his conversion as well (Romans 7:14-25). God obviously still used, and continues to use him greatly! Remember, the grace of Jesus is sufficient for us, and His strength is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9). Another important thing to note: As you read the Bible, you will see that God is ALWAYS the hero, not the people.

Just Give Him What You've Got

Perhaps you are wanting to believe on/trust in Jesus, but for whatever the reason may be, you are having trouble doing so. Consider the situation in the Gospel of Mark chapter 9. There is a man with a demon possessed son, who comes to Jesus, and asks Jesus to remove the demon from him. Jesus tells him that all things are possible if he will believe. We see the man's response in verse 24: *"And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."* The man brought Jesus the faith that He had, and Jesus granted his request and removed the demon. Look at Matthew 17:20: *"... If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you."* Mustard seeds are really small. Bring Jesus whatever faith that you have (just make the choice to take Him at His Word), and in your weakness, let His strength be made perfect (2 Corinthians 12:9)! Paul gives us another angle on this beautiful truth in Philippians 4:13 *"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."*

Even the believer's love for Jesus comes from God. I can only truly love Him in my spiritual/born again nature (Matthew 22:37, Galatians 5:17, Ephesians 2:1-6), which I do not have until I have believed on Him. I did not get saved because of my love for Jesus, I got saved because Jesus' love for me (Romans 5:8). He gets ALL of the glory.

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Please understand that Jesus is THE way THE truth and THE life and that no one comes unto the Father but by Him (John 14:6). There are no alternative solutions; there can't be. Anything else would rely on our own righteousness; something we do not have.

Some Common Objections

I have heard people say things to the effect of: "Well, my loved one didn't believe this, so even if this message is true, I don't want to go to some sort of Heaven where they won't be allowed in, because it wouldn't really be Heaven without them there." I have a couple of things to humbly suggest in response to this. First, please know that no mere mortal living here on this side of eternity has the comprehensive list of those residing in or destined for Heaven or Hell. None of us know who may have, in their last moments or even seconds, put their trust in Christ as Savior, which again, of course, is the one and only requirement for salvation. Secondly, if your loved one is in Heaven, he/she really wants you to join him/her there. If he/she is not in Heaven, he/she most certainly DOES NOT want you to join him/her where he/she is (Luke 16:27-28).

Another objection that I have heard from people when they are pondering suffering, either their own or that of others, is something to the effect of them asking: "If there is a God, then why does He allow such terrible things to happen?" Or perhaps they do believe there is a God, but they are angry at Him for allowing something to happen to them, or to someone else, that they do not see as being "right." One of the early church "fathers" said something to the effect of, "If God could be fully understood by humans, then he wouldn't be God" (Isaiah 55:8-9). Also, read Job chapters 38-42 for more perspective on this. A God whose entire scope one could fit inside the confines of a 3-and-a-half-pound human brain wouldn't be much worth worshiping, as he would certainly have limits; something the real God does not have. The only ability that God does not possess is the ability to make a mistake. I give this topic additional treatment in the section below entitled "Live Your Life in Order to Please God." Please also know that Jesus (God) is well acquainted with suffering and has done plenty of it Himself, on our behalf (Isaiah 53, also read the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John). In the scope of all things, some suffering seems to be necessary (please refer to most of what is written above in this book).

Please understand that man brought death into the world by his sin that he chose to commit (1 Corinthians 15:21, Genesis 3:19). Having already discussed here at great length the just desserts/wages of sin, the current predicament that our world is in makes perfect sense. This rings especially true as we consider that the unsaved person is currently spiritually dead in their sin (Ephesians 2:1). As I have also already discussed here at length, God has provided us with a way out, at His

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own expense. There will be some suffering in the meantime, until we (those of us who have believed on Jesus) see Jesus face to face and are then like Him, and see Him as He is (1 John 3:2, 1 Corinthians 13:12). He does indeed love us, and He will not allow the suffering that we (believers) experience to be in vain (Romans 5:3-4), as His suffering was NOT in vain. We read in Romans 8:28: *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.* The people who love God and who are called according to His purpose are those of us who have believed in Him, who are born again; born of God into the sinless second birth (1 John 3:9). The sinless second birth keeps God's commandments perfectly, and therefore loves Him as one should (Matthew 22:37-40). It is sinless, it has eternal life (John 6:47, 1 John 3:9), and it is called according to His purpose (Romans 8:29-30).

In this same vein, some ask why God doesn't just get rid of evil. Well, He eventually will, but if He did so right now, He would have to get rid of you and me as well (again, our flesh is sinful). He loves us, so He refrains from doing so for the time being. Also in this vein, people may ask how a loving God could send anyone to Hell. I would humbly submit that the right question to ask here actually would be: "Why would anyone choose Hell over a loving God?"

I most certainly believe that God did not, and could not create evil (Psalm 92:15). However, I do believe that He did see it necessary to create the possibility of rejecting Him; choosing evil, so that those of us who are of His creation would have to (get to) choose to love Him by the means of our free will that He blessed us with. Please understand that evil is simply the lack of good, just as chaos is the lack of order, dark is the lack of light, cold is the lack of heat, death (of something alive) is the lack of life, etc. Do you want to be "loved" because someone has been forced to "love" you? Do you want to be "chosen" because there is no other "choice" but you, or because whoever chose you was somehow forced into "choosing" you? This obviously would not be real love. You are made in God's image (Genesis 1:27). I would therefore respectfully argue that He sees such things as this in much the same way you do. He wants His relationship with you to be real and genuine, just as you desire your relationships to be. He wants each of us to truly choose to love Him.

We all know that there are times when we go through difficult circumstances that we may never fully understand the purpose of on this side of eternity. We go through those difficult circumstances, whether we choose to or not, however, we can choose to go through them with Jesus (God), and have them result in growth and blessing from Him (Romans 5:3-4, 8:17). We can also choose to go through those difficult circumstances without Him, and not only miss out on that

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growth and blessing, but become more calloused, bitter, and unhappy. God wants to make you better, not bitter.

Please also know that God can handle your anger. Bring it to Him. He wants you to (Psalms 55:22, 1 Peter 5:7). He will use it for your ultimate benefit, as opposed to Satan using it to your detriment if you stubbornly hold on to it. Read the Psalms. There is plenty of anger expressed and dealt with there, as well as other places in Scripture.

Another objection that sometimes comes up is that many non-Christians are nicer, more generous, helpful, etc. people than many Christians are. I agree 100%. Please remember that each and every one of us has our flesh (which has sin), with each person's flesh being unique to him or herself. The nature of some people's flesh is simply more unpleasant and objectionable than that of others. If a person is unsaved, yet generally comes across as being relatively pleasant, generous, helpful, cooperative, etc. in their flesh (the old nature/man that all of us have, saved or unsaved), they will likely be more desirable to be around than someone who does not come across as being as pleasant, generous, helpful, and cooperative in their flesh, who has indeed been born again, yet isn't walking in the Spirit. [I, to my shame, have been this unpleasant and objectionable Christian many times over the years; more than once has my poor behavior been rightly called out by a nonbeliever.] If a Christian is not walking in the Spirit, he/she is living in the flesh, and thus really is not living any differently than he/she did before receiving salvation/the new birth. Any Christian, given enough time, will ultimately fail you; Christ, however, is forever incapable of failing you (Hebrews 13:5). Christ is perfect; His people certainly are not; starting with me. Please don't let the flawed followers of Jesus (our flaws being the reason we are needful of Him in the first place) cause you to miss out on what the flawless Jesus is offering you. Needless to say, doing so is to one's eternal detriment.

Something That Should NOT Be Put Off

Well, there it is. If you have not done so already, PLEASE just take Jesus at His Word and believe on Him; put your trust in Him before you put this book down! You very well may not have tomorrow or even another minute to think about it. Once again, going to your death without ever putting your trust in/believing on Jesus will secure your place in the judgment of Revelation 20, where "the dead," meaning those who die in their sin (Ephesians 2:1); those without the gift of eternal life that Jesus gives, are judged. Those judged here, of course, receive the second death, which again is the Lake of Fire referred to in Revelation 20 (the ultimate wage of sin, which we all rightfully deserve without the second/new birth). I DO NOT WANT YOU TO BE JUDGED THERE, AND NEITHER DOES GOD (2 Peter 3:9)! Again, none of us are guaranteed another minute on this side of eternity! You do not want to

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stand before the Father without the imputed (again, meaning to be given to, or to have put upon you) righteousness of Jesus (Romans 4:22-25), and have God pass the sentence upon you that you would deserve; the sentence that He MUST pass upon you if you are without the righteousness of His Son, which only comes through faith in Him; believing the Gospel. Please believe the Gospel (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). There is plenty of evidence to know that it is true, and if you don't believe it, you are without excuse (Romans 1:20). [More on this in Addendum 1 below.] If you have done so, you are going to Heaven whether you like it or not (John 6:47, 10:28, 29, etc.)! J As believers of the Gospel, all of our sins of the past, present, and future have been paid for in full and removed. [Remember that they were ALL future when He died in your place for you 2000 years ago.] Once you have believed in Jesus, you are washed perfectly CLEAN with His blood (Romans 3:25, 5:9, Ephesians 1:7, 2:13, Colossians 1:14, 20, Hebrews 9:7, 14, 20, 10:19, 13:12, 1 Peter 1:2, 19, 1 John 1:7, Revelation 1:5). If you have just now put your trust in Jesus and believed the Gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1-4), accepting His free gift to you of salvation/eternal life, I would invite you to say your first prayer to Him, AS a man or woman who IS going to Heaven. Maybe say something like this to Him:

Jesus, I know that I am a sinner and that I fall short of your standard of perfection. I believe that you are the perfect, sinless Son of God. I know that because of my sins I deserved death, but I believe that you died in my place for my sins, according to the Scriptures, and that you were buried and rose again on the third day, according to the Scriptures. I believe that you did that for me, and I am fully trusting in you for the salvation that you alone have now given to me, that I know you will never take away. Thank you, Jesus, thank you for giving me your righteousness. Help me now to walk in the Spirit, whom I now have been sealed with; who now dwells within me, in order to serve you, to learn more about you, to grow closer to you, and receive more of You and Your blessing in this life and in the next. Thank you so much for loving me so much and being willing to do what you did for me, so I could spend eternity with you. Amen. And then just keep talking to Him about everything (it need not be formal); He always has the best answers (Proverbs 3:5-6, 1 Thessalonians 5:17)!

Work OUT Not FOR

Paul tells each of us in Philippians 2:12 to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. This is NOT a passage that tells us that we are saved by works (upon examination, we see that no passages in the New Testament tell us such a thing). In the book of Philippians, Paul is addressing believers (Philippians 1:1); once again, saved people, and he is telling them to work OUT, not for, THEIR OWN salvation; something that they ALREADY POSSESS. Remember the repentant thief who was crucified next to Jesus, whom Jesus promised would be in Paradise with

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Him that very day (Luke 23:39-43)? What work was that man capable of ever doing for Jesus or truly promising to do, during the short remainder of his earthly life? NONE! He was saved because of what Jesus did for him and the promise that Jesus made to him, not because of anything he could ever do for Jesus or any promise that he would have made to Jesus! Once again, Jesus gets ALL of the glory. That being said, there will be some things that we discover and experience as we walk with the Lord in the Spirit; in our salvation, as we are doing God's work, seeking Him, and learning about Him, which will put us into a state of awe. This may indeed shake us up a little bit (fear and trembling). This is bound to happen as you progressively grasp to greater and greater degrees just how much God has done and continues to do for YOU, and what He alone has saved YOU from; that ultimately being the damnation that YOU deserved! Such things will make you want to dig deeper and learn even more about God and what He has done for you, and what He continues to do for you. As you continue to do this, it will compel you ever more so to love, prefer, and focus your energy on that which is pure and everlasting; which has real value, as opposed to tainted and temporal things of this earth that are ultimately worthless; of no value at all, and/or are blatantly destructive. You will also find yourself increasingly hating the sins of the flesh and finding them increasingly repulsive, even as you continue to wrestle with them (Romans 7:14-25). These things happen because your will continues to line up evermore so increasingly with God's will; as you continue to become more like Jesus, and your walk in the Spirit continues to mature. There is a chorus of a beautiful classic hymn that sums this idea up pretty well, it reads: *"Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face. And the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace."*

"Former Christians"

You may have talked to and even know, or know of people, perhaps even some famous Christian musicians or renowned preachers who have written Christian books, who have supposedly "left Christianity." I respectfully submit that I do not think I have ever met or know of anyone who fits that description, who has fully trusted in/believed in the finished work of Jesus and been saved by Him and born again. It is highly possible for someone who is depending upon their behavior or performance for their "salvation," to even a small degree; someone "serving" God out of fear (fright) and obligation, and living in the trepidation of not measuring up then losing, or perhaps never obtaining salvation, to become disillusioned and give up on their useless religion. Such a religion (false gospel), even if it is called "Christian," ultimately amounts to nothing more than an elaborate, meaningless, and enslaving list and/or system of "do's and don'ts," without ever receiving and being sealed with, and thus empowered by the Holy Spirit, who of course only indwells and seals someone when, and only when they truly trust Christ

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alone as Savior and truly believe the Gospel (John 3, Ephesians 1:13). Trying to truly live "righteously" only in the power of the old man in the flesh is always going to end poorly, one way or the other (Matthew 7:21-23).

Study The Bible Regularly

I urge you to diligently study the Scriptures (walk in the Spirit) that I have quoted and cited in this writing, as well as the rest of the God's Word (the 66 books of the Bible). Regarding "the rest of God's Word," if you are new to the Bible, I humbly suggest starting with reading the Gospel of John, then Acts, then Romans, through Philemon, then Hebrews 1, Genesis, Psalms, then Proverbs, then of course, eventually all of it.

Test what I, or anyone else, tells you about the Scriptures against the Scriptures themselves. They are the ultimate standard for truth. The Bible itself speaks very highly of doing this (Acts 17:10-11). Be a "Good Berean." ☺

Set Apart

The moment that you put your trust in Jesus, you are sanctified, which means to be set apart. When this happens, you have experienced what is often referred to as "positional sanctification." This means that you now stand sinless before God, because you have been born of the Spirit and your sins have been removed and paid for by Jesus, and you bear His imputed (again, meaning given to, or placed upon you) righteousness (Romans 4:22-25). Thus, He has perfected you and set you apart for eternal life with Him (1 Corinthians 1:2, Hebrews 10:14 and more). At this point, you are forever free from the ultimate penalty of sin. As you walk in the Spirit, growing and maturing in your faith and your walk with Jesus, the life you live progressively becomes more set apart for Him. This process is often referred to as experiential sanctification. As this happens, you are experiencing increasingly more freedom from the power of sin. One day when you, the believer, meet Jesus face to face and are like Him, and see Him as He is (1 John 3:2, 1 Corinthians 13:12), you will be free once and for all from the presence of sin! _

Find A Church

God does not want us to go at this business of Christian discipleship alone; He did not create us to be islands, so to speak. He created us to be in fellowship with one another (Hebrews 10:24-25, 1 Thessalonians 5:11, Proverbs 27:17, Matthew 18:20, 1 Peter 3:8, Galatians 6:2). I would therefore implore you to find and get involved in a church that preaches the TRUE GOSPEL (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

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I would suggest that when you find a church that you are potentially interested in, you call or meet privately with the pastor. Ask the pastor exactly what he would tell someone who wanted to know how to receive the free gift of salvation/eternal life and be sure that they are going to Heaven after this life. Ask him also what he believes is necessary to stay saved, or to "prove" that someone is saved. If he answers anything other than the finished work of Jesus alone for getting and staying saved (which is, of course, what the Bible teaches), or for "proof" of salvation, then look for another church. You and your family should regularly be getting solid Bible teaching and shepherding from your church leadership that is rooted in the true Gospel as its foundation (Matthew 7:24-27, 1 Corinthians 3:11, Galatians 1:6-9). Teaching and preaching from the basis of anything other than the solid foundation of the true Gospel is going to ultimately result in confusing, fruitless, and potentially damaging results (Matthew 7:26-27). One possible exception to the idea of leaving a church that is not properly preaching the Gospel is as follows: If you are a seasoned believer with a solid understanding of the Gospel, God may be calling you to be vocal and/or instrumental in getting that church on track with the true Gospel. If you think this might be your current situation, diligently seek the Lord on how He may want you to minister to, or perhaps leave, that church.

If the pastor of a "church" that you inquire information from tells you that you should only listen to their leaders and refer only to their literature, in terms of religious teaching (such as publications from the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society), and interpret the Bible through the teachings of these people and publications, run and don't look back. If they tell you that in addition to the 66 inspired books of the Bible, there are other inspired scriptures (such as the Book of Mormon, The Pearl of Great Price, and Doctrines and Covenants), run and don't look back. However, not from the people, only from their false teaching and beliefs. Please love and pray for these usually nice and well-meaning people, who have been deceived. Study what they have been/are deceived into believing. This will enable you to witness/minister to them assertively and LOVINGLY, without belittling, insulting, or attacking them; keeping the focus ON JESUS and the Gospel, when the Lord gives you the opportunity to tell them about the real Jesus and the real Gospel. Upon inquiry, it will quickly be blatantly apparent that such "churches" do not preach the true Gospel; however, I thought it fitting to point them out distinctly. These are "Christian" cults, meaning that they do not let the Bible stand on its own authority. In fact, the "church" that promotes the teachings of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society even asserts their own corrupted "Bible translation;" the New World "translation." The points of corruption in this "translation" are too numerous to cover in the scope of this writing. I will, however, point out one of them, which is found in John 1:1, which blatantly denies the deity/supremacy of Christ, which is outright blasphemy. Neither of these

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groups, nor any other group teaching outside of the real Gospel, recognize and worship the true Jesus for who He really is (Revelation 1:8, 22:15, Hebrews 1:8, Colossians 2:9, 2 Corinthians 12:9, etc.). Jesus loves these people (as do I, and should all believers) and desires to save them (2 Peter 3:9).

Remember that churches are made up of people; sinners saved by grace, who still dwell in their sinful flesh, just like you (if you have believed on Jesus). And just like you, they will stumble and fall from time to time. Lovingly help them up when this happens; do not kick them while they are down, you wouldn't like that to be done to you (Luke 6:31, 1 Corinthians 13). Therefore, do not expect your church to be perfect, it will not be. Do not expect everyone to act the way that they should act (or the way that you think they should act) all of the time. No one does, including you, even after they are saved. There also may be some unsaved members and/or regular attendees as well who need to hear and believe the Gospel just as much as any other currently condemned unbeliever (John 3:18). Your loving and Godly behavior, testimony, and attitude just may be a very important component of what God uses to get through to them and bring them to salvation.

Also, be mindful that your pastor is also a human sinner saved by grace, and he has his own struggles with sin, just like you or I do. Be willing to cut him some slack, and be quick to forgive him accordingly. Pray for him OFTEN; I suggest every day, multiple times. Also, pray for him while he is preaching. Satan does not like sound doctrine to be dispensed clearly and effectively from the pulpit. Be good to him. He is likely working very hard for you. I believe that pastors are very high on the list of people that Satan does not want to be successful. He is possibly under a great deal of spiritual attack (Ephesians 6:12, 1 Peter 5:8-9).

Do not expect the people of your church to be in full agreement on details of church operations, such as music, budget, building expansion projects, etc., with you, or with each other all of the time (or even most of the time). Be willing to listen objectively, think, and pray—something we are given the charge and the privilege to do without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17)—before you speak (James 1:19). Make a daily commitment to have a mindset of giving the people of your church the benefit of the doubt. Be kind to people, and be ready and willing to forgive them as God, for Christ's sake, has already forgiven you (Ephesians 4:32, Colossians 2:13). God can teach us much through conflict. Remember that conflict (disagreement) in and of itself is not sin; mismanagement of conflict, however, is sin. Believe you me, I'm preaching to myself as well in this section. It is so easy and tempting to

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become "righteously" (meaning overly and wrongfully) critical and judgmental of one's church, pastor, and fellow congregants.

Be willing and eager to help out. Take good care of and look out for your brothers and sisters in Christ, even giving them preferential treatment (Romans 12:10); they are your forever family! Remember that not all of them (and you) have the same abilities (or the same amount of, or the same degree of abilities), or the same specific callings and passions. I will also gently remind you that any abilities, and the amount of any one of them that each of us may possess, were GIVEN to us by God (1 Corinthians 4:7) in His perfect and infinite wisdom and discernment. You gave yourself NONE of your innate abilities nor potential for other learned abilities. Therefore, do not be arrogant. God does not prefer any of us over another (Romans 2:11), and arrogance is at the top of the list of things that He hates (Proverbs 6:16-17 and many more). Be a blessing and an encouragement to your church brothers and sisters at every opportunity. Use your gifts and abilities to build up and create godly unity in every respect; Satan wants us to use them for the exact opposite, and he is very clever and cunning in his ways of getting us to do so.

Also remember that love is a choice; it is not necessarily some sort of overwhelming feeling that just overtakes us automatically. If it were simply the latter, then why would Jesus see the necessity in deliberately commanding us to love the Lord our God with all of our hearts, souls, and minds (the first and greatest commandment), to love our neighbors (others) as ourselves (Matthew 22:39), or to love our enemies (Matthew 5:44)? In summary, be good to your church family, even when you do not feel like it. Love them even when you do not like them. Value them and treat them well. Be loyal to them. Go out of your way to help them and to be kind to them. Do not talk negatively about them behind their backs, even when it takes the form of a prayer request made out of "love and concern." You have a tremendous opportunity to serve God and to grow in Him (and help others to do so as well) by following these principles. The people of your church may very well also become some of your most dear and loyal lifetime (real) friends, in spite of their (and your) shortcomings. Have an unhurried read of Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 for further discussion on this extremely important topic. A side note: I would argue that in reality, the dislike of a neighbor is the temptation to not love that neighbor. Being tempted is not a sin. Giving in to temptation, which in this case is the failing to choose to love that perhaps "not so likable" neighbor, is indeed a sin. God will bless your choice to obey Him and love that neighbor. You just don't have what you need within you to love that neighbor? Fair enough. God does. Ask Him for it (walk in the Spirit) and He will give it to you (Philippians 4:13).

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Live Your Life in Order To Please God

God is infinite (Psalm 147:5, Luke 1:37, Proverbs 15:3). As extensive as it may be, the sum total of all the knowledge, capabilities, and accomplishments of every man and woman who has ever lived is finite. It has also been quite well established scientifically that the universe itself, as vast as it is, is also finite. God, of course, created the universe (Genesis 1:1, John 1:3). Infinity is infinitely larger and more significant than even the largest of what is finite (ponder that and try to wrap your mind around it for a while). Therefore, which is most worthy of our efforts to please: God or man? I think that the answer to that question is infinitely obvious. The [somewhat] ironic thing is that when we are putting God first (walking in the Spirit), and are more in step with Him, thus acting more like Him, we become more loving (like Him), and thus better (more genuine) servants to other people. We ultimately treat them far better because of our far greater (God-given and God-inspired) capacity to love them than we ever would have had otherwise.

Remember that your salvation is free; it costs you nothing whatsoever, nor will it ever. Your discipleship (following Jesus), however, may be different. As you walk with God, you may find Him calling you to step outside of your comfort zone, so to speak. This "stepping out" may indeed (and probably will) cost you something; perhaps even a great deal. The extreme examples of costly discipleship would be the lives of the apostles, such as Peter and Paul. They were not forced to give up the things that they gave up, or to do the things that they did, or suffer in the manner that they did in service to God, in order to get saved, or to stay saved. But they put God first, followed His direction, and made these sacrifices for Him anyway, and thus by His power, they accomplished feats of tremendous value that extended and continue to extend beyond their earthly lifetimes. They are currently reaping the rewards of these sacrifices and will do so throughout eternity. Paul himself tells us in Romans 8:18, *"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."* Notice that he does not even make a comparison; he says that it isn't even worth doing. Such a comparison, if it could even be made, likely cannot even be measured or perceived by us in our current state of being. I will try to illustrate, though: Think of someone asking you (not forcing you) to give up the only \$50 that you may have in your wallet. You had other immediate plans for it that day, but the person asking you for your money has a legitimate and immediate need for it. They give you a genuine and verifiable promise of a multi-billion-dollar estate in exchange for it within a week's time. I doubt that even this outlandish example comes close to doing justice to the incomparability between our service to the Lord and His eternal rewards to us. Serving God is an investment that will reap eternal dividends of worth that is beyond unimaginable in our current

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fallen state. It would be extremely wise for us to invest as much as we can, while we can (Galatians 6:7-10)!

Speaking from experience, one of the most beautiful and exceedingly satisfying ways to serve God (walk in the Spirit), among many others, is to directly tell others about Him and His Gospel. He is very pleased when people come to faith in Jesus (Luke 15:10 and others). He uses (privileges) us to bring the message of salvation, the Gospel, to others, and it pleases Him when we do so. THEREFORE:

Please share this message with someone else!

One way that I humbly suggest doing that is to walk through this book with a person who may need to hear the Gospel. Share this eternally important message with as many people as you can, then encourage them to share it with as many people as they can, and so on. The more, the better. The more you study the Scriptures and share the Gospel, the better at sharing the Gospel you become. Therefore, I urge you to practice sharing it as often as possible.

Be sure, however, to always share the Gospel in love (1 Corinthians 13:1-4)! No matter how wonderful something may be, when people are harshly force-fed anything, they tend to reject it. We DO NOT want this message being rejected! The urgency of the Gospel message to the eternal well-being of a person cannot be overstated. **Please do not hesitate to duplicate and distribute this book electronically, or as a hard copy!** You have my full permission to do so, as long as the textual content is not in any way altered. I encourage you to do so on as large a scale as you are able. This is another way that you have now been equipped to spread the Gospel message. If you are reading this from a hard copy, you can go to www.savedbygracealone.org and get a PDF. This will be helpful, especially if you want to print more copies of this writing. Please feel free to contact me via email. Let us bring in as many as we can to the free gift of eternal life that only comes by grace, and grace alone, through faith in the finished work of Jesus. May God bless you, and may we meet someday and spend forever together in the presence of God, on the perfect other side of eternity!

Addendum 1: You Think that You're too Enlightened to Believe in God

With all due respect, no, you are not; perhaps you're currently too stubborn to do so (I get it; I can be stubborn too). The arbitrary decision to reject supernatural explanations, even though they are often the best

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explanations for many phenomena, is not enlightenment; it is narrow-mindedness, not "free thinking," no matter how educated, intellectual, or "scientific" one may attempt to come across when discussing it. I respectfully implore you to get past this because: A) Atheism is probably the most ridiculous and bankrupt RELIGION ever devised (a religion is something that is adhered to with ardor or faith...blind faith in this case). Please understand that none of this is an attack on you, but on the load of nonsense you have been duped into believing, at least at some level. I question whether there are really any 100% genuine true atheists. B) Eternity is a long time, and you don't want to spend it in the only place that is available to spend it in if you choose to die in your sin. I often hear people who object to the truth of Scripture ask, "How could a loving God send people to Hell?" The proper and more logical question to ask here is, "Why would anyone choose Hell over a loving God?"

The religion of atheism ultimately reduces to this principle: Nothing, for no reason, with no cause, with no purpose, with no direction, with no intention, somehow became everything. And then this "everything," through countless ridiculously lucky accidents, each of them with odds against them happening being orders upon orders of magnitude beyond that of mathematical absurdity (mathematical absurdity being 1 in 10^{50}), became the orderly universe that "just so happens" to be fine-tuned to support life, that we see today; including our biosphere, which of course includes us. In addition, one must accept that each of these mind-blowingly improbable events had to occur in just the right order relative to one another. The odds against that happening are even greater. One must accept the entirety of this ridiculous premise purely on blind faith if one truly chooses to truly adhere to the religion of atheism. Anything else would not be atheistic thinking and would be profound [willful] cognitive dissonance at the very best.

I think that oftentimes when someone thinks of the term "nothing," they think of space. Space is far from being nothing; space is something that would have had to come into existence at the alleged Big Bang, if the Big Bang were indeed true. Genesis 1:1 provides a much better explanation. Do a little reading; space itself is very complex. A true "nothing" is something that I am not sure any mortal can truly wrap his/her mind around. One must also question why there is something instead of nothing. Atheism has no answer for that.

One must also accept the idea that moral laws that transcend human determination are nonexistent and must then appeal only to human emotions, feelings, and opinions. In other words, there are no moral absolutes, and therefore judgment regarding them is irrelevant and misplaced at best. If this is the case, one person's truth and moral code is no less relevant than anyone else's. Good and bad become irrelevant. There is no place for any sort of justice system. If someone feels that you shouldn't exist, and that if your existence were to cease, the world

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would be a better place, then they are within their own rights to act upon their own truth and kill you because, according to their truth, which would be just as relevant as anyone else's, they felt that this was best. This would be completely acceptable, and you would have no basis on which to say otherwise. If, according to someone's truth, your car should belong to them and they choose to simply take it for themselves, then what right do you have to be judgmental and tell them that they shouldn't take it from you? After all, they followed their heart and acted according to their own truth, which is just as relevant as yours or anyone else's. I could go on with countless examples. I certainly hope that all of us see just how absolutely ridiculous such a premise is. Nonetheless, if there is no Law Giver that transcends humanity, there is no law that transcends humanity, and the ridiculous statements I made earlier in this paragraph are not ridiculous statements at all, but "relevant" according to this impossible "reality."

Information needs a source. It would be ludicrous to think that the production of the hardware and the programming of the software of the computer that I am using to type on right now was not the result of a sophisticated, deliberate, and coordinated source of information many layers deep, consisting of many brilliant minds working together with intention, logic, creativity, and precision from concept to production. Life is perpetuated by information at all levels. I submit that it is far more ludicrous not to credit a deliberate information source for the sophisticated information system of life, which consists of and is carried out via nucleic acids (DNA and RNA) and proteins, than dwarfs (to put it mildly) the information involved with the most sophisticated computing systems ever devised or proposed by the most brilliant teams of minds of mankind. We rightly recognize the fact that the information necessary to build a sophisticated computer system has and requires an elaborate source of intelligence with intention. An adherent to the religion of atheism must, by faith, assert the exact opposite regarding the far more sophisticated information source necessary for life. Any sort of "in-between" ambiguous attempt at explaining otherwise is a result of nothing more than willful cognitive dissonance. Life is either a result of an intelligent Creator, or it is not. To think that it is not is illogical and is nothing more than willful ignorance.

The adherent to the religion of atheism will look at a drawing of a human being or a prosthetic leg and conclude that an artist is responsible for the first and a talented engineering and manufacturing team for the second. However, at the same time, he will credit a ridiculous chain of lucky cosmic accidents for the existence of a real human leg and a real human being. I don't have enough faith to even begin to believe something as ludicrous as this.

I also find it interesting that someone can readily believe the miracles that must be invoked in regard to the Big Bang (i.e., cosmic inflation),

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as well as abiogenesis (life from non-life), but then turn around and scoff at the miracles recorded in the Bible. Belief in the Resurrection of Christ, where there is a body with all of the chemical ingredients of life lying right there, even in the right places, does not require even an infinitesimal fraction of the faith necessary to believe in abiogenesis. Historically speaking, the Resurrection of Christ is as plausible as Lincoln giving the Gettysburg Address; something no one has any logical need to question. Also, there is no way that 12 men (Jesus' 12 apostles) were going to keep a lie straight for 40 years, especially one of the magnitude of the Resurrection, that was guaranteed not to bring them any material gain and continuously expose them to hardships and put them in harm's way. Each of the apostles knew without a doubt that the Resurrection was either undeniably true or that it was false. No one would have voluntarily endured the horrendous suffering and brutal deaths that these men endured for something they knew to be a lie.

The concept of atheism also lacks the necessary non-contingent factor for the formation of life. Many, if not most, prominent atheists, such as Richard Dawkins and Francis Crick, will agree that there is no way that life could have formed here on Earth via unguided processes. They will, however, argue that life must have developed elsewhere and then somehow made its way here to Earth; in other words, life on Earth would be contingent upon it developing somewhere else. This does not solve the problem of abiogenesis (life coming from non-life via unguided processes); it only moves it elsewhere where it is no less implausible than it is here on Earth. They would have to move the initial spontaneous formation of life back sequentially from place to place, planet to planet infinitely, with one world dependent upon life coming from the one before it, and then somehow against astronomical odds, making it there. It amounts to an infinite string of extremely lucky contingencies. This is, of course, not logical, especially considering that the universe had a beginning; it has been around for a finite amount of time. The God of the Bible is the logical and necessary non-contingent; someone, the force outside of time, space, and matter who is needed to cause time, space, and matter. God has no beginning; no one created Him; He just is (Exodus 3:14, Hebrews 13:8). This is not only by far the most sensible and logical conclusion, it is also by far the most hopeful (and by that, I do not mean merely wishful)!

Science is based on logic. The logical conclusion when one sees evidence of design, especially evidence of overwhelmingly elaborate design, is to attribute it to a designer. Science is the search for truth. The truth can be found in logic. Atheism deceitfully masquerades as science. At its core, it appeals to anything but logic. In our universe, we see vastness, morality, order, and amazingly complex and purposeful design. These only come about by the deliberate action of a very intelligent and very powerful Creator; a God; one like the God of the Bible; the one true God.

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The point of this writing is really not about winning an argument. It is about the fact that I want you to go to Heaven and not be deceived into forever forfeiting it for a lie devised by someone who hates you.

Addendum 2: Because of What You Think James Was Saying, You Can't Get Over Lordship "Salvation"

"*Faith without works is dead.*" For many people, this may be one of the most perplexing, if not the most, perplexing phrase in the 66 books of the Bible. It bothers/ confuses so many, because of the numerous other passages throughout the New Testament where we are plainly told that we are saved by grace alone and not by works. Yet here in James 2:17, 20 and 26, the Bible directly states as plain as day, 3 TIMES, that faith without works is dead; it's right there in black and white.

There have been myriad commentaries and sermons written on these verses and those accompanying them. Most of the ones I have come across are rather confusing and convoluted and/or just plain bad. Most of them that I have seen make an attempt in one way or another to [erroneously] redefine faith; asserting such ideas that James isn't just talking about just any-old-faith, but he is talking about some sort of [nebulously] "lively faith," or they may state something to the effect that real faith that saves will automatically result in changed behavior. This ultimately reduces to an unbiblical reliance upon works, no matter how you slice it or try to twist it. These sorts of arguments do nothing more than back-load works (again, which we are not, and cannot in any way be saved by) into the equation. This sort of thinking almost invariably leaves a person wondering if they have done enough, if they have repented hard enough, if they have made themselves feel sorry and miserable enough, if they have cleaned up their act enough, if they have sacrificed enough; always wondering if they have made the cut; wondering if God really sees their faith as being legitimate enough to keep them out of Hell. I know this feeling from experience and it is absolutely terrible. If there are indeed folks who are buying into this philosophy that have somehow managed to convince [deceive] themselves that they are comfortable and eternally secure in it, I would suspect that they are probably quite spiritually arrogant. Remember that Jesus' harshest words were reserved for spiritually arrogant people. I would humbly, but boldly assert that there are some other much better ways; biblical ways to look at this little apparent dilemma. Let's first consider the following passage:

Eph 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

Eph 2:9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

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As I have already stated, in attempting to rectify this passage with grace and faith, many have somehow tried to re-define what faith is. The Greek word used here translated as "faith" is "pistus." There is nothing in the definition of this word that alludes to any works.

Here is probably the most famous salvation verse in the Bible:

Joh 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

The Greek word here translated as "believe" is "pisteuo." As with the word discussed above, which is much like it, there is again no allusion to works in the definition of it, none whatsoever.

"Pistus" is the Greek word also translated as "faith" in our phrase "*faith without works is dead*" in James 2:20 and 26. Its definition also makes no reference to any sort of works, whatsoever. Redefining "faith" in order to explain this passage is just flat-out unbiblical, as I see it. Again, there are numerous other places where Scripture is clearly stating that salvation is by grace alone and it uses words such as these in doing so. For the sake of brevity, I will not expound on those here in this addendum, however, I would encourage you to research them yourself. Much more attention is paid to this topic in the preceding sections of this book, as well as in the articles and the blog found at savedbygracealone.org.

Let us look at how the book of James starts out. James is addressing believers, Jewish believers in particular. In verse 2 he says "my brethren." This is always a reference to believers in the New Testament. Believers have the irrevocable gift of salvation (Romans 6:23, 11:29, Ephesians 1:13, 2:8-9, etc.). Gifts are not earned, they are FREE; including the FREE gift of salvation The Bible is clear about that (Romans 5:15-16, 18). You therefore are not saved by works, period. No scriptural "gymnastics" and slick back-loading of works into the equation are going to make this passage say anything different. James even starts chapter 2, the chapter which contains the verses in question in this post by addressing his "brethren."

OK, but it still says that faith without works is dead. Yes, it does. Let's look at the word "dead." The Greek word translated to "dead" here is "Nekros." This can mean a corpse (which incidentally is something that God can bring to life), and it can also just as easily refer to something more or less figuratively being dead, such as in the sense of such as a dead battery, or a dead ball in a football game, etc. Dead here means that whatever is being referred to is not doing anything; it is inactive; it is not getting anything accomplished. There is nothing in this word that at all alludes to condemnation or damnation of the believer; once again, the person who has trusted Christ as Savior and received the irrevocable

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gift of salvation; one of the "brethren." James is admonishing his SAVED audience to do something with what they already and will always HAVE!

Another thought: if the true definitions of the original Greek words translated as "faith" or "believe" in our English Bible would have included a works component, then the phrase in question would have been a gross redundancy and thus there would have been no need for the Holy Spirit to inspire James to include it in his letter.

Now, should the person of faith be doing good works for the Lord? Absolutely, without question! But not to get saved, stay saved, or prove that they are saved in any way, shape or form. The proof of the salvation of the believer is in the infallible Scripture, not in heart of the extremely fallible believer (Jeremiah 17:9). Consider this passage:

1Co 3:11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

1Co 3:12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

1Co 3:13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

1Co 3:14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

1Co 3:15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

The WORKS of believers are being judged here; Jesus has already paid for our sins and has taken OUR judgement; received the wage of death which must be paid for sin; He has made the payment of His death for OUR sins, been buried, and rose again (and in doing so, conquering death); it's a done deal, so there is nothing left to judge in that regard. We HAVE the foundation, which is Jesus Christ. NO ONE is going to Hell here in this passage, in fact every one of us here in this passage is not only going to Heaven, but I would argue is already IN Heaven at the point of this event occurring. What is being determined/judged here is how our WORKS will be REWARDED for eternity. Some of us saved people will receive many eternal rewards, some of us will not.

Let's go back a few verses in our James passage and look at the topic sentence of the section:

Jas 2:14 What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

Note that the word "profit" is used here. Profit is something that is earned or accumulated (in this case by and for the believer, and for another benefactor), by working and/or investing; it is NOT a gift. Again,

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salvation is a gift from God. If something is given as a true gift, then it can in no way, shape, or form be earned. If anyone is able to [and does] give true gifts, it would be God, and because of His perfect nature, that would be the only kind of gift He would even be capable of giving. Believers can and should indeed be earning rewards. God rewards the believer; one of the brethren, for faithfulness, service, and obedience; which are essentially one in the same. The meaning of works here is to get things getting done that God wants us to get done. Note, this OPPORTUNITY is only available to the believer; someone who possesses the irrevocable gift of eternal life. Paul tells us in Galatians 5:16 to walk in the Spirit so we won't fulfill the lusts of the flesh. The Apostle Paul, like James, is talking to saved people; only saved people have the Spirit (who they are born of) to walk in. The fruit of the Spirit that is described in verses 22 and 23 of the same chapter is made manifest by walking in the Spirit; the believer's good works, which again, are getting things done that God wants done. The believer still has the flesh (remember, he is talking to believers in this passage) and when we are not walking in the Spirit, we are fulfilling the lust of the flesh...which can accomplish no works of any value, but only dead works, which are clearly of no value (Hebrews 6:1, 9:14), no matter how good they may look. Any works that one may be relying upon to play any contributing part at all in their GIFT of salvation qualify as dead works.

Jas 2:19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

This verse is often [mis]used to reinforce the unbiblical redefinition of faith and the back-loading of works that we have been discussing. I'll make 2 points here: First off, the teachings of many false religions that are leading people straight to Hell adhere to the belief that there is one God; simply believing that there is only one God and truly trusting Christ as Savior; believing the Gospel, are not at all the same thing. Secondly, Jesus didn't die for the devils. James is admonishing his audience to make the most of their gift of salvation; their rebirth in Christ (John 3, Ephesians 4:24, Colossians 2:10).

In James 2:14 we also read the phrase: "Can faith save him?" The clear and resounding answer to that question is YES! Scripture is clear on this in more than one place.

No matter how hard you may have "worked for God," no matter how religious and "righteous" and "spiritual" you may think you are (perhaps you are even a pastor or some other sort of church/religious leader), if you have never truly trusted Christ as savior before you die, you will not be at the Judgement that I discussed above, which is talked about in 1 Corinthians 3. Instead, you will be at the judgement described in Revelation 20, starting in verse 11, where it won't just be your works getting judged, but it will be YOU getting judged and in no way

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rewarded, but sentenced for your sin and dead works, which cannot and will not save you. To say that you will not like your sentence would be an infinite understatement. There will be no opportunity for appeal at that point either. You can, however, simply choose to take Jesus at His Word and trust Him as Savior right now, and forever avoid this horror.

James is a beautiful book. [It's actually a letter.] I love the book of James; it is part of God's Word. Some folks have almost asserted that it is unfortunate that the words we have been discussing here are included in Book of James, or even that the book of James is in the Bible at all. The inclusion of the Book of James in the Scriptural Cannon is not what is unfortunate. What is unfortunate is that so many people; including many esteemed teachers of the Bible, have not been obedient and taken the initiative to rightly divide and diligently do a proper study of it (2 Timothy 2:15). God's Word interprets its self; it does not contradict its self. If James really was telling us that works were a necessary component for salvation, then the Bible would contradict its self in a very [infinitely] big way in its key underlying theme. This would render it to be untrustworthy and flat out worthless. I have heard it said that when you find an apparent "contradiction" in God's Word, that there is a gem to be uncovered with some digging. I agree. This is indeed one of those cases. After some honest study, what an encouragement this passage becomes for me, the believer, to rest in the Lord and to trust in Him alone for the irrevocable gift of eternal life, and to actively live in and use that gift that He has freely given to me to bless Him and others, as He continues to bless me.

Addendum 3: Lots of People Have Disappeared; Things are Bad

If you are reading this in a time after a lot of people have suddenly and "mysteriously" disappeared, the Rapture has occurred. I alluded to it above at the end of the "...That Cannot Die" section. Those of us who have disappeared are those who have put our trust in Christ; the body of Christ; the true Church (Colossians 1:24). We have not been taken away to be corrected and enlightened by aliens or some other sort of "enlightened beings," or removed by some sort of mystic new age force, because we were a menace to the next step of human evolution, or any other sort of nonsensical garbage "explanation" (lie) that the mainstream media, world government (whatever it may be called), or world religion (whatever it may be called) may be feeding you. There may very well indeed be "aliens" around, but if so, they are not benevolent or "friendly" extraterrestrial visitors from other worlds; they are evil, malevolent minions of Satan (fallen angels and/or demons), who are not limited to your present three spatial dimensions, who are perhaps temporarily masquerading as "peaceful" extraterrestrials, who will readily tell you any lie that suits their agenda, without hesitation. What has happened to those of us who have disappeared is that the only

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true God, the God of the Bible, has taken us from the earth, and we have met Jesus in the air, and we are currently dwelling with Him, and will be doing so forever (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 1 Corinthians 15:51-52). Needless to say, we are doing extremely well (unlike you, if you are unfortunate enough to be reading this after the Rapture and before the Glorious Appearing of Jesus). You still cannot earn salvation, but **it is still available to you by grace**, just as I have already explained above, at length. You are, however, in for a very rough road, regardless of whether you are a believer or not. You are probably already very well aware of this.

There are or will be 144,000 missionaries sent by God (Revelation 7:1-8, 14:1-5) who very likely are hated and vilified by the world government and the world religion. **Listen to them, and do NOT listen to the world government, or to the world religion, or to the "visitors from other worlds"** that may possibly be present (again, these "visitors" are extra-dimensional minions of Satan; perpetual liars; enemies of God and the Gospel, and they desire your eternal damnation and will stop at nothing to secure it).

By now there are (if not yet, there will be), or already have been, two witnesses in Jerusalem with profound supernatural powers (Revelation 11:1-12), who are disturbing (or have disturbed) the world government and the world religion. These may be two individuals or possibly two groups of people. I strongly lean toward thinking that they are most likely two individuals, as I write this. Listen to them as well; they are messengers sent by God. These two witnesses may be still alive and around. If so, they will be killed, probably by the world leader (Revelation 11:7). Their deaths will be celebrated, and they will be denied burial (Revelation 11:9-10); however, they will resurrect three-and-a-half days later, and then they will publicly ascend, as God calls them up (Revelation 11:11-12). Perhaps you have already seen this happen.

Whatever you do, **DO NOT take the mark** of the world leader, which is likely an implanted chip of some sort, perhaps along with something else, that is supposed to go in your forehead or in your right hand. At the point in time when the policy requiring this mark is implemented, the mark will be required in order to "legally" buy or sell anything. My best estimate would be that this policy will likely be implemented shortly after the resurrection of the two witnesses (Revelation 13:16-18). This mark will somehow bear the name and/or number (666, expressed in some way, shape, or form [Revelation 13:18]) of the world leader. Thus, having it would identify and align you with the world leader, who at least would appear to have risen from the dead, shortly after he would have at least appeared to have been assassinated (Revelation 13:3). He is the most wicked and deceitful human being who has ever lived or ever will live, who would at the point of his apparent resurrection be directly

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empowered, or perhaps even indwelt by Satan himself (Revelation 13:4). This mark would therefore align you with Satan himself. Taking this mark is an irrevocable ticket to eternal damnation (Revelation 14:9-12). During this time period, you will likely die for your faith if you do not take this mark. However, all who do take this mark will then only have three-and-a-half years (at the most, quite likely less) to live in the Hell on earth that they would be experiencing, and then enter the ultimate destruction; the second death in the Lake of Fire, which is unimaginably worse yet. Needless to say, **this mark is most certainly not worth taking!** If you are someone who has trusted in Christ and not taken the mark of the world leader, you will be forever at peace, in the presence of God after your physical death occurs (Revelation 6:9-11, 7:9-17). There is a relatively small chance that you will survive until Jesus returns to Earth, at His glorious appearing (Revelation 19&20). This will occur seven years after the world leader; the Anti-Christ/Beast/Man of Sin or Lawlessness/Son of Perdition, etc., as he is referred to in Scripture, signs the peace treaty with Israel, which I am guessing would have occurred very shortly after the Rapture. If that signing has not happened yet, watch for it. He will break (or already has broken) that treaty, three-and-a-half years into it, probably around the same time as the assassination and ascension of the 2 witnesses (Revelation 11:7-12).

When Jesus returns at His glorious appearing, He will be setting up His beautiful millennial Kingdom on earth, which you will be part of if you put your trust in Him and don't take that mark. I do not believe that one would even be able to receive that mark once they had trusted in Jesus and believed the Gospel, and been sealed with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13). Satan, the world leader, and the fallen angels/demons; evil "extra-terrestrial visitors," etc., will all be removed. **A saved person's suffering will be temporary,** followed by an incomprehensibly wonderful and **eternal** reward (Romans 8:18). To say that **it will be worth it** would be the understatement of all time. What is coming after the millennial kingdom is even better yet (Revelation 21 & 22)! I would strongly suggest reading (in the Bible) Isaiah chapters 60-66, Daniel, Joel, Zechariah, Matthew chapter 24, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 2 Timothy chapter 3, and Revelation. More Scriptures speak of this time period, but these are a great start for studying it.

If you are reading this before the Rapture has occurred and still have not yet **chosen** to take Jesus at His Word and put your trust in Him, **do it NOW**. There are no prerequisites. Come as you are. It is about a rational **decision** to place full trust, not about having the "right" feelings or emotions or saying the right prayer. **The Rapture could take place at any moment,** and you do not want to be left behind to endure this seven-year Tribulation/Time of Jacob's trouble, which I have briefly described above. It will be the worst time on earth that has ever been or ever will be. God bless.

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Scriptures Cited, Referred To, and Recommended

All Scripture passages are cited in this work are from the King James Version of the Bible. All references are done so in the context of the wording of the King James Version, with some references to the original languages in which these passages of the Word of God were inspired.
Genesis 1:1, 27, 3:19

Numbers 23:19

1 Samuel 12:14

2 Samuel 11, 12:10-18

Job Chapters 38 through 42

Psalms 55:22

Proverbs Chapter 3, 6:16-17, 15:3

Isiah Chapter 53, 55:8-9, 64:6

Jeremiah 17:9, 32:17

Ezekiel 33:11

Daniel

Joel

Nahum 1:7

Zechariah

Matthew Chapter 5 (emphasis verses 24 and 44), 7:21-27, 9:12, 17:20, 18:20, 19:26, 22:37-40, 24

Mark Chapter 9 (emphasis verses 23-26)

Luke 1:37, 2:11, 6:31, 15:10, 16:27-28

John 1:1-18, 3:1-6, 16, 18, 5:8, 10, 14, 17, 22-23, 6:37-40, 47, 10:10, 28, 30, 14:6, 9

Acts 1:25, 5:1-10, chapters 7, chapter 8 (emphasis verse 37), and 9, 13:22, 16:31, 17:10-11

Aspects of Salvation

Romans 2:11, 3:10, 20, 23, 25, 28, 4:11, 24, 20-25, 5:3-4, 6-8, 15, 6:1-2, 23, 7:14-25, 8:18-30, 10:9, 11:6, 29, Chapter 12 (emphasis verses 1 and 10)

1 Corinthians 1:2, 3:8, 11-15, 4:7, 11:30, Chapter 12 (emphasis verse 3), Chapter 13 (emphasis verses 1-4, 12), 14:33, 15:1-4, 21, 42-49, 51-52

2 Corinthians 5:8, 17, 21, 11:3, 14-15, 12:9

Galatians 1:1, 6-12, 2:16, 19-21, 5:16-17, 19-23, 6:2, 7-10,

Ephesians 1:7, 13, 2:1-6, 8-10, 4:32, 6:12

Philippians 1:1, 2:5-12, 4:13

Colossians 1:14, 17, 20, 24, 2:9, 13, 3:9

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 5:11, 17

2 Timothy 2:15, 3

Titus 1:2

Hebrews 1:2-3, 4:3, 5-11, 6:18, 9:7, 10:14, 24-25, 12:2, 13:5

James 1:19, 2:10, 4:17

1 Peter 1:2, 19-20, 3:8, 5:7-9

2 Peter 3:9

1 John 1:7, 3:2, 4, 9, 4:4, 15-16, 5:7

2 John 1:8

Revelation 1:8, Chapters 2 and 3 (emphasis verse 20), 6:9-11, 7:1-8, 11:1-12, 13:3-4, 16-18, 14:9-12, Chapters 19 and 20 (emphasis verses 10, 14-15), Chapter 21 (emphasis verses 1-7), Chapter 22 (emphasis verses 12-13)

I recommend to those who are new to the Scriptures to begin with the reading of the Gospel of John, then Acts, then Romans through Philemon, then Hebrews 1, Genesis, Psalms, then Proverbs. I do also humbly recommend that order.

Aspects of Salvation

Those who are new to studying prophecy are recommended to begin that study with the reading of the books of Revelation, Daniel, Matthew 24, Zechariah, and Joel, as well as the Isaiah chapters 60-66. Eventually be sure to read the 66 books of the Bible; Genesis 1 through Revelation 22, in their entirety! I humbly but highly recommend using the King James Version. I understand that it may be more difficult to read at first, but you will quickly get used to it (and grow to love it), and you are going to get a much more consistent representation of the true meanings of the Scriptures with this translation than you are with any other English translation. I speak from experience, as someone who formerly used modern translations almost exclusively. Please let me emphasize, however, I am in no way, shape, or form saying that the use of any particular translation of the Scriptures is a requirement for salvation, at all! I think this will be more than obvious to the person who has read this book in its entirety with any degree of sincerity. All that said, at the end of the day, the best translation of the Bible for you is the one that you are actually going to read!

I strongly recommend obtaining and using "MySword" (mobile app) and "e-Sword" (PC, mobile or Mac app). These are excellent Bible study tools, and they are free or very inexpensive, at least at the time of this writing. I find them to be extremely useful for a more in-depth study of God's Word.

May God bless you. If I never get to meet you here on Earth, I'll see you on the other side! ☺

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Please visit www.savedbygracealone.org for more resources, including a PDF of this book.

Aspects of Salvation

Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus

(Lyrics by Helen Lemmel 1922)

O soul, are you weary and troubled? No light in the darkness you see?

There's light for a look at the Savior, And life more abundant and free!

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,

Look full in His wonderful face,

And the things of earth will grow strangely dim, In the light of His glory and grace.

Through death into life everlasting, He passed, and we follow Him there;

O'er us sin no more hath dominion— For more than conqu'rors we are!

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,

Look full in His wonderful face,

And the things of earth will grow strangely dim, In the light of His glory and grace

His Word shall not fail you—He promised; Believe Him, and all will be well

Then go to a world that is dying, His perfect salvation to tell!

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,

Look full in His wonderful face,

And the things of earth will grow strangely dim, In the light of His glory and grace.

Aspects of Salvation

*He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not
the Son of God hath not life.*

... 1 John 5:12



And He said unto me,

My grace is sufficient for thee, my strength is made perfect in weakness.

2 Corinthians 12:9

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved...

Acts 16:31

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 3:16

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

John 11:25-26

Jesus plus something is nothing. Jesus plus nothing is everything. His grace alone is enough!!

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